Research Paper

'Doing Kinship and Gender': Gender Issues in the Socio-political Writings of Irawati Karve and Leela Dube

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ABSTRACT: This paper deals with the reading of seminal works of two prominent Indian feminist anthropologists- Irawati Karve and Leela Dube; Doing so the paper tires to address the gender issues in their writings on kinship system. The argument of the essay is that Irawati Karve and Leela Dube represent two different phases and contexts of anthropological investigation in the country. We can call these phases as the phase of institutionalization of the discipline of anthropology and the phase of professionalization. The difference explains not only the differences in the nature of insights offered by the two authors in their writings on kinship systems and their method of bringing in gender issues in their anthropological investigation, but also the differences in the two phases in the development of anthropology as an academic discipline in India.
KEYWORDS: social anthropology, feminist anthropology, kinship, gender.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Irawati Karve (1905– 1970) and Leela Dube (1923– 2012), the two distinguished anthropologists, represent two different phases in the history of anthropological study in India. This essay compares and contrasts the personal and professional lives of these two woman anthropologists, their orientations, methods and their contributions with a focus on the treatment of gender issues in their writings on kinship systems. The argument of the essay is that Irawati Karve and Leela Dube represent two different phases (pre-Independence and post-Independence respectively) and contexts (colonial and postcolonial respectively) of anthropological investigation in the country. We can call these phases as the phase of institutionalization of the discipline of anthropology and the phase of professionalization. Each of these phases had their peculiar constraints, challenges, opportunities and advantages and their concerns can best be described as "cultural anthropology" and "social anthropology" respectively. This difference explains not only the differences in the nature of insights offered by the two authors in their writings on kinship systems and their method of bringing in gender issues in their anthropological investigation, but also the differences in the two phases in the development of anthropology as an academic discipline in India.

Before I proceed, let me make my concepts clear. The terms "social anthropology" and "cultural anthropology" have generally been used to show the distinction between the North American and the European traditions of anthropology respectively (Williams, 1983: 40). But for want of a better term to suggest the engagement of the early Indian anthropologists with history and Indology, their eagerness to encompass all the aspects of Indian culture including oral traditions, and their enthusiasm to map broader pattern I have used the term "cultural anthropology" in this paper, and "social anthropology" to suggest the more focused endeavors of the Indian anthropologists to understand the social institutions and their interrelationships. While cultural anthropology very often tends to be a macro study, social anthropology usually favors micro study.

CONTEXT

In his essay which gives an overview of the development of sociology in India, M. N. Srinivas (1916– 1999) points out that 'Indian sociologists and social anthropologists are unable, at least in their empirical work, to draw a sharp line between the two disciplines…. Senior scholars such as Radhakamal Mukherjee (1889–1968), N. A. Thoothi (1902 – 1966), (D. N. Majumdar (1903 – 1960), N. K. Bose (1901 – 1972), Irawati Karve (1905 – 1970), and A. Aiyappan (1905 – 1988), each wrote on the themes which he or she considered interesting or important without considering much whether it lay within social anthropology or sociology. Some foreign scholars

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who have spent their lives specializing on India such as J. H. Hutton (1885 - 1968), D. G. Mandelbaum (1911 – 1987) and M. B. Emeneau (1904 – 2005) have also refused to make a sharp distinction between the two disciplines'. This was quite natural because anthropology or sociology as areas of study were opened up as a result of East-West encounter. Hence, they did not have any native roots. Whatever information about the social life of the people –particularly the Hindus– in the subcontinent collated by the British officials, Christian missionaries and European travelers in the nineteenth century was intended to meet their administrative or evangelistic needs. It was also used to decry Hindu customs and practices which provided a justification for the British presence in India. With the founding of the Ethnographic Survey of India and the starting of census began the serious attempts at data compilation. As M. N. Srinivas puts it, 'Professional anthropologists were the last to join the band of data-collectors, and W H R Rivers was the first of them, producing his monumental study of the Todas of the Nilgiris in the first decade of this century' (Srinivas, 1987: 135-6).

Apart from the lack of native roots and the colonial context, the academic environment was absolutely unfavorable for Anthropology because 'Nationalist Indians felt that to be studied by anthropologists was to be condemned as primitives just as being studied by Sanskritists, philosophers or archaeologists was to be regarded as civilized' (Srinivas, 1987: 136).

