



Rethinking interdisciplinarity in social sciences: Is it a new revolution or paradox?

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ABSTRACT

Present paper interrogates and discusses the place of interdisciplinary inquiry in the field of social sciences. The focus is on origination, need and the nature of interdisciplinary inquiry and the emerging movements towards the integration of the disciplines. In addition to looking into the politics of interdisciplinarity, present viewpoint tried to problematize classism, Eurocentrism and dominant meta-theory in the disciplinary constructions, showing the paradox inherent in its formation.

KEYWORDS: interdisciplinarity, paradox, knowledge, metatheory, classism

The emerging trend in the history of social sciences highlights the need for interdisciplinary programs in order to offer a better perspective in understanding various social issues (Jacob, 2015). Some research (e.g. Barry, Born &Weszkalnys, 2008; D’Augustino, 2012; Fuller, 2013; Thoren&Persson, 2013) pointed to the excessiveness of the urge to be consciously interdisciplinary, creating the misapprehension that these processes of integration of knowledge construct space for freedom of diversified

expressions. However, the questions asked by the Gulbenkian Commission (Wallerstein et. al., 1996) as ‘knowledge for whom?’ and ‘knowledge for what?’ may be connected to the fundamental aspects of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary debates (see also Burawoy, 2007). The uncertainty of knowledge formation through disciplinary inquiry was mostly concurred through two processes, that is, homogenous and heterogeneous outlooks (see Barry, Born, &Weszkalnys, 2008). The homogenous form of inquiry is in accord with the discipline’s and concurrent paradigms, but heterogeneous forms of inquiry are derived by the logic of accountability, innovations and ontology (Barry et al., 2008). In this context, academic institutions adopted an interdisciplinary approach in order to have critical outlook towards the authority of dominant disciplines such as sciences and technologies and acting as a supporting agent for the new disciplinary cultures, such as social sciences and humanities. The opening of a number of interdisciplinary departments and centers in some of the Indian universities and institutes shows the increasing trend of interdisciplinarity (Pramanik, 2014). For example, the recent openings of study centers in some of the progressive educational institutions in India, for example, centre for the study of discrimination and social exclusion, gender studies, and Dalit studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi has invented the new culture of education, which crossed the boundaries of dominant disciplines and invited interdisciplinary research where contexts of the marginalized and underrepresented groups are seriously understood. The motive and agenda are to create a new political tool for conscious assertions of one’s identity under the periphery of modernity for emancipation and equal rights. However, the estrangement among the perspectives, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies to bridge the disciplinary divides has invited new elitism in the knowledge system.

Also, full-fledged interdisciplinary centers such as humanities and social sciences and liberal arts in Indian Institute of technology, educational and historical studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi have become the symbol of critical interdisciplinary attitude towards the legitimacy of natural sciences and also among themselves, that is, within the culture of social sciences and humanities (see also Beteille, 2010; Chatterjee, 2002). However, the emphasis on adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the academic institutions also led to the resistance from the traditional culture of the institutions.

The present article attempts to critically understand the meaning of interdisciplinarity and integrates the perspectives offered by some of the important social scientists (e.g. Chatterjee, 2002; Kagan, 2009; Wallerstein et al., 1996; Winch, 1990), who reported the need to understand social sciences in the context of interdisciplinarity. Broadly, the present article will be broadly discussing the following research question such as, ‘What is the present need of interdisciplinary research?’ ‘Does the nature of interdisciplinarity was not evident in the process of the emergence of disciplines itself?’ ‘Do new disciplines have their origination in the interdisciplinary context?’

