

IAS GURUKUL

SOCIOLOGY PAPER- 2



BOOK- 1

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UNIT A: INTRODUCING INDIAN SOCIETY

IAS GURUKUL

PERSPECTIVES ON THE STUDY OF INDIAN SOCIETYINDOLOGY (G.S. GHURYE)

Indology literally means a systematic study of Indian society and culture. Indologists claim that uniqueness of Indian civilization cannot be fitted into the framework of European Sociology. They claimed that Indian society could be understood only through the concepts, theories and frameworks of Indian civilization. They rely primarily on the book view. It gives more importance to the culture of Indian society than to the empirical structure. Indology is an independent discipline in itself as well as an approach in Indian sociology. In both the versions; Indological studies comprise investigations of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, work of art, rituals, ceremonies and other related components of the Indian culture and civilization. The mainstream of Indology, however, has been the creation of western scholars. The sources of Indological studies are primarily classical text, manuscripts, archaeological artefacts, and symbolic expressions. The aim of Indological studies is to gain a deeper understanding of the Indian culture.



Indologists consider ancient Sanskritic texts and manuscripts as a rich source for the study of Indian society

As an independent discipline, Indology is much older than sociology in India. The first important centre of Indology was started by Sir William Jones at Kolkata in 1784 AD. By 1886 the Theosophical Society at Adyar had started Indological studies of its own kind. In 1891, the Oriental Research Institute, Mysore was started. Oriental institute, Baroda, was started in 1893. The Bhandarkar Institute, Pune, was established in 1917. Thus, when the first department of Sociology was started at Bombay University in 1919, the discipline called Indology was well established in India. As a result, the founding fathers of Indian sociology were

influenced by the Indological approach. In the writings of B.K. Sarkar, G.S. Ghurye, Radhakamal Mukherjee, K.M. Kapadia, P.H. Prabhu and Iravati Karve, we have a decisive influence of Indological approach.

Indological approach in Indian Sociology is influenced by the discipline of Indology but it is not coterminous with Indology. All sociologists who have used Indological approach are also influenced by other sociological perspectives. For example, in the writings of G.S. Ghurye, there is a synthesis of Indological approach and the diffusionist approach propagated by W.H.R Rivers. In the same way, in the writings of Radhakamal Mukherjee, there is a synthesis between Indological perspective and the empirical sociology of American variety. Secondly, Indology as a discipline contains a variety of approaches and methods. There are many schools within the discipline itself. Different Indian sociologists were influenced by different schools of Indology. For example, B.K. Sarkar was influenced by the Indological studies of the Asiatic society founded by Sir William Jones. G S. Ghurye was more influenced by the writings of Indologists of the Bhandarkar Institute, Pune; than by the writing of British School of Indology founded by Sir William Jones or the German scholar Max Mueller. In the same way, Radhakamal Mukherjee was influenced by the Indological writings of Anand K. Coomaraswamy.

Within Indological studies, there are broadly two types of works-- one is called Indology or India studies and the other is called Oriental studies. There are both commonalities and differences between Indology and Oriental studies. Indology seems to offer a sympathetic and positive account of the Indian society and culture. Orientalism presents a rather unsympathetic and negative account of the Indian society and culture. Orientalism emerged to serve the need of the British Empire and other colonial powers of west, whereas Indology is said to be the labour of love for Indian wisdom. Max Mueller, James Mill and William Archer were important figures of Orientalist writing about India. The Indological writings have been enriched by William Jones, Wilkins, Colebrooke and Wilson in British India; Rene Gueno, Louis Renou and Bougle in France and Anand K. Coomaraswamy, Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade in USA.

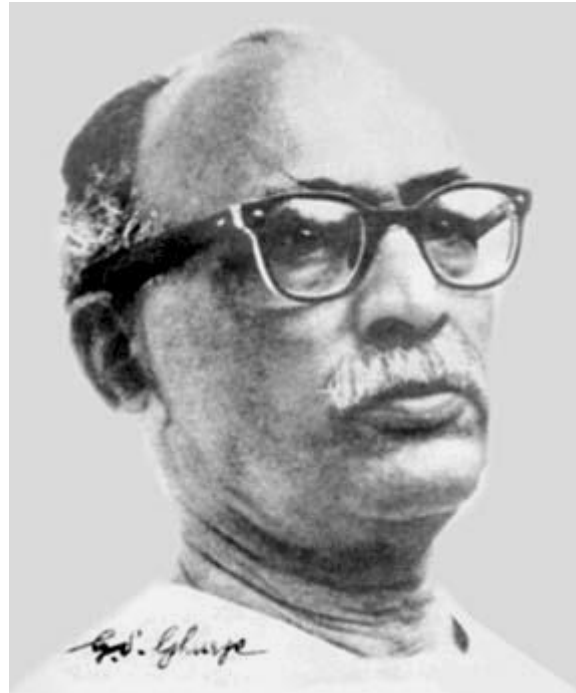
The Indological studies have sought to develop an empathic understanding of Indian culture. There is, however, a general tendency, among the Indologists, to exaggerate either the virtues of Indian culture or weaknesses of Indian culture. The Orientalists see primarily the negative elements in Indian tradition and rationalises the missionary activities as well as the British rule in India. Indologists, however, overemphasise Indian spiritualism and underemphasise the achievements in the realm of material culture and the practical wisdom of the common people of India.