Secondly, as Partha Chatterjee argues, though the question regarding the plight and status women in Indian society was central in the nationalist discourse and the discourse of the reformers till the mid-nineteenth century, such issues suddenly disappeared from 'the agenda of public debate towards the close of the century'. Further he interprets this change to the emergence of new patriarchy. 'The new patriarchy advocated by nationalism conferred upon women the honor of a new social responsibility, and by associating the task of female emancipation with the historical goal of sovereign nationhood, bound them to a new, and yet entirely legitimate, subordination' (Chatterjee, 1997: 130).

Thirdly, the institutional set up too was not very favorable for doing anthropology. As M. N. Srinivas points out, as teaching posts were very limited, classroom teaching was prioritized over research in the newly founded universities and funds for research, library facilities, and research assistance were almost nonexistent (Srinivas, 1987: 136).

This was the context in which Irawati Karve, the first Indian woman anthropologist, wrote her first research work *Chitpavan Brahmins: An Ethnic Study*, her Masters' thesis in Sociology at University of Bombay. Though, in spite of her growing age and two heart attacks she continued to publish her works till 1969, by 1955 all her major works in anthropology were published. All her later works are mostly socio-economic surveys and very often co-authored. In short, her major works are the products of a colonial context and they will have to be viewed by placing them in that context for a fair appraisal of her contribution.

Leela Dube submitted her Ph. D. dissertation to Nagpur University in the year 1953 on three Gond (Adivasi) groups in the Chattisgarh region with a focus on women's lives. And when she began her independent research, she could start with the compilation of a 154 pages descriptive bibliography of kinship studies carried out in India from 1890s to 1969 - *Sociology of Kinship: An Analytical Survey of Literature*. In other words, there was already a substantial body of literature – macro studies mostly – from which Leela Dube could start and formulate her micro study. And also anthropology as a discipline was already institutionalized though it lacked professional rigor. Acknowledging Irawati Karve's deep influence on her, Leela Dube herself records:

Listening to her at the breakfast table and in the conference, I was struck by her imaginative intellect, originality, wide ranging knowledge of texts, and a kind of daring to formulate propositions, the qualities which are present in ample measure in much of her writings on kinship, caste, family and Hindu society. Her work in all the above areas have inspired me. … Karve's pioneering discussion of the implications of differences in marriage and kinship between north and south India, her focused studies of some castes in Maharashtra and Karnataka, the concept of the 'central zone', use of folk lore, and spontaneous discussions of new ideas and work under progress, whenever we met, proved critical in framing my enquiries into family and kinship and later in my elaboration of the dynamics between kinship and gender. (Dube, 2000: 4041).

Secondly, 'the atmosphere for the social sciences', as observes M. N. Srinivas, 'changed noticeably in the years following the advent of independence' (Srinivas, 1987: 136). Social welfare initiatives of the new Indian state and its commitment to socio-economic development of the society were in sharp contrast with the earlier colonial setting. 'Implicit in the new encouragement of the social sciences was an assumption that they were essential for transforming India into a modern, democratic, egalitarian and prosperous state' (Srinivas, 1987: 137).

Thirdly, as Radha Kumar illustrates in *The History of Doing*, there was a revival of impetus in the feminist unease about social discrimination, particularly about 'being used as cheap capital' and also 'feminist class-consciousness came into focus' in the 1970s (Kumar, 1993). In 1974, the Committee on Status of Women presented its findings *Towards Equality*. To summarize, newer and more progressive theoretical stances were available to anthropologists who began their work in the early 1970s. For instance, structural-functionalism became popular which helped sociologists to study society as system with well-defined functions for each of its constituent elements. Similarly feminists in the post-1970 became more conscious of sexual politics that informs gender inequalities. Emergence of women's studies was a challenge to the andro-centric bias of the social sciences.

II. BIOGRAPHIES

In this section I will briefly sketch the biographies of the two anthropologists as they explain some of their basic assumptions and theoretical orientations. While sketching the biography of Irawati Karve I have freely drawn from the writings of her students, friends and associates, my principal source for Leela Dube's biography is her own autobiographical narrative 'Doing Kinship and Gender'.

Analyzing the social processes in the nineteenth century Western India, Uma Chakravarti identifies a rapid transformation in the Brahmin caste groups due to exposure to Western education and social reform movements on the one hand and contestation by the non- Brahmin castes on the other (Chakravarti, 1993). This was the common backdrop for both Irawati Karve and Leela Dube.