History of Interdisciplinarity in social sciences

The initiating process of the disciplinary edifice was also the interdisciplinary process where the pioneers of different disciplines came out from the intense multidisciplinary background, e.g. philosophy, medicine, arts, and so on. In contemporary academic debates, since this term was coined by Erich Jantsch (see Jantsch, 1970), ‘interdisciplinarity’ has become a buzzword (Hoffmann, Schmidt, & Nersessian, 2013). However, in the history and philosophy of science literature, there were elaborate discussions about the work of prominent philosophers like William of Ockham and others who were considered more as deviant interdisciplinarians (see Fuller, 2013). Deviant interdisciplinarians ejected out from the mainstream conceptual and auxiliary epistemological understanding of the discipline and explored the ontological reality, may be through cutting down and coming to the simple explanation of any phenomenon, for example ‘Ockham’s razor’. According to Fuller (2013), the transcending of disciplinary knowledge through the intervention of philosophy helps in the integrated understanding of the reality or went beyond the ‘synthetic worldview’ (see Hoffmann, Schmidt, & Nersessian, 2013). The argument concentrates on the making of disciplinary discourse and there is no denial that other discipline can’t contribute, but the focus is the perspectives which drive the motor of emerging disciplines. Mandelbaum (1977) in his book ‘anatomy of historical knowledge’ tried to clarify some of the problems concerning the nature of history as a discipline, explanations in the history of knowledge construction and its reliability. He hinted at the analytic account of different types of historical inquiry together with the nature of causal explanation in everyday life

and the concept of objectivity and its limitations. Thus, the causal mechanism and the acceptance of the reliability mode of disciplinary explanation were limited to the problem feeding among different disciplines (Thoren & Persson, 2013) in the paradigm which the majority accepted.

The interdisciplinarity or pluridisciplinarity (integration of knowledge originating in two or more fields) have been approached in different ways and this created ample confusion among various related terms such as multidisciplinary (contributions from two or more fields to a research problem) and transdisciplinarity (knowledge produced jointly by disciplinary experts and social practitioners) (see also Klein, 2014; Jacobs & Frickel, 2009; Weingart, 2000). The processes underlying disciplinarity and its various aforesaid facets nevertheless have involved more than two individual disciplines. The emergence of different cultures of academic inquiry on a common platform of understanding human issues, such as social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences can be taken as an apt movement in the interdisciplinary research (see also Bod, 2013; Kagan, 2009). The strongest among all the three was considered to be natural sciences whose impact are direct and observable.

Blunden (2011) highlighted the work of Kagan (2009) on the shifting problems of the social sciences without any proper resolutions. The process of understanding the overarching history of disciplines, emergence and its impact on the society seems to be the part of disciplinary constructions itself. For example, the utilization of social category such as gender had a different place in the earlier science literature as compared with the contemporary science literature. Earlier science literature used male perspective to deal with the scientific phenomenon, contrary to the present case of handling and theorization. The inclusion of the diversified perspective in the current science leads to the innovative solution. However, the disciplinary construction still resides in the rhetoric of disciplining the knowledge, where the inclusion of the diversified perspective is done on the basis of 'self-ethnography' evaluated under the garb of the dominant perspective, rather than a valid science (see Medin & Lee, 2012). The formation and reformation of the discipline operate under the conglomerations of paradigms where the dominant paradigm legitimizes and frames the written and verbal discourses of the discipline (see Hyland, 2004). For example, the epistemological movements comprising questions and answers in

the discipline of psychology was driven by the different paradigms, like prepositivism, positivism, and post-positivism, where the positivistic approach dominated for a long time across the cultural context. This framing of the thinking about the discipline and its reformulation can be considered as a matter of dominant scientific paradigm and latter, as a shift in the history of knowledge construction and disciplinary boundaries (see also Hunt, 2014; Kuhn, 1962).

In the history of disciplinary construction, knowledge was observed to have emerged out as facts, but less research has been done which highlighted the point of origin and spread of the knowledge. Researchers in the field of social representations showed that knowledge are not simply the medium of thought and expression but sometimes they become the object of thought and action (Kadianaki & Gillespie, 2015) and can be taken as fact. However, it was difficult to affirm whether disciplinary debates and knowledge arguments led to the exact facts (Doren, 1959). Various disciplinary domains related to social sciences are driven by the dominance of paradigm. Some researchers in social sciences link disciplinary knowledge with the power structure in society (Foucault, 1969; Wallerstein et al., 1996; Winch, 1990) which corresponds to the legitimization of knowledge within the valued social categories. Since approaches to scientific understanding played an important role in the legitimization of knowledge, the positivism in the disciplinary construction reemerged as an epistemological movement in the new form. Therefore, knowledge construction had confronted the dominance of the perspective, manipulating the causal factors attached to the meaning of facts. This manipulation of the knowledge may be the result of macro-level systems affecting the authenticity of knowledge. For example, the changes in the political ideology, religious fundamentalism or other may lead to the changes in the curriculum by imbibing the dominant values (see Apple, 1993; see also Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009).

