NEHRUVIAN SCIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

- "Where is the postcolonial history of science?"

  -It cannot be easily answered.

- It entails theoretical issues as to what constitutes the "postcolonial" in science and technology studies but also practical consideration of how such a history can be characterized.

- The postcolonial might be located not in the ex-colonies at all but in Western centers of science

  -in their universalizing ambitions and their ongoing economic, political, and scientific hegemony

  -it would be rash, too, to homogenize postcolonial diversity

- The experience of one ex-colony might differ vastly from that of another

- and in ways that reflect varieties of indigeneity (occurring naturally) as much as separate colonial traditions.

- And if the postcolonial history of science is to avoid merely celebrating the end of colonialism:

-it is necessary to ask what the passing of colonialism signified

- and when, in relation to science, it effectively ended.

POSTCOLONIALISM

- Postcolonialism is a school of thought that deals with **the effects of colonization on societies and people**.
- The term "Postcolonialism" is a bit of a misnomer— 'post' typically means 'after', which implies that Colonialism has ended and the study of it takes place afterwards *(McClintock, 259)*.
- However, the societies examined through the lens of Postcolonialism are still dealing with many of the problems of colonization such as the **struggle for independence**, **return of resources**, and **recovery of history** *(Houses 278)*.

- However, the **Eurocentric** view of history, the one in which **Europe remains at the center of culture and society**, views colonialism as firmly in the past.
- In that perspective, colonialism was an integral part of capitalist development in the West, where the colonies were used as resources for raw materials to fuel production.
- Rather than focus on how colonialism affected the societies that were colonized

  -it upholds colonialism as part of the "European grand narrative of modernization"

  or

  - a period of history in which the key defining feature was the modernization in the West despite the fact that many people were conquered and subjugated.

  (Chatterjee, xi)

- In order to address Postcolonialism, Post colonialist historians first address how Colonialist historians created their narratives.
- During colonization, histories were largely written by the elite European conquerors.
- The Eurocentric worldview of these conquerors led them to write histories of the societies they colonized in a manner that placed them relative to European societies.
- Furthermore, the colonists placed the people they colonized both as diametrically opposite of their own and lesser than, allowing them to justify treating them as subordinates.

- **The writing of Post colonialist histories is an effort to counteract the lasting effects of the colonial histories**, which tend to ignore or gloss over the severe damage colonialism has had on society.
- This includes the loss of land and resources, which hold significant spiritual and economic value.
- Cultural traditions and knowledge of **pre-colonial pasts** have also been **wiped out** in many places, due to **persecution and forced conversions.**
- We can look to the **Spanish conquest of the present-day American Southwest** for evidence of the consequences of colonialism.

- Indigenous people not killed by foreign diseases or war were often captured and forcibly converted to Christianity.
- The Conquistadores (conqueror in Spanish and Portuguese) employed extreme violence in their takeover of the American Southwest and Mexico, resulting in deaths of countless indigenous peoples (Restall, 96), but colonial history typically does not spend time addressing the negative consequences of their exploits.
- This causes issues in their narrative writing.
- Often, the losses indigenous people suffered are missing from the narrative, which produces a version of history in which the voices and experiences of these people are excluded.

- Postcolonial historical writing is an attempt to

-move away from **imperialist** and **colonial views** of societies

- and return to **Enlightenment ideals**

- and portray the impact of colonialism on colonized societies in a more honest and thorough manner.

- According to "The Postcolonial Aura," **one of the goals of postcolonial writing is to reestablish colonized societies as complex and nuanced**, rather than in the simplistic ways they are presented in colonial histories.

* Age of Enlightenment was an intellectual and philosophical movement that dominated Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries with global influences and effects. The Enlightenment included a range of ideas centered on the value of human happiness, the pursuit of knowledge obtained by means of reason and the evidence of the senses, and ideals such as liberty, progress, toleration, fraternity, constitutional government, and separation of church and state.

NEHRUVIAN SCIENCE (NS)

- A concept of Nehruvian science (NS) has value only if it adds analytical depth, and not mere descriptive gloss, to the understanding of the history of science in modern India and if it allows the historian to stand outside both the nationalist representation of science and the colonial vision of science that preceded it.
- There are problems in focusing exclusively on Jawaharlal Nehru (1889 –1964):

  - of exaggerating the contribution of one individual or

  - of shrinking the temporality of postcolonialism to fit the compass of a single life.
- Nehru was not a practicing scientist, nor (despite his undergraduate education at Cambridge) did he possess scientific training.
- And yet he was one of the principal architects of modern India and, through his enduring commitment to science, a leading figure in the formation of India's science policy and practice.