The Indological approach within Indian Sociology is much developed, sophisticated and nuanced than the writings of the British school of Indology. Within the broader frameworks of Sociology it has enlarged our understanding of Indian family, marriage, kinship, religion, art, culture, language, mythology and civilisation.

Later, under the influence of Louis Dumont and Mckim Marriott, culturological writings on India have fruitfully utilized the insight of Indological approaches. T.N. Madan has pleaded recently for the synthesis of Coomaraswamy and Levi-Strauss

in the creative understanding of Indian society and culture. D.P. Mukherjee had earlier pleaded for a synthesis of an understanding of the Indian tradition (provided by Indologists) within the Marxian analytical framework of dialectics. All the major sociologists before independence were influenced by Indological approach. Even Srinivas had at time used Indological data to supplement his field work.

Then Indological approach rested on the assumption that historically Indian society and culture are unique and that this contextual specificity of Indian social realities could be grasped better through the texts. The use of the Indological approach during the early formative years of Indian sociology and social anthropology is seen in the works of S.V. Ketkar, B.N. Seal, B.K. Sarkar and G.S. Ghurye.



G.S. Ghurye- Founding Father of Indian Sociology (Above) Was An Indologist

Sociology in Bombay developed under the leadership of G.S. Ghurye. The range of Ghurye's scholarly interests and research is astounding. Exploration of diverse aspects of Indian culture and society through the use of Indological sources permeated Ghurye's otherwise shifting intellectual concerns and empirical research pursuits. His monographs on Indian Sadhus (1964), on Religious Consciousness (1965), on Gotra and Charan as the two Brahminical Institutions (1972) among others reflect that enduring concern. Ghurye also maintained the tradition established by civilian-scholars of studying races and tribes in India (1943, 1963, 1969). Later generations of Indian sociologists and social anthropologists- were to use these inexhaustible themes for their researches.

Although trained in the craft of Indology, Ghurye was not averse to the fieldwork tradition of social and cultural anthropology. His field survey of sex habits of middle class people in Bombay, conducted in the 1930s (Ghurye, 1938) and the monograph on the Mahadev Kolis demonstrated that far from promoting an armchair textual scholarship, Ghurye introduced a down-to-earth empiricism in Indian sociology and social anthropology.

The sweep of Ghurye's works and the wide range of his intellectual interest have had a profound influence on the development of the twin disciplines in India. Like a discreet butterfly Ghurye moved from one theme to another with equal interest, erudition, and ability. He showed India to be an inexhaustible mine where sociologists and social anthropologists could conduct endless explorations. He indicated innumerable but unexplored dimensions of Indian society, culture, and social institutions which would occupy social analysts for decades if they had both the desire and the ability to 'know'. This rare spirit of inquiry and commitment to advancing the frontiers of knowledge was one of Ghurye's precious gifts to Indian sociology and social anthropology. Diversified interests are also reflected in the great variety of works his research students produced on themes ranging from family, kinship structures, marriage, religious sects, ethnic groups---castes and aboriginals, their customs and institutions, to social differentiation and stratification, caste and class, education and society, the Indian nationalist movement, social structure and social change in specific villages or regions of India, and also urbanization, industrialization and related social problems in India.

Ghurye's rigour and discipline are now legendary in Indian sociological circles. In the application of theories to empirical exercises or in the use of methodologies for data collection that legendary rigour is not somehow reflected. To put it differently Ghurye was not dogmatic in the use of theory and methodology. He seems to have believed in practising and in encouraging disciplined eclecticism in theory and methodology. Despite his training at Cambridge under W.H.R.V. Rivers and his broad acceptance of the structural functional approach, Ghurye did not strictly conform to the functionalist tradition when interpreting the complex facets of Indian society and culture which he chose to investigate. It would be appropriate to characterize Ghurye as a practitioner of theoretical pluralism. Basically interested in inductive empirical exercises and in depicting Indian social reality using any source material-primarily Indological-his theoretical position bordered on laissez-faire. Similarly, when Ghurye conducted survey-type research involving primary data collection, he did not conform strictly to accepted methodological canons. He often ventured into generalizations on the basis of scanty and unrepresentative evidence (e.g., Ghurye 1968). It is also likely that Ghurye's flexible approach to theory and methodology in sociology and social anthropology was born of his faith in intellectual freedom which is reflected in the diverse theoretical and methodological approaches his research students pursued in their works.