Interdisciplinary approach in social science research

The clash between knowledge in process and the ideological resistance as major sociopolitical perspective was often encountered in an interdisciplinary research context. As Simon (1966) observed that, “. . . there is, perhaps, no more liberating influence than the knowledge that things have not always been as they are and need not remain so”

(P.92) (see also McCulloch, 2003; p. 18). This statement of Simon indicated that the perception induced from the knowledge is destined to change and are not immutable. The capacity to incite this knowledge was the hallmark of the possible interdisciplinary research in the educational domain. The integration of knowledge has enriched the primary discipline and its offshoots, but the metatheory and meta-methodological perspective of that discipline have hardly collaborated with other metatheories. For example, the paradigmatic influence of individualism selected different school of thought for institutional makeup as compared with the paradigmatic influence of society and its influence. Coming to the educational research and interdisciplinarity, the former usually approach education as a single and autonomous, hard, empirical and scientific endeavour (McCulloch, 2003; p. 24). However, the adherents of educational studies have favoured a pluralist and eclectic approach, seeking to apply a range of disciplines from the social sciences and humanities, rather than seeing education as a single or a unitary discipline in itself (see McCulloch, 2003).

The approaches of interdisciplinary research may at the outset denote the democratic assumption of disciplinary collaboration, but the nature of unity may work on secluded presumptions derailing the authenticity of interdisciplinarity in the actual sense. For example, some of the literature in social sciences showed mathematics based fear among the women group, because of preexisting female stereotypes towards mathematics in the society, leading to the confirmation of those stereotypes in the evaluative domain and thus, leading to the decrement in the performance (e.g. Spencer, Steele & Quinn, 1999). The disciplinary debates to understand the phenomenon of stereotyping was understood from different disciplinary perspectives, where social sciences adopting the positivistic paradigm very much differed from the social sciences adopting the phenomenological perspective. The social science disciplines like psychology constructed its theories based on the positivistic approach in majority of the cases. The methodologies, strategies and theories in psychology witnessed a departure from the alternative contemporary approaches in psychology. In the course of time, starting from its interdisciplinary background the modern psychology became more rigid, intentionally thickening its boundary. That is, the associated contexts of the society such as social categories and identities (e.g. social class, caste gender etc) which may have regulated the

stereotyping may not be taken into consideration. Thus, the contemporary critical social psychologists' preferred interdisciplinary approach to understand the above psychological phenomenon through interdisciplinary methodological stances.

Interdisciplinarity and metatheory

The need for interdisciplinarity arises to offer the collaboration of perspectives, which was not limited to, social sciences, but arts, humanities, and natural sciences. The prevailing culture of the institutions seems to play an important part in their choice and preferences of metatheory and perspectives of the disciplines, thus, creating more intellectual divides, lack of consensus and dominance of the perspectives in seeking the answers raised in the disciplines (see also Tyler, 2006). Metatheory, in one sense, act as a travel guide, under which different theories are connected together, in terms of commonality of the essence. According to Abrams and Hogg (2004), "a metatheory places specific research questions within a broader framework and encourages the integration of theorizing for a range of potentially disparate phenomena" (P. 98). The resistance and debates in the academic circles regarding any question pertaining to any phenomenon is a matter of metatheory.