- His personal engagement with science helps explain:

  - how, within the time frame of the late colonial and early postcolonial periods, science received such public validation.

  - but equally it helps us to contest negative representations of science in the non-West as a form of stubborn "localism," as a kind of ethnographic aside to the "real" (i.e., Western) history of science.

- Nehru was one of the principal authors of **postcolonial subjectivity**, not least in relation to science.

- Also the career of Nehru's science raises questions about **science as authority and science as delivery** that are surely of wider moment.

CONCEPT OF NEHRUVIAN SCIENCE

- There are four broad strands:

- First, since for Nehru science was also a philosophical and literary pursuit, **NS created a space for postcolonial ownership and subjectivity**, establishing the centrality of science in the autobiography of the Indian nation.

- Second, since science stood for authority and a higher form of knowledge, **NS sought to contest Western presumptions of a monopoly over science** and to ground modern science in India's cultural traditions and contribution to world civilization.

- Third, while extolling the transnational foundations of modern science, **Nehru understood science, intellectually and functionally, primarily in relation to India's national needs and Cold War ambitions.**

- Fourth, **NS presented science as a program of delivery, committed to redressing such basic social problems as ill health and poverty**, an endeavor answerable to the state and the public it aspired to represent.

- Postcolonial studies have been preoccupied with matters of voice.

- The question of who speaks, whether for the subaltern (of lower status), the colonized, or the postcolonial subject, is a recurring analytical trope.

- Significantly, it was as a writer, speechmaker, and politician and, above all, as prime minister of India (1947–1964) that Nehru gave his authorial voice to science in India.

- Science for Nehru was in part a **literary strategy,** a means of giving **narrative structure and thematic coherence** to Indian history.
- This served a **patriotic end**
  - to **demonstrate the wealth and antiquity** of India's attainments in science, technology, and medicine
  - But at the same time also critiquing its enduring backwardness and emphasizing the value of its syncretic interaction with other civilizations, including those of the Muslims and the British.

- This combination of factors valorizing the importance of science in history was evident in his Glimpses of World History (first published in 1934 –1935)

  - This also announced the strongly didactic trait that would characterize Nehru's writing and speechmaking.

- A belief in the authority of science as the highest form of secular knowledge was invoked in order to instill legitimate pride in indigenous achievement.

- And also to laud the contribution ancient and medieval India made to the wider world of science.

- And Nehru qualified this with recognition that India could not make progress, in the present still more than in the past, from a position of epistemic isolation.
- Science even gave meaning and context to the colonial experience.

*__Epistemic isolation__- when a person or group lacks the knowledge of, or **means** of access to, particular information.

- Thus he remarked in 1936 in his autobiography:

  "To the British we must be grateful for one splendid gift of which they were the bearers, the gift of science and its rich offspring."

- The manner of India's encounter with the West, via colonial rule, was "unfortunate, and yet, perhaps, only a succession of violent shocks could shake us out of our torpor."

- Without this "great gift," India was "doomed to decay."

- Nehru could not overlook the authority science had formally enjoyed under colonialism.
- And he also remained critical of its failure to deliver the practical benefits a backward and impoverished India so patently needed.
- Nehru's interest lay as much in the culture of science as in its material achievements:

  - and he repeatedly invoked what he termed the "scientific temper" and the "spirit of science."

- This philosophical understanding of science appealed to Nehru at several levels:

-It enabled him to present his own social ideals and political convictions as being grounded in rationality, part of his secular worldview and "scientific" socialism, while condemning his Indian opponents, especially Hindu and Muslim communalists, as woefully unmodern.

- Science alone ensured that society did not revert to the kind of barbarism that religious bigotry and reactionary obscurantism (deliberately making something difficult to understand) repeatedly threatened.

- But, for all his praise of scientists, Nehru did not believe that they held a monopoly on the truth. Rather, they needed the vision of the intellectual and the pragmatism of the politician to give their work wider meaning and purpose.

- Pt. Nehru put it to India's National Academy of Science in 1938:

"We have vast problems to face and to solve. They will not be solved by the politicians alone, for they may not have the vision or the expert knowledge; they will not be solved by scientists alone, for they will not have the power to do so, or the larger outlook which takes everything into its ken (range of knowledge). They can and will be solved by the cooperation of the two for a well-defined and definite social objective."