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM (M.N. SRINIVAS)

Structural functional approach claims that Sociology is a universal science of society and its concepts, theories and assumptions can be fruitfully utilised beyond Europe for comparative analysis. It gives more importance to the empirical structure in the field than to the normative framework of culture. This view propagates a very rigorous and systematic fieldwork for the collection of data. The central concept within this approach is social structure.

Social structure usually refers to any recurring pattern of social behaviour. It also includes enduring, orderly and patterned relationships between elements of a society. Different sociologists have defined social structure in different ways. We may briefly refer to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown who inspired M.N. Srinivas to adopt the structural functional approach towards the religion and society among the Coorgs of South India.



M.N. Srinivas (Above) pioneered Structural Functionalism in India

To Radcliffe Brown the social structure is empirical reality existing at a single moment of time, while the structural form is an abstraction from reality by the investigator and implies a period rather than a moment of time. Fortes, Evans Pritchard, Firth and Nadel use the term social structure broadly in this sense. Radcliffe-Brown differentiates the culture of a society from its social structure. He sees the culture of a society as its standardised mode of behaviour, thinking and feeling. Social structure for him consists of the sum total of all the social relationships of all individuals at a given moment in time. Radcliffe Brown's

structural functional approach also distinguishes the forms (structures) of social relations from their effects (functions). Radcliffe Brown further insists that culture can only be studied scientifically as an aspect of social structure. Followers of Radcliffe Brown acknowledge the inseparability of culture and social structure.

Structural functional approach in Indian Sociology is the most popular, most developed and most coherent approach in Sociology after India's independence. This approach has been adopted to study village communities, caste structure, family structure, kinship structure, religious structure, political structure etc. It underlines the processes of structural cleavages (discontinuities) and differentiation in societies for special attention. Problems of equality and inequality, study of power structure, social stratification, changes in the demographic and family structure of Indian society have been studied by this approach.

In the structural functional approach special consideration is given to comparative study of social categories such as caste and class and their implication for the nature of the society in India. M.N. Srinivas' studies of the religion and society among the Coorgs, Rampura village and social change in modern India were primarily an application of Radcliffe-Brown's structural approach with some modifications. Srinivas had studied the structure of village life, the structure of family (Okka) and the structure of caste relationships by using key concepts of structural functionalism.

S.C. Dube's studies of Indian village and India's Changing Villages were conducted by using the structural approach. F.G. Bailey's analysis of structural changes in India with the set of comparative categories like tribe, caste and nation is another example of structural approach. Andre Beteille's studies of caste, class and power in a Tanjore village and agrarian structure were based on the analytical categories derived from Max Weber and Karl Marx. T.N. Madan had studied family, marriage and kinship from structural functional perspective but in the study of non renunciation and the ideology of householder in Indian culture, he used culturological approaches. A.M. Shah studied the household dimension of Indian family by using structural approach but in the study of village life he used the historical approach. Oommen's studies of social movements in India are also rooted in structural framework of sociological enquiry.

The use of more than one conceptual category and the application of comparative method are the defining features of structural functional approach in India. Although most of such studies were rooted in empirical fields, their theoretical and conceptual schemes were useful for a broader generalisation. For example, Srinivas' concepts such as the dominant caste, Sanskritisation, Westernisation and his analytical distinction between Varna and Jati were useful in the understanding of patterns of relationship at a more general level by generations of sociologists. Structural approach in Indian Sociology includes a very wide spectrum of viewpoints ranging from structural-functionalism to a synthesis of Karl Marx and Max Weber.

The main limitations of the majority of structural studies include neglect of cultural dimensions or historical dimensions. They, usually, overlook the hidden contradictions and present a more consensual view of the social structure. Their

strength lies in their rich empirical traditions and conceptual and theoretical sophistications.