There are different categories of interdisciplinarity, like natural science, social science, humanities (Kagan, 2009). And there can be the possibility of overlapping of metatheories, under the broader critical framework of interdisciplinarity. For example, the movements directed towards the emancipation of social science disciplines from the dominance of individualism, utopianism, capitalism etc. tried to offer critical perspective (e.g. Wallerstein, 1996). These movements were resisted by the era of emergence and reemergence of objectivism (Williams, 2000; Little, 2009) which carried one's subjective biases under the umbrella of objectivity. Wallerstein et al. (1996) expressed doubt over social sciences taking different paths to ensure objectivity, via, nomothetic approach and idiographic approach, by maximizing the hardness of the date and looking for the unmediated primary sources respectively. Some arguments questioning the objectivity of social sciences viewed that objective knowledge is simply the knowledge of social identities that are sociopolitically stronger in terms of race, caste, social class and other social context (see Wallerstein et al., 1996).

The culture of doing science representing the neutral and modern way of understanding social and natural phenomenon was judged on the same continuum of the objective to subjectivity. A scientist who adopted positivism and its epistemological stance of collecting true data that can be measured and quantified were taken as true disciplinary knowledge. However, the collaboration of disciplines cannot be justified to be universal, but there are needs to understand the adoption of metatheory in each of the sub-disciplines through which the nature of disciplines has become dominated. Since interdisciplinary approach will be insufficient without the meaningful collaborations of disciplines and understanding of the emerging disciplinary agenda, however, it becomes a necessary condition for the verification of interacting metatheoretical perspectives. For example, if metatheory of psychologism/individuality dominantly framed the nature of the discipline, for example, psychology, does that metatheory be again utilized despite its criticism in collaboration with another discipline to give interdisciplinary outlook (e.g. educational research)?

In the recent past, Bhargava (1992) highlighted the prominent role of the worldview of methodological individualism, which explained the social phenomenon in terms of individual thinking, choice and deeds. However, in this common sensical embodiment of rationality and pragmatism, the new movements of emancipations of minority voices, which is interdependent and asolipsistic, was largely ignored in the disciplinary dominance. The issue of appropriate social science methodology to understand the diversity in the disciplines was most of the time not recognized by the mainstream approach. These mainstream scientific myths have created new divides in terms of microaggression and blatant stereotypes (see Sue, 2003, 2005). Thus, discipline construction was observed to have a dehumanizing effect. The disciplinary makeup largely intruded into the do's and don'ts where more important phenomenon like experiences and representations of handling social psychological objects were ignored as unscientific. The impression of inclusion and exclusion of experience in the research for theory building has most of the time relied on indifferent metatheoretical principles and inadvertently labeled it as legitimate. The agenda of interdisciplinarity seems to be more pronounced rather than real interdisciplinary inclusion. In the words of Frodeman and Michel (2007), "The paradox of a century of interdisciplinarity effulgence is that no

attempt at interdisciplinarity has produced a viable understanding of, or ongoing counterpoint to, specialization” (p. 510). The crossing of boundaries or transdisciplinary research got into the struggle for narrowed search for meaning where no platform of interdisciplinarity was evident because it was observed to be confined to the disciplinary boundaries only (see also Klein, 1990, 1996). As pointed by Klein (1990) “interdisciplinarity is neither a subject matter nor a body of content. It is a process of achieving an interpretative synthesis, a process that usually begins with a problem, question, topic, or issue” (p. 188). However, the basic political causal factor behind the disciplinary intricacies was regulated by the scientific communities (Kuhn, 1962).

The effort for getting the grants for the research for the utilitarian purpose was evident in some of the social science research. However, the grants available for bringing movements in the discipline restructuring at the macro level, such as critical theories etc, seem to be rare and limited. The roles of disciplines in social sciences and humanities, which may offer checks to the scientific dominance, were regulated by the perspective which may have a more pragmatic answer to the funding associations. For example, linking the outcome of technology to the emerging socialization practices of children in an urban class has more potential to be a part of interdisciplinary research, rather than simply offering the problem of class divides because of technological inputs. The new government policies have the safest token of reliance on the technological development which has a high probability of providing jobs. This is undeniably a prospect statement creating hopes and thus refueling the common worldview navigating across the disciplinary boundaries. The possibilities of emergence of new dominant disciplines are ample, whose metatheory corresponds to the prominent identities in the history of discipline construction. Thus, present argument resides in the framing of checks on the ideas of interdisciplinarity, especially the methods and metatheory.