- Cultivating a scientific outlook was part of the educated individual's personal development:

-but it was also a social cause;

-it was a public duty, not confined to scientists, to help society to think and act in ways that were rational and progressive.

- Scientific thought and achievement encouraged constructive dialogue with other fields of speculation and inquiry

—from history and philosophy to psychology and psychoanalysis

—each of which might challenge scientific orthodoxy or present its own complementary understanding of the world

- Even religion, so often represented by Nehru as the antithesis of reason, had the ability to reach beyond "the surface of things" in ways conventional science could not.

- With their remarkable capacity for abstract thought, Indians had pioneered the study of mathematics, algebra, and astronomy in ancient times.
- They similarly had the capacity to deploy this intellectualism to help shape modern science.
- Thus, inspiration might be found in “the old Vedantic conception that everything, whether sentient or insentient, finds a place in the organic whole.”

- The career of the plant physiologist Jagdish Chandra Bose (1858–1937) demonstrated for Nehru how India's philosophical and spiritual traditions could actively inform and supplement the work of modern science.
- The "culture of science" gave India pride in its past, but also the intellectual authority and resources to be an active and equal participant in the present-day domain of science.
- For Nehru science was simultaneously both universal and national, even though intellectually and politically this might be a difficult proposition to maintain.

- In 1948 Pt. Nehru declared:

"Science and technology know no frontiers. Nobody talks or ought to talk about English science, French science, American science, Chinese science. Science is something bigger than countries. There ought to be no such thing as Indian science."

- Perhaps Nehru was not endorsing a concept of "Indian science" because it might imply that India remained locked in an arcane localism, not modern enough to embrace the universality of modern science.
- He was also convinced that India, still striving to overcome a colonial legacy of neglect, needed foreign scientific and technological expertise and could not otherwise meet the material needs and ideological objectives of the modern nation.

- The articulation of science as authorial voice gave individuality (even at times a certain quirkiness) to Pt. Nehru's scientific utterances, just as it brought to the postcolonial predicament the authority and the ambiguity of the once-colonial, still part-colonial, subject.
- Pt. Nehru's subjectivity enabled him to personalize science, to render it heroic.
- For him, there was "something very wonderful about the high achievements of science and modern technology."
- Scientists were "the miracle-workers of today."

- It was also part of his authorial license to speak, in the depths of the Cold War era:

-from a position of moral superiority (not least vis-a-vis the West)

-about the danger posed by growing nuclear arsenals and the destructiveness of these "new and terrible weapons."

- Subjectivity gave Pt. Nehru the freedom to communicate his often lofty idealism to a wider Indian and international audience.

PT. NEHRU AND THE ZEITGEIST

- Pt. Nehru's long years in prison in the 1930s and early 1940s enabled him to read extensively in history, science, philosophy, and current affairs.
- His writings made extensive reference to the Western scientists, philosophers, and social theorists who influenced his own thinking:

-including Bertrand Russell (to whom he possibly owed the expression "scientific temper"),

-J. D. Bernal (especially for his Social Function of Science),

-P. M. S. Blackett (a scientific advisor to Nehru after 1947),

-and Laurence Hogben (whose Science for Citizens he called an "astonishingly good book").

Zeitgeist- the defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time.

- These like-minded intellectuals nurtured and reinforced Nehru's belief that science was not only authoritative but had a unique capacity to effect far-reaching socioeconomic change.
- Given Nehru's propensity for assimilating and rearticulating the views of others, one of the difficulties in seeking to conceptualize Nehruvian science is to establish what Nehru's own contribution actually was.
- Did he invent the scientific ideas and policies to which he gave voice or merely appropriate them from others?
- This uncertainty lends strength to the argument that Nehru was both author and publicist, for he brought his own intellect, imagination, and presentational skills to the public consideration of science in India but he was not the sole author when it came to how that science was imagined or drafted into the political process.

- There is a further point here. Postcolonial science might be presented as literally that:

-as sited temporally after colonialism.

- But India's independence was long anticipated and its science had by the 1930s reached a point of maturity

—in institution building, individual achievement, and international recognition

—that encouraged high expectations of what would happen once colonial constraints were removed.