Irawati Karmakar (Karve) was born in 1905 in a Chitpavan Brahmin community. Her father Ganesh Hari Karmakar worked in the Burma Cotton Company. So she was sent to a boarding school in Pune. At school she was a classmate and a close friend of Rangler R. P. Paranjape's daughter. Principal of Fergusson College, Rangler Paranjape was very progressive and had a personal collection of variety of books to which Irawati Karve had an easy access. In 1926 she graduated from Fergusson College majoring in Philosophy, got Dakshina fellowship, and joined Bombay University to study Sociology. In the same year she was married to Dinkar Karve, son of D. K. Karve or better known as 'Maharshi Karve', the founder of a women's university in Bombay. This university was later renamed SNDT University. Despite her close relation with the stalwarts of the reform movement such as Maharshi Karve, Irawati Karve kept herself away from the reformist activities and said to have remarked, 'I will pay my debt to society through research in my subject. And beyond this, I owe no other debt to society' (Dilawar, 2013).

Irawati Karve, as noted above, wrote her Masters' thesis under the guidance of G. S. Ghurye in 1928-29 on Chitpavan Brahmins, her own sub-caste. G. S. Ghurye was, according to M. N. Sirnivas, was one of the most distinguished and prolific 'of the early Indian social anthropologists who wrote on wide variety of topics from the line of succession of Mahabharata kings to the sexual behavior of the American female – all under the umbrella of Sociology' (Srinivas, 1987: 136). This early apprenticeship, I guess, explains the eclectic approach of Irawati Karve in all her writings – bringing in myth, folklore, linguistics, epics, history, etc. in her anthropological writings and invoking several schools of thought in her method of doing anthropology.

Irawati Karve went to Germany to do her doctoral work in anthropology from the University of Berlin in 1928-30. On her return, after a brief service at SNDT University as the Registrar, she joined Deccan College Pune as Reader in Sociology from where she retired after four decades of teaching and research which included her extensive field work for her monograph on kinship organization in India which was published in 1953:

I moved from region to region taking measurements, blood samples and collecting information about kinship practices and terminology … and so I travelled from place to place never knowing where my next step was to be nor where my next meal was to come from … Rest pauses between work, meal times, travel in buses full of people and in third class railway compartments filled with men and women gave me the opportunities to I sought for collecting kinship material. … The working day meant over twelve hours of work (Quoted in Sundar, 2000: 19).

She even learnt to read the language Tamil so that she is able to read literature in the language which she believed threw light on the south Indian systems. Yet she was also a great home maker. She enjoyed involving herself in 'baking, knitting, gardening', etc. –'the mundane tasks of home'– as recorded by her daughters Gauri Deshpande and Jai Nimbkar - both distinguished writers- and her son Anand who runs an NGO in Pune called 'Arti' and her students and colleagues. Finding 'a room of her own' was certainly not an issue in her case. Yet, as Nandini Sundar points out, 'whatever the feminization of sociology and anthropology today, at the time she worked, Irawati Karve was one of the few survivors' (Sundar, 2000: 10).

Leela Dube too hails from a Maharastrian Brahmin family where 'a room of her own' for a girl child was not an issue at all. Yet, Dube records how her mother believed that 'girls needed to be trained properly for their future in marriage', and how 'an independent career for girls was not on the agenda' of the family (Dube, 2000: 4037). The mother was an extraordinary influence on the shaping of Leela Dube's stance: 'Over the years I became acutely aware of the derivative nature of women's status in rituals and rules of kinship and everyday life: but during this time I also came to realize that personal equations, subtle strategies, and manifest designs of individuals were often equally important in the shaping of quotidian lives of women' (Dube, 2000: 4038).

Leela Dube studied Sanskrit, Philosophy and English Literature at the undergraduate level, Political Science at the Masters' and then moved over to do doctoral work in Anthropology. A clear advantage for Dube was that she was married to Shyama Charan Dube, a person of her choice who was also a sociologist of repute known for his works such as *Indian Village* (London: Routledge, 1955) and *Indian Changing Villages* (London: Kegan Paul, 1958). At home, I had an excellent example of an 'Indian village', remarks Leela Dube humorously (Dube, 2000: 4043).