The requirements to interrogate the paradoxes of interdisciplinary approaches, dominance and conceptual saturation disguised as interdisciplinarity created some space for interrogation in various institutions. The creative investigation of a ‘big theoretical question’ (Rhoten, O’Connor, & Hackett, 2009) with tantamount effort to go beyond the rigidity of disciplinary nomenclature has given more force to interdisciplinary research and synthesis. The investigation to locate the exactness of liberty in the disciplinary

boundaries (Lamont & Molnar, 2002) and the display of classism in education as social psychological processes of interaction seem to become a simultaneous activity. In this context, Amin (2012) recently pointed that modernity is constructed on the principle that human beings, individually and collectively (i.e., societies), make their own history (P. 7). The location of history whether in the past or in the present was mainly decided through the social phenomenon (see Carr, 1961). The role of culture and the consciousness in a consumptions era of modernism seem to be highly constructed and derived from the same. As Nagel (1952) pointed that

“Socially significant human behaviour is an expression of motivated psychic states, that in consequence the social scientist cannot be satisfied with viewing social processes simply as concatenations of externally related events and that the establishment of correlations or even of universal relations of concomitance cannot be his ultimate goal. On the contrary, he must construct ‘ideal types’ or ‘models of motivations’ in terms of which he seeks to ‘understand’ overt social behaviour by imputing springs of action to the actors involved in it” (as cited in Schutz, 2004, p. 211).

The effect of modernity on disciplines indicated its token of existence by asking relevant questions appreciated by the group of scientists. Though the role of social scientists was also derived from the metatheory and group think as followed by the aforesaid scientific world. The scientific thinking had been always the supporter of the utopian world (Ridley, 2001) with no inequality of disciplines and classes. It wished to live in a fair, just and caring society. But the utopias that the humanists have thought about in the past, even if they are not a just take-off of contemporary society, are somehow not satisfactory in this day and age. So what about science and its follower discipline in social science, that is, psychology etc? In comparison, if science wanted to do something really useful, there is a possibility that it could design utopia (see Ridley, 2001), of its kind.

Interdisciplinarity and class of education

It was the mark of an educated intellect to seek only so much exactness in each type of inquiry as may be allowed by the nature of the subject matter (Doren, 1959). Frankel (1956) pointed that, “liberalism, it is said on all sides, has forgotten to take human egoism into account and has been utopian in its conception of what can be made of man” (p. 101). Jacobs and Frickel (2009) expressed their doubts about the interdisciplinary functions of disciplines in the integration of knowledge. According to them “many interdisciplinary projects make only limited gains (as do many disciplinary based investigations), and those that are spectacularly successful can become established as new fields of inquiry, leading to a new round of differentiation and fragmentation” (p. 60). The idea of interdisciplinarity seems to come from perspectives respecting the process of crossing the boundaries while explaining some phenomenon (see also Lyon, 1992). This approach towards the formation of grand theory may be mistaken as it didn’t cross the boundaries of the present formulations. The present formulation of the theory and its perspective is not holistic, the way it is compartmentalized among social categories of educated classes (see also Joshi, 2011; Kumar, 2011). In his recent work, Banaji (2013) demonstrated the importance of reintegrating theory with history and of bringing history back into the historical materialism. The theory about education also depends upon one’s experience with the context and was heavily influenced by colonial artifacts. One kind of question, which was raised, was ‘Does interdisciplinary research follows any scientific criteria?’ As, till present times, research has highlighted the explanation of one problem in different ways and the explanation themselves was tied to the approach followed on the scientific criteria.