- NS began its "postcolonial" career more than a decade before independence in 1947, just as it continued long after that date to grapple with the legacies of colonial rule and its continuing manifestations.

- Histories of modern science in India have been written in which Pt. Nehru receives barely a mention or in which he appears as a latecomer to ideas about the social role of science that others had pioneered.
- The strongest case against Nehru as innovator lies with the career of Meghnad Saha (1893–1956).
- A professor of physics at Allahabad University, Saha argued for a comprehensive approach to the problems of rural poverty, flood control, and endemic malaria that afflicted his native Bengal.

- Inspired by Soviet planning and the American New Deal, Saha proposed the massive deployment of state resources to tame Bengal's rivers and, through a series of hydroelectric dams, generate energy for industrial development.
- Saha expounded his ideas through the journal Science and Culture, which he founded in 1935, and the title and contents of that journal express many of the ideas that subsequently became associated with Pt. Nehru

-the cultural understanding of science, confidence in the strength of India's ancient and modern scientific credentials,

-the dual perspective on science as both national agenda and universalist pursuit,
-and the commanding role of the state in national regeneration.

- But where Saha was a scientist looking to propagate his ideas among politicians, Nehru was a politician seeking to mobilize science and scientists behind his social vision.
- In the end, Nehru proved more astute and influential, while Saha, by the time of his death, had become marginalized. With or without Saha, the late 1930s were ripe with opportunity.
- In 1938 Saha impressed his national regeneration scheme on Subhas Chandra Bose, then president of the Indian National Congress, and this outlook was reflected in Bose's speeches at the time.
- Bose passed responsibility for planning on to Nehru, who, at Saha's suggestion, was installed as chair of the Indian Planning Committee.

- Armed with subcommittees on such topics as health, manufacturing, and population, the committee drafted a blueprint for India's social and industrial future.
- However, the outbreak of war in 1939 and the renewed imprisonment of Congress leaders precluded further discussion until after 1945.
- It could be argued that Nehru adopted a scientific agenda that was Saha's and Bose's well before it became his own.
- But such an argument underplays Nehru's contribution— or the extent to which his views and those of others like Saha were, at the time, congruent.
- Nehru's speeches and writings from 1932 onward make it clear that he was intent on formulating his own views on the role of science in society, including, following Soviet precedent, "the application of the spirit of science to social affairs."

- As he told the Indian Science Congress in 1937,

"science is the spirit of the age and the dominating factor of the modern world . . . the future belongs to science and to those who make friends with science and seek its help for the advancement of society."

- In looking to Pt. Nehru to chair the Planning Committee, Saha was recognizing his stature as a left-leaning nationalist leader and a formidable publicist for science, a combination that gave him a unique ability to carry the message for scientific planning to party and nation.
- Pt. Nehru could popularize the cause of regenerative science in a way Saha could never hope to do.

THE CHARACTER OF NEHRUVIAN SCIENCE

- Nehruvian science encompassed many different things, but some of its most salient characteristics deserve to be highlighted here.
- First, it was a program for sociocultural change, intended to transform society and the prevalent mind-set.
- Science was crucial to Nehru because he wanted to oversee radical change in India without having recourse to revolutionary violence or state authoritarianism.
- As he remarked in 1952:

"We live in an age of science. We hear and read of revolutions but the greatest revolutionary force in the past 150 years has been science, which has transformed human life and has changed political, social and economic organizations."

- In postcolonial India the revolutionary effects of science were to be mobilized not, as in Russia, through violent upheaval and Stalinist directives but, instead, through parliamentary democracy and state planning.
- Without the instruments of dictatorial rule, Nehru was dependent on his ability to foster support for science by tutoring the democratic will and educating government itself.
- "My interest," he told the Science Congress in 1951, "largely consists in trying to make the Indian people and even the Government of India conscious of scientific work and the necessity for it."
- The planning process, interrupted by war, resumed with the formation of a National Planning Commission in 1950.
- For Pt. Nehru, planning was the equivalent of a peaceful revolution and represented "science in action."

- The Nehruvian vision of science was intended to replace the imperial ideology of the old colonial services (dedicated to upholding empire) with an ideology of science as the means by which the modern nation could free itself from the incubus of custom and overcome deprivation and backwardness.
- Nehru declared in 1937:

-"It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and the deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people."

- Or as Pt. Nehru put it, still more emphatically, in 1962:

-"Poverty has ceased to be inevitable now because of science."