Being a housewife and also a mother of two children was an obvious disadvantage for her fieldwork for various conceptions related to it. But her teaching job in Saugar University helped her overcome this problem in

the sense that she could take the help of her students in collecting data from far off places. 'In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Department of Anthropology at the University of Saugar was known as 'mini India' because it attracted students from all over the country'' (Dube, 2000: 4041). Thus Abdul Rahman Kutty, one of her students from Kerala made fieldwork on the Laccadive Islands where 'a rare combination of Islam and matriliny' with 'a most unusual social system' existed: 'In retrospect, the critical questions of conjugal relationship and rights over resources, children and space that came to occupy me later were actually assuming shape while I worked in this island society' (Dube, 2000: 4042). When in 1970s the issues of woman's liberation and cultural organization of gender came up for discussion, gender issues which were hitherto of peripheral importance in Leela Dube's writings became her central concern.

Thus, though there are extraordinary similarities between the biographies of Irawati Karve and Leela Dube, differences are far more striking. Karve's problem was that she was obliged to work within the framework of reform movement and nationalist ideology. Hence though she could view the predicament of women in family and society sympathetically, she could not suspect the discipline itself in which she worked. This is the reason why her concern for women is poignantly expressed in her writings other than strictly anthropological. But by the time Leela Dube made her formal entry into the discipline, feminization of sociology and anthropology was already underway which helped her take a 'feminist' position to critique the bias of the discipline.

TEXTS

In this section, I will take up for discussion Irawati Karve's *Kinship Organization in India* (1953) and *Yuganta: The End of An Epoch* (Marathi original: 1967; English trn.: 1969; Revised edn.: 1991) and Leela Dube's *On the Construction of Gender: Hindu Girls in Patrilineal India* (1988) and *Women and Kinship: Perspectives on Gender in South and South-East Asia* (1997) to discuss the treatment of themes related to women. A word in justification for including *Yuganta* among the anthropological texts is probably in order. Because *Yuganta* is basically an interpretation of the principal mythical-heroic figures of the *Mahabharata* and not an anthropological work *per se*. But for Irawati Karve *Mahabharata* is a historical work 'like Mohenjodaro': 'The *Mahabharata* is an extensive record of the intimate life and thought of scores of people.' (Karve, 1969: 191 and 10). Moreover, *Yuganta* is a work of an anthropologist working in a colonial context. As Nandini Sundar points out, "it is perhaps the tragedy of colonized India, that 'scholarship' and 'sociology' is what is done in English, often with outside theoretical tools, while much that is relevant and contemporary in society and which should be incorporated by sociology is written in other forms, notably literature" (Sundar, 2000: 21-22). Dhanagare does precisely this exercise in 'Practicing Sociology through History' when he says that *Yuganta* 'has challenged the commonly held norms of a Hindu family - particularly those ideas associated with ideal woman- hood (such as vaginal purity as a precondition of a virtuous wife, unflinching devotion to husband, and the like) as defined by the patriarchal authority structure of the dominant upper strata of the society' (Dhanagare, 2007: 3417).

Kinship Organization in India is not only 'the first systematic comparative study of the numerous aspects of kinship behavior India' (Furer-Haimendorf, 1965: 1473), but also a celebration of the diversity within India. Early in her essay, Irawati Karve remarks:

The present day cultural problems before India also largely revolve around these three entities, viz. region, caste and family. … The tendency is to minimize the differences and establish uniformities … Welding of the Indian sub-continent into a nation is a great cultural task, but very often the urge for uniformity destroys so much, which from an ethical and cultural point of view, can be allowed to remain. The need for uniformity is an administrative need, not a cultural one. (Karve, 1953: 16)

To accommodate the diversity of the country within her kinship study, Irawati Karve maps the kinship patterns in the country on to linguistic / geographic zones: northern, central, southern and eastern. If the 'Indo-Aryan' northern zone is characterized by patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal family pattern derived from the ancient Sanskritic family system, taboos on consanguine relations and marriage outside of kin-group resulting in the expansion of kin-group but alienation of woman, the southern zone with its 'Dravidian' system, 'fundamentally different from the northern zone', is characterized by totemic clans, matrilineal castes, cross-cousin marriages, narrow clustering of kin-group resulting in the strengthening of existing alliances and greater freedom of women. The transitional central zone is a zone of cultural convergence and the 'Austro-Asiatic' eastern zone is of Mundari and Monkhmer speaking tribes on whose kinship structures the available information is scant. The transitional central zone of mixed patterns of kinship and marriage shows a convergence of the north and the south. (Karve, 1993)