Ethnocentrism and the construction of disciplines

Is interdisciplinarity a new fashionable term in an academic discourse? What do we know about interdisciplinary research and how we may do it? Here, classism in education infringed the antiquity of the discipline and its query. In the word of Malinowski (1944):

Histories of philosophic thought of political ideology, of discovery, or of artistic creation, have only too often neglected the fact that any form of individual inspiration can only become wholly a cultural reality if it can capture the public opinion of a group,

implement the inspiration with the material means of its expression and thus become embodied in an institution (P. 49). Thus, the power struggle of culture in the knowledge domain and its secluded movement into its own space as dominated by traditional divisiveness largely shaped the culture of discipline too. Its advancement in the form of integrations of disciplines in the exploration of query ultimately ended up with the rhetoric of desirable shape. This hollowness in the name of interdisciplinarity immensely ignored the voiceless elements of historic oppression. It can be a better argument that various social movements for the assertion of social identity and self-respect is the result of interdisciplinary research, but does it extend beyond the educated class which is still a minority of its own kind? Deriving the question from Appadurai (2004) works that, 'in what respect does culture matters and does culture matters for development and for the reduction of poverty?' Is it in a culture that the idea of the future, as much as of those about the past are embedded and nurtured? Appadurai (2004) pointed that in strengthening the capacity to aspire conceived as a cultural capacity, especially among the poor, the future-oriented logic of development could find a natural ally and the poor could find the resources required for context and alter the setting of their own condition. It may be a better logic to defend the existence of interdisciplinary research, but finding the answer to the existing duality of expressions in major institutions acting as progeniture of discipline integration is not very clear.

Frodeman and Mitcham (2007) asserted that discipline constructions are the processes of disciplining knowledge, negotiating with the paradigm, authenticating the experts and giving meaning to the facts or truth. The process of identification of the approach, which legitimizes the institutional research process and disciplining, or approving its framework can be the area of further exploration. For example, let us see the case of modern psychology as a discipline, which focused on the understanding of mind and behaviour. As a discipline following the scientific norms, modern psychology rejects its basic property as irreducible and not eliminable, thus confining its perspective in the mind independent category of exploration. It is debatable whether mind and its associated features are difficult to explore, as the present scientific world usually relies on observable information, which can be quantified. In this regard, Hibberd (2013) discussed extensively on the metaphysics of process psychology where it was noticed that

psychology by relying on natural scientific method is no more scientific, but pseudoscientific. As scientific discipline assumed to have two essential properties viz, additive structure and order, the consideration of psychology as a science may be a wrong turn due to its lack of additive property. Thus, psychology as a subjective science shows the property of order but not mathematical additivity because of its use of abstract and value loaded concepts. These psychological concepts are neither eliminable to the point of nothingness nor reducible to set categories of elementary features. So, in the case of psychology, Hibberd (2013) highlighted the viewpoint where qualitative methods are scientifically suitable to approach to retain psychology's scientific stature as a discipline. Thus, the disciplinary construction or interdisciplinary process of knowledge construction may have similar underlying logic of finding explanations to some phenomenon. This underlying logic may be the result of ideology of dominant social category, recycling the same age old disciplinary process.

The modern society and its projected multi-ethnic and tolerant attitude gave a direct challenge to the embedded traditional culture (see Jacob, 2015; Sadovnik, Cookson & Semel, 2013), under the new vision of interdisciplinary liberal education. Although some of the recent literature contradicted their assumption of being modern. For example, Doren (1959) highlighted the requirement of the right kind of exactness while supporting liberal education. The concept of liberal education has a philosophical base in the era of enlightenment where the new thoughts were relying on critical thinking, fact search, and empirical observations. The dogmatic, imposing and non-empirical facts or knowledge was not taken into account by the contemporary thinkers. The preference was to place knowledge out of the metaphysics, basing in the paradigm, which claimed its ability to show the cause-effect relationship within the epistemic term, where the ontological authenticity, seem to play a superficial role.

The tendency to find the causal factor behind the phenomenon was limited to the observable features in the positivistic social sciences as compared with the features which emerged through the exploration experiences. The paradigmatic wars took the turns in terms of varied interpretations and got subsumed into the mainstream worldviews of observing and quantifying. However, Raina (2009) tried problematized knowledge as a marker of discipline construction in the modern and transmodern context. The knowledge

and its authenticity had always witnessed transformations in the history of discipline and the present status of knowledge had been in the new state of flux, where not only Eurocentric traditions were questioned but the effort was made for the revival of traditional progressiveness.