- Science had the capacity to resolve India's seemingly most intractable problems, including rapid population growth.
- Although Nehru prioritized "science" in his earlier utterances, as he grew more aware of the complex needs of state planning and rapid industrialization his references to technology became more prominent.
- Thus in 1956 he spoke of "the stupendous growth of technology" and the need to think "in technological terms" of the requirements of the planning process.
- Medicine and public health never stood quite so high in Nehru's esteem.

- Second, NS was state science—science conducted for the people but at the direction and discretion of the state.
- There were clear reasons for this. In British India the scientific establishment had largely been a state establishment, situated in specialist research institutes rather than in the more public (and Indian) arena of the universities.
- Although many former colonial services were dissolved after independence, or restructured to meet national needs, the legacy of state direction and responsibility remained.
- Under the provisions of the 1935 constitution, carried forward into the Indian constitution in 1952, many areas of government business were assigned to the provinces (and so, latterly, to the states of the Indian Union).

- Nehru saw the requirements of modern science and technology as being too fundamental, but also too specialist and strategic, to be relegated to the states or poorly funded local universities.
- Issues of national self-sufficiency and defense also seemed to favor centralized control.
- One of the clearest statements of this need was made in the "Scientific Policy Resolution" presented by Nehru to the Indian parliament in 1958; but he attached similar importance to state control of major industries, without which no modern nation could "retain its freedom."

- As prime minister, Nehru used the central government, its scientific institutions, and control over science budgets to build a scientific establishment sympathetic to his views.
- In August 1947 he created a central government portfolio for scientific research under his own direction. Expanded into a Department of Scientific Research, in 1951 this became the Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research.
- Nehru continued to lead debates in parliament on scientific matters, address annual meetings of the Indian Science Congress, and preside over the governing body of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

- Patron and mentor of India's postcolonial science, he established a coterie of like-minded scientists around himself, among them:

- S. S. Bhatnagar, director-general of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research,

- P. C. Mahalanobis, the statistician behind India's planning regime,

- and Homi K. Bhabha, chair of India's Atomic Energy Commission.

- Nehru retained personal control of the Department of Atomic Energy, and his keen interest in nuclear power as a vital energy source and marker of India's scientific modernity ensured that his relations with Bhabha were particularly close, allowing privileged funding for the atomic energy program.

- Third, NS was an institution-building project.
- As one commentator observed in 1977, Nehru,

"more than any other Indian of his time," realized that "the days of scientists working for their own intellectual satisfaction in relative isolation" were over.

- They had to accept the logic of funding resources controlled by the state and state-driven science policy.
- Under Nehru, India saw an eightfold increase in the national science budget between 1948 –1949 and 1958 –1959.
- His government inherited a set of colonial scientific bodies, such as the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and to these, as prime minister, he added others, like the Atomic Energy Commission, which drew on the model of similar institutions in the West.

- In a speech that anticipated his later reference to hydroelectric dams as “temples of the new age,” he spoke in 1954 of India’s national laboratories as “temples of science built for the service of our motherland.”
- Although the details of his involvement remain for the present lost in government files and departmental memoranda,

-evidence suggests that Pt. Nehru concerned himself with key appointments to these institutes, just as, near the end of his life, he voiced impatience at their increasing bureaucratization and lack of innovation.

- Fourth, NS, while primarily designed to inspire national pride and nurture India's development regime, was also, in an era of intense Cold War rivalry,

-a way of renegotiating India's former scientific dependence on Britain as the colonial master and of opening relations with other scientific powers

-the United States, Russia, France, and Canada

- Science, technology, and, to a degree, public health gave ex-colonial India a new authority, a new moral stature, in the world.

- NS was a significant adjunct to, and vehicle for, the nonaligned movement in which Nehru was so pivotal a figure.
- It is striking how often he chose to address meetings of the WHO and UNESCO in India, using the opportunity to stress both the international nature of modern scientific endeavor and India's active participation and leadership role within it.
- Finally, NS was a historiographic project. Beginning with, or drawing added strength from, Nehru's own writing, there was a systematic attempt to rewrite the history of science in (and for) India in ways that illustrated the long history of science in India and its formative role within Indian civilization.

- Many historiographic projects between the 1950s and the 1970s, while making little explicit reference to Nehru, seem to reflect his views or draw on shared assumptions.
- Further research is needed to show how far Nehru provided the patronage and inspiration for individual works of scholarship or for more ambitious historiographic projects that linked historians and scientists, like:

-the Concise History of Science in India (produced for the Indian National Science Academy).