The interconnection between the institution of marriage and caste system are very strong in India. However, the actual practices of marriage vary considerably from region to region, from caste to caste and also, albeit slightly, from time to time. Karve, when she talks about marriage rules and practices in India makes a contrast between the northern and the southern region. She points out that in the north one must not marry in his patri-clan, and one must not marry with his father's sister's children, and also must avoid marriage with "*sapinda*-kin" which basically means one with common ancestor. Apart from this are the rules of *gotra*: he/she should not marry from his mother's family *gotra* and also from his own *gotra*. In south India, unlike the north, as Irawati

Karve points out, one prefers to marry inside clan which is totally against the marriage practice and rules of north India. (Karve,1993)

Thus, gender is not a central concern in Irawati Karve's study though definitely a woman's perspective is at work while comparing the marriage systems in the country and also while, in diachronic inquiry, bringing to the fore the implication of the social change for a woman. However, a more sympathetic reading by Uberoi credits Karve as the pioneer of feminist perspective:

I regard Karve as a pioneer of an indigenous 'feminist' perspective on the Indian family. Her central contrast of north and south Indian kinship revolved around differences in marital arrangements as seen from the point of view of women: marriage with kin versus marriage with strangers; marriage close by versus marriage at a distance; a more or less marked distinction between 'daughters' and 'brides'; and so on. Similarly, she evaluated modern changes in family life – for instance, the modification of Dravidian marriage practices in the direction of the northern model – from the viewpoint of their possible effects on women's lives. (Uberoi, 1993: 40)

This assessment is further endorsed Subhadra Channa who argues that Irawati Karve anticipated feminist and post-colonial critiques of anthropology within the limits of the American cultural anthropological tradition (Channa, 2007). Nandini Sundar too feels that "it is possible to conclude on the basis of Karve's oeuvre that before 'women studies' became formulated as a 'field' in the 1970s, and the term 'patriarchy' entered everyday discourse, studies of kinship and the family were the major arenas where scholarship on women was possible" (Sundar, 2000: 30).

But, while there is every truth in Nandini Sunder's assertion, I think it is very hard to sustain the claim of a 'feminist' perspective in Irawati Karve's anthropological writings unless the term itself is conceived broad enough to include just a woman's perspective as well. It must be remembered that 'security' is a value for Karve and she defends joint family system on the same ground. However, Uberoi and others are trying to invent a tradition for indigenous 'feminist' anthropology and naturally they begin with Irawati Karve, the earliest of the woman anthropologists. Secondly *Yuganta* (1967) clearly demonstrates a perspective which can be described 'feminist'. It is basically a work of literary interpretation and, as Irawati Karve herself admits, 'literary interpretation is as much a reflection of the person who interprets as of the matter he interprets' (Karve, 1969: 10). *Yuganta* focuses on the women characters in *Mahabharata* and through them, it reflects on the lives of women during the time of the *Mahabharata*. In her essay on Kunti, Karve makes a generalized statement: 'The making of some lives is entirely in the hands of others. That was the case of women in the times of the Mahabharata. Their happiness, their sorrows were decreed by men to whom they belonged. Men acted, men directed and women suffered' (Karve, 1969: 40). Irawati Karve did not conceive of gender as a construction. But the statements in Yuganta like the one quoted above does point to the way a woman is made rather than born.

Leela Dube's essay *On the Construction of Gender* belongs to a totally different phase in anthropological inquiry in which she is able to demonstrate the processes by which women are structured as gendered subjects in patrilineal India. The essay is restricted to the study of socialization of Hindu girls but her methods as well as implications have wider resonance. The basic assumption of the essay is that 'gender differences that are culturally produced are, almost invariably, interpreted as being rooted in biology' and that that 'gender roles are conceived, enacted and learnt within a complex of relationships' (Dube, 1988:WS-11). Then the essay goes on to examine the various rituals and ceremonies, the use of language and practices within the family during pre-pubertal phase and the phase of onset of puberty of a girl child, the wedding rituals and the lullabies and nursery rhymes which construct femininity in complex and contradictory ways. The ambiguities and contradictions, argues Leela Dube, reflect the contradictions inherent in the patrilineal patrivirilocal kinship system (Dube, 1988).