Decolonizing discipline: Discipline and class domination

In the post-positivistic paradigm, the Eurocentric approach of discipline has been transformed into representations of all disciplines. Similarly seem to be the case for interdisciplinarity which may assume its stand as representations of disciplines. There may be a possibility of those dominant disciplines (e.g. natural sciences or other) as acceptable among the dominant identities may form major interdisciplinary discourse both in academic interactions and texts. Thus, the ideology of power and especially of the educated class (see also Meszaros, 1986) who was trained in the modern education and formed the class of education had shown their supremacy in pedagogy and curriculum and in fact in their politically innovative way. Here the thrust is more directed towards the representatives of rhetoric in education whose inclination toward interdisciplinarity was more limited rather than working class of education engaging pragmatically in the everyday interactions.

According to Meszaros (1986), “the ruling ideology has a vested interest in the preservation of the status quo in which even the most glaring inequalities are already structurally entrenched and safeguarded” (P. IX). Hence, it can afford to be consensual, organic, participatory and the like, claiming thereby also the self-evident reasonableness of ruling moderation, objectivity, and ideological neutrality. Since the tool of education in the colonial context was the most powerful aspect of legitimacy. This framed the position of the intelligentsia as a ruling class as synonymous with the colonizers (Rudra, 2006). The notion of being educated in the western framework inflated the subjective perception of the dominant class and caste (e.g. Indian ruling class) in terms of education and their feeling of being a modern individual in traditional backward society. So, whatever new, aforesaid modern, or intellectually radical came on the intellectual front, it was immediately grasped by the educated class which may be placed under as a class of education.

European sociocultural framework, as fashionable among third world intelligentsia was the formidable attempt for sustaining one's legitimacy for improving and modifying the culture of the working class. However, this was politics in the hand of ruling the class in terms colonial artifacts. The particular formulation of social class is mainly derived from the perception of one's social position on the list of features as romanticized by the society. Weis (2004), on the line of Walkerdine, Lucey, and Melody,(2001), understood social class to be the "social and psychic practices through which ordinary people live, survive and cope" (P. 4). Thus, the consciousness of one's class in the academic domain has been attributed mainly to the comparative context of the class divide on the features and standards as set up by the agency of the intelligentsia, though presently in the name of interdisciplinarity, however not pragmatic. The value domain propagated by the dominant identities in terms of social class and also caste very much shaped the line of inquiry and evaluative setup, which was utopian by face and divisive in practicality and outcomes (see also Alvares, 2011; Sarukkai, 1995; Varghese, 2011).

Public engagement and interdisciplinarity: crossing the boundaries of discipline and class

The effort to promote interdisciplinary research is not new and it date back to 1920 onwards (see Jacobs & Frickel, 2009). However, every major discipline has an interdisciplinary makeup though not in fashionable terms as it is mechanized and complimented in rhetoric' of today. The academic balkanization may be one factor which may make the discipline more vulnerable to discipline dominance because of lack of empirical validity (Jacobs & Frickel, 2009). Thus, the decision among the academic community should not limit to the group of likeminded people, but should have public interface both in metatheory and methodology of exploring problems. Raising the consciousnesses of the interdisciplinarity in educational studies and research may be an active step towards the enlightenment, empowerment, and emancipation. The check on the groups' false consciousness about the reciprocity of classism and humiliation in terms of the imposing situation of educational settings is the requirement too. It was positioned that interdisciplinarity may eradicate the rigour of discipline by relying on findings and

terms gained from another discipline. However, this may be the case, but the options are open when we remove the social class based interaction and made it inclusive. It also depends upon the philosophy of methods (see also Lynch, 2013) which is not limited when it comes to rigour. The need to make interdisciplinarity a critical tool of exploration can be a promising adventure and interdisciplinary act in educational research may enrich the mother discipline which is also a kind of interdisciplinary work. This article doesn't attempt to deny the evolution of new interdisciplinarity efforts as it was historically done. The denial of reductionism and invitation to the democratic aspect of exploration seem to be a politics in itself and the politics directed towards the liberation and freedom of consciousness is the need of the hour. In other words, 'does interdisciplinarity direct to interdisciplinary outlook or a kind of interdisciplinarity?'

