

## Language Chauvinism

This is in response to your article “*The Dominance of Angreziat*” in No.102 of MANUSHI which was also carried by the website *Sulekha*.

I fume ineffectually when I hear people in India casually referring to their own rich and ancient languages as “vernaculars” and to their spiritual and religious literature as “mythology”, not quite understanding the intent and import of those appellations. I hold my head in despair when middle-class English speaking protestors, along with hundreds of innocent children holding placards, fill the streets condemning the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 60 years ago, but don’t spare a moment for those killed and maimed by terrorists in our own country.

I am frustrated that someone with socially liberal views such as myself would be labeled a “Hindu fundamentalist” merely for suggesting that we respect our heritage.

Why and how have we lost our ability to think for ourselves? I guess our system of “neither-here-nor-there” education is responsible for this. When will we develop true universities throughout the country where students have the opportunity to take courses from a wide variety of disciplines and acquire sound knowledge of our own culture and history.

**Murli Nagasundaram, via email**

## Losers from Liberalisation

I wish to respond to your article entitled “Who’s Afraid of Liberalisation” in No. 141. As I read about how your Government puts restrictions on your farmers’ exports of wheat, onions and oilseeds, I could not help but think, it sounds as if the American Government is teaching yours how to keep the poor, poor and the rich, rich.



# Readers’ Responses



As your country dumps imported produce, wheat, sugar, cotton, cooking oils and lentils on your own domestic markets, ours over produces these items to keep prices low for American farmers. By having American farmers grow crops far in excess of the actual demand, our Government causes prices to be low in the domestic market. First World countries such as the USA and UK are not truly interested in “Fair Trade” or “Free Trade” but are rather interested in “Controlled Trade”. You can bet that what your Government did to its own people—“Banned Exports/Increased Imports”—was a direct result of First World Government’s pressures to control the world market. If First World countries were to allow “Free and Fair Trade”, it would mean the end of their dominance, because Second and Third world countries would flourish in an open and free market.

So we know Who is Truly Afraid of Liberalisation?

I couldn’t help but notice the lack of advertisements in your magazine. This alone tells me that you’re true to your beliefs. I commend you for your true dedication.

**Ray A Driffen, via email**

## BJP’s Rudderless Politics

In response to your two-part article in No.s 142 and 143, on the verdict of the May 2004 general elections, I think, yours is more an instant, rather shocked reaction, than an in depth analysis.

The general voters are not ungrateful. If there had been positive achievement of the BJP led Government then the people would have readily voted back the BJP led Alliance to power.

To me, it appears that three factors played against the BJP Government. They are :

- 1) All round corruption from the top levels of the Government to the lowest levels of peons and clerks.
- 2) Narrow religious bigotry as evidenced in Gujarat.
- 3) Creeping regimentation in educational institutions to destroy the social fabric of a multi-national, multilingual and multi denominational country like ours.

Add to these, the vulgar election campaign conducted by the BJP at the cost of the country’s exchequer.

The post election behaviour of the party exposes its utter lack of commitment other than greed for power. Without power it is rudderless.

**Sarbakinkar Banerjee, Calcutta**

## True Beauty Queens

MANUSHI No.143 gave a revealing exposé into the assembly line manufacturing business of Indian beauty pageant contestants. Not being blessed with having been born, much less ever visited India, I convey a perspective of an individual who has come to vehemently love your land, via the teachings of various female “Hindu” mystics, and texts such as the *Mahabharata*.

These texts and teachings have taught me how the actual strength, intelligence and beauty of India is deeply internalised by her daughters whose inherent beauty, dignity, loyalty, fortitude, creativity and spirituality give India her majestic history.

In the *Tantric* schools of philosophy the divine female power – Shakti – upholds and permeates the entire Universe and is worshipped as Kali, Lakshmi, Durga, Sarasvati and in myriad other manifestations. Even

the geographical entity called India is venerated as sacred Mother — the goddess Prithvi. From this view point, any daughter of India is supposed to be a symbol of veneration, not cheap titillation. Why then is India beginning to embrace titillation, in lieu of veneration, toward her sacred daughters?

A real “Miss India” is, however, found within the pages of No.143 itself. This “Beauty Queen” is Savitra whose life struggle is described in the article, “Battling for Education”. She and those like her should be boldly crowned as “India’s Best”, instead of those who display only bleached skin for all to see and drool over.

While the Savitras of India quietly go about their lives, much ado is made over fair skinned females, with manufactured bodies, who provocatively parade their wares in front of a panel of judges so they can vote on the personal “attributes” each contestant possesses. Cattle are also paraded before similar panels of

judges at any Texas livestock facility. They are also graded over their personal “attributes”, voted upon, and the “Best of the Show” is chosen, and then sold to a slaughter house. In the end, there is very little difference between the two types of contestants. Both will be sold: one to the slaughter house, the other to fuel the fantasies of and provide titillation for multitudes of men, who could not care less about a woman’s intellect or dignity. Are women to be treated as objects of titillation or veneration? Let India decide!

In the meantime, the Savitras of India give hope to this naive Texas prisoner that perhaps your land can somehow protect her foundations while simultaneously increasing its cultural influence on the international scene. May be this can be done without India’s further descent into the mindlessness that sentences the Savitras to lives of abject poverty and wasted potentialities.

**Timothy Eby, Prisoner # 623385,  
Beaumont Prison, Texas, USA** □

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