Leela Dube's *Women and Kinship* extends the scope of the above essay to include family organization and kinship systems in South and South-east Asia. Thus, it is a forbiddingly ambitious venture to make a comparative survey of the regions by focusing on 'the complex of institutions that make up the structural and cultural dimensions of a kinship system.' The patterns she discusses are the predominantly patrilineal, patri-virilocal systems of Hindu and Muslim India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan; the matrilineal structures in some minority groups of South Asia like the Nayars of Kerala and among the Minangkabau of Indonesia; and the bilateral and often matrifocal patterns of most Southeast Asian nations like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Then she goes on to investigate 'the process by which women and men are turned into gendered subjects and thus implicated in the maintenance and reproduction of a social system' (Dube, 1997: 2).

The objective of the study is to challenge one of the stances of gender studies which do not pay sufficient attention to kinship system on the grounds that kinship as a social organization is irrelevant as well as immutable given or change resistant. Admitting that some work relating gender with kinship has been done, Dube states in one of her endnotes that 'by and large,…feminists have not shown a clear realization of the significance of varying patterns of kinship for understanding gender relations and explaining disparities, inabilities, and exploitation. Even in the discussion of the family as the seat of oppression, the wider context of kinship has not been considered' (Dube 1997: 159). For Leela Dube the organizing principles of kinship have profound influence 'on the business of living – on the allocation of resources, on the constitution of production relations, on the immediate context of women's lives, and on sustaining a specific ideology of gender' (Dube, 2000: 1). Kinship as containing 'the most

change-resistant aspects of social organization' is contradicted by the concern with "family breakdown" anxiety shared by both in the first and the third world countries. This concern, according to Leela Dube 'suggests an ideology that holds that kinship systems should be stable' which deserves to be challenged. Her basic argument is that 'differences in kinship systems and family structures account for some critical differences among societies in the ways in which gender operates' (Dube, 1997: 2).

Comparing the predominantly patrilineal kinship systems of South Asia with the mostly bilateral or cognatic Southeast Asia, Leela Dube concludes that women's status, valuation, prestige, power, authority, nutrition, health, education, and the like are much inferior to those of men in the patrilineal kinship systems. "Women in South-East Asia exercise an unusual degree of autonomy in economic and social life. Relative egalitarianism between the sexes appears to be a general feature of South-East Asian social organization". This fact cannot be explained as a result of colonial education and adoption of colonial modernity because, "this peculiar quality of gender relations will have been established before the advent of Islam or Christianity and before the economic, political, and social impact of the West" (Dube, 1997: 6). The gender ideology of South-East Asia, according to Leela Dube derives from indigenous tradition of bilaterality in which women command control over family as well as community resources. As against the Southeast Asian systems, the patrilineal systems of South Asia "function and survive at the cost of women" who are "vulnerable to oppression of different kinds" (Dube, 1997: 156).

The second important finding of Leela Dube is that kinship systems are not immutable because they are not self-sustaining systems. They basically operate through material relations though they are more eloquently expressed through rituals, ceremonies and practices. Dube goes to the extent of claiming that even legal systems are governed by kinship ideology: "I would argue that not only in traditional legal systems and in customary law but also in the content and character of the new laws that have been framed ostensibly to favor women, there is an unmistakable stamp of kinship ideology and kinship organization, whose principles are effective even when not articulated" (Dube, 1997: 152). In view of the foregoing, Leela Dube concludes, "If kinship acts as a buffer in this uncertain and competitive world, the flexibility and existence of choices in bilaterality seem the most promising" (Dube, 1997: 152).

Leela Dube's work is not without flaws. But they are flaws any macro study is open to – i.e. – broad generalizations on such vast regions as South Asia and South East Asia which can be challenged by micro studies. But then as a text which foregrounds diverse kinship systems and the practices of structuring womanhood within each of these systems and as a critique of male-dominated systems, Leela Dube's book is of great interest.

CONCLUSION

Both Irawati Karve's *Kinship Organization in India* (1953) and Leela Dube's *Women and Kinship: Perspectives on Gender in South and South-East Asia* (2000) are macro studies which try to encompass a vast area and take the risk of seek making generalization. But the first one, as the title itself gives out, is more general in scope trying to point out the general characteristics of the society. And the second one is focused on women and gender and picks up such material issues as ownership of property and legal systems. The first one carries the stamp of general climate of nationalistic discourse. But the second one carries the stamp of women liberation movements. The fifty years that lie in between are the years of negotiation and transition in the discipline of Indian anthropology of women.

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