Paradoxes of interdisciplinary research

The collaborations of disciplines and creative integration in terms of knowledge assimilation and accommodation labeled as a mysterious black box or kaleidoscopic step (see Rhoten, O'Connor, & Hackett, 2009). It may be expected that by doing this, a critical perspective shall be developed to go beyond the explanations as was available within the boundary of a particular discipline. The above plan can be placed under the new form of enlightenment where the idea has been loaded with the diversity of knowledge. However, the problem is about the options of disciplinary perspectives. The politics of modernity in both colonial (see also Bara, 1998) and postcolonial era (see also Chibber, 2013) has been not very different. Even the idea of modernity was heavily criticized for being totally aloof from the everyday interaction. It rejected at the outset the idea of public space in terms of collaborations, interactions and movements. In the context of post-colonialism, Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia (2006) showed the persistence of Eurocentric legacy, shaping the contemporary discourses in cross-disciplinary interactions. Thus, the perspectives underlying the assumptions of the individuals' and their agency were highly dominant in educational research, behavioural outcome and the introduction and design of discipline in the institutions. The perspectives in a new form of interdisciplinarity may offer the embroidery work to the problem, but may else become more intense and formidable in its approach. The disclosure of the disguise of the

perspective of interdisciplinary research is the challenge to solve, as it may not be limited to a discipline dominance and conceptual lethargy. In this context, Aram (2004) highlighted differences in the degree to which scholars believed in the nature of interdisciplinary knowledge, corresponding endogenously or exogenously to the academic institution or university.

The disciplinary sustainability and ideological impact such as value freedom, modern, or communism seems to carve the making and remaking of disciplines (Chari & Verdery, 2009). The interdisciplinary approach to understanding emerging social issues, which were not handled by the particular discipline, may be because of mismatch between questions and available methodologies. Also, Alvares (2011) pointed towards the nuances and paradoxes in the embedded interdisciplinary programs within the disciplinary paradigms carrying forwards the same Eurocentric outlook. These programs most of the time lacked the assumptions which may handle the problems were more situated in sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts.

Thus according to Alvares (2009):

We are still very much moving along a one-way street, with all the movement from the “superior” or “advanced” culture from the core to the “inferior” or “deficient” culture at the periphery, because that is how knowledge continues to flow in the global university knowledge system (P. 72).

Bowker (1993) hinted at the paradox where the efforts of interdisciplinary programs in creating a universal model through synthesis may lead to the new kind of closure effect. The integration of disciplines to understand any phenomenon, for example, inequality in terms of the class divide or race or caste perpetuate homogenous outlook conveying the perspective of the dominance of individualistic sciences (see Barry et al., 2008). Also, some of the thrusting and critical programs in the form minority studies have the potential to make the disciplinary system more heterogenous and have the potentiality to create the new paradigm. However, contrary to the above viewpoints, Mukherjee (2012) demanded unitary social sciences, which must go beyond the discreteness of the disciplines and promotes the objective science of society. This vision for the objective

science of society channeled through the integration of disciplines can be analysed more closely and helps in the emergence of diversified perspectives.

In conclusion, as Fay (2011) positioned, the critical theory underlying the metatheory of social experience for the construction of self may become an enabling, motivating resource for its interdisciplinary audience in the direction of empowerment and thus emancipation. Thus, in conclusion, we may assume that any discipline doesn't work in isolation, but has a comparative frame of reference with another discipline. The effort, which purposely claims its engagement with another discipline is a flawed grandiosity because the discipline and the nature of research don't, emerges out in a vacuum but from the sociocultural context, which is the target of every discipline. Thus, the need is to understand the existing paradox in the disciplinary structure, representations of the existing real world challenges and the dominance of majoritarian gatekeepers of disciplinary advancement (see also Weingart, 2000).

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