NEHRU AND BEYOND-SCIENCE

- Was Nehruvian science a success?

  Or

Did it wither away with Nehru's death, the decline of Nehruvian idealism, and the many difficulties that beset India in the 1960s and 1970s?

Was it tied to the destiny of one man, or did something Nehruvian persist, if only by stealth, in the science of government policy and of research institutions and the way in which scholars continue to write about the history of science in India?

- NS reached its apogee as an intellectual project and state program at the height of the nonalignment years in the 1950s and early 1960s.
- It was then that many Nehru-style history projects were conceived, even if they did not bear his imprimatur (a person's authoritative approval)or reached fruition only years later.

- Long after his death Nehru continued to be eulogized, especially by members of the scientific and administrative elite he had helped create.
- In a special issue of the Indian Journal of Public Administration in 1969, Nehru was lauded for his foresight and direction.
- India was fortunate, declared one contributor, to have had a prime minister "who realized more than most people that science and its application are the only means to combat backwardness and increase the pace of national development."
- Another wrote:

"Indian society continues to be weighed down by tradition. There is too much superstition and obscurantism around. There is still too little evidence in Indian life of the scientific temper, of the spirit of inquiry and of reliance on the scientific method."

- As state policy, NS reached a new plane of authority under the premiership of Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi.
- In 1974 a statement on national science policy was written into the fifth of India's five-year plans, followed in 1976 by an amendment to the Indian Constitution that made it the duty of every Indian citizen "to develop the scientific temper."
- These moves arguably reveal more about Mrs. Gandhi's determination to consolidate her political position as her father's heir than the actual pursuit of science.
- Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv, who assumed the premiership after her death in 1984, kept alive the idea of a special relationship between the Nehru/Gandhi dynasty and science and technology, as demonstrated by elements of Mrs. Gandhi's "emergency" program in 1975 and Rajiv's attempts to usher in a new age of technological modernity in the 1980s.
- NS clearly enjoyed a continuing political authority in India.

- But by the 1970s and 1980s the image of NS had become tarnished

-in part because it had failed to deliver all that had been grandly promised in the name of science, including the eradication of poverty.

- A reaction set in against state science and technology, and the violence and inequality that had accompanied it, led by such critics as Vandana Shiva, Ashis Nandy, and Arundhati Roy, though this mostly bypassed reference to Nehru himself.
- For instance, Shiva did not attack Nehru by name, instead blaming the "Green Revolution" that occurred after his death. But her evocation of Gandhi as an Eco sympathetic counter to modern industrial science inevitably traded on earlier tensions between the Gandhian and Nehruvian approaches to science and technology.

- Perhaps Nehru's scientific agenda has simply been appropriated by parties of both left and right (including the Hindu Bhartiya Janata Party) and so has lost much of its specific association with Nehru.
- But there was a partial revival in NS ideology in the early 1980s, in response to the perceived rise of irrational forces, including those of the Hindu right, in Indian political and public life.
- In 1981 a "Statement of Scientific Temper," calling for India to return to the ideal of a "scientific temper," was issued by a group of intellectuals, academics, and scientists led by P. N. Haksar, an associate of Mrs. Gandhi.
- It is around this talismanic term that NS is most commonly invoked in India today.

CONCLUSION

- Nehruvian science has been presented here as a problem not just in the history of Indian science but of postcolonial science more generally.
- Clearly, there are ways in which that history is distinctive to India (and to Nehru himself), and certainly India, scientifically speaking, emerged from empire in a more privileged and powerful position than most ex-colonies.

- But the case of India and NS highlights wider characteristics in the postcolonial history of science:

-the strategic importance of postcolonial subjectivity for regaining a sense of local ownership over science;

-the attempt, intellectually and institutionally,

-to wrest science in the non-West from the legacies of Western hegemony;

-the centrality of science in the programmatic of socioeconomic change;

-the moral authority and political leverage of science in an age of competition between the great powers.

- Perhaps the core element in the postcolonial condition remains the dilemma as to how to fashion a science that is both local and universal?
- This conundrum remains at the heart of much current debate about what science and the history of science mean to, and for, the non-West.
- Nehruvian science offers one means of trying to establish how that dilemma was articulated and how attempts were made, intellectually and materially, to resolve it.

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