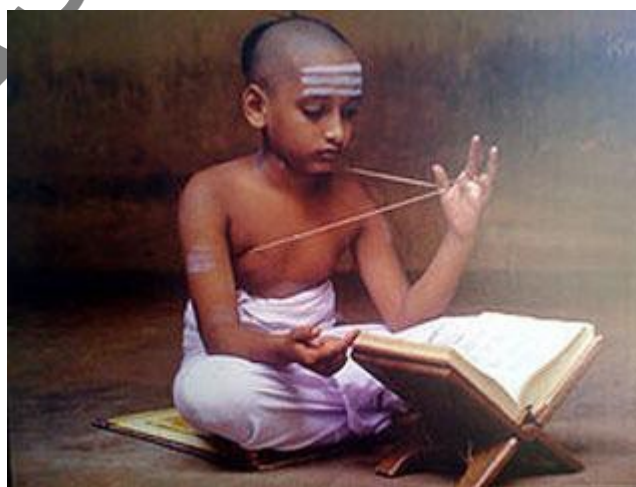
SRINIVAS ON STRUCTURAL - FUNCTIONALISM

Mysore has been veritable laboratory of social anthropological research for M.N. Srinivas. He wrote his first doctoral discussion on 'Social Organization of Mysore Families', which was published in Mysore (1942). He then submitted his doctoral dissertation on 'Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India' to Oxford University. This dissertation was published in book form under the same title, in 1952. In course of his field inquiry, he stayed in village Rampura for 10 months in 1948 and for two months in 1952. He paid several visits to the Coorg's village Rampura from time to time. The village is located at a distance of 25 mile south east of Mysore city. In several research papers the social system of Rampura has been explained. Under the influence of Radcliffe-Brown, he made structural study of relationship of roles and statuses of castes and their occupations.

Srinivas emphasized upon the unity of the village and observes that the village is a vertical entity made up of several horizontal layers each of which is a caste. The unity of the village is expressed by village officials supervising the rituals, village elders and dominant caste.

Concept of Sanskritization

Srinivas in his book, Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India (1952) developed the concept of Sanskritization to understand the process of Social Change taking place among the low caste Hindus/tribals and other groups in upward direction. According to him, Sanskritization is the process by which a low Hindu caste, or tribal, or other groups having lower status, changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently twice-born caste (Dwij-Jati).



A young boy having undergone the Upanayana (sacred thread) ceremony

Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community. The claim is usually made over a period of time, in fact, a generation or two, before arrival is conceded. Occasionally, a caste claims a position which its neighbours are not willing to concede. This type of disagreement between claimed and conceded status may be not only in the realm of opinion, but also in the more important realm of institutional practice. Thus, Harijan caste in Mysore do not accept cooked food and drinking water from the Smiths, who are certainly one of the touchable castes and, therefore, superior to Harijans. Even their claim to be Vishwakarma Brahmins is not accepted. Similarly peasants (Okkaligas) and others such as shepherds (Rumbas) do not accept cooked food and water from Marka Brahmins, who are certainly included among Brahmins. Similarly, Coorgs are referred to as Jungle people (Kadujana), but Coorgs themselves contradict this reference and they claim themselves as true Kshatriyas and even Aryans. Srinivas has cited these examples all from Mysore state, but parallels can be cited from every part of India, because everywhere the tradition of caste hierarchy and associated statuses and roles come into being.

Nowadays, the effect of Sanskritization can be seen in almost all villages of India. In Bihar, Rajwars, a scheduled caste, claim themselves as Raj Vanshi Kshatriya. Similarly, Koyeris, a backward caste, claim themselves as Kushwaha Kshatriya and Dusadh, another scheduled caste, claim themselves as Gahlout Kshatriya. Some of their members use titles like 'Singh' and 'Thakur' like Rajputs of the area. Previously, Koyeris did not wear sacred thread, but now they have started wearing it. Not only this, many lower Hindu castes have started a Brahminical way of life. They have given up non-vegetarian food items and unclean traditional occupations. They take food after performing bath and making prayers. They read Ramayana and Hanuman Chalisa daily as a part of religious duty like Brahmins. Many of them have long beard and put Tilak-mark on their forehead. By claiming themselves as Kshatriya and observing the rituals like Brahmins, they claim their statuses like Brahmins and Kshatriyas of traditional India.

Sanskritization is generally accompanied by, and often results in, upward mobility for the caste in question, but mobility may also occur without Sanskritization and vice-versa. However, the mobility associated with Sanskritization results only in positional changes in the system and does not lead to any structural change. That is, a caste moves up, above its neighbours, and another comes down, but all this takes place in an essentially stable hierarchical order. The system itself does not change.

Sanskritization is not confined to Hindu castes, but also occurs among tribal and semi-tribal groups like Gonds, Oraons, Cheros of Central India and the Pahadis of the Himalayas. This usually results in the tribe undergoing Sanskritization claiming to be a caste and therefore, Hindu. In the traditional system, the only way to become a Hindu was to belong to a caste and the unit of mobility was usually a group, not an individual or a family.

However, Srinivas has emphasized upon the Brahminical model of Sanskritization and ignored the other models like Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Even the

Brahminical model was derived from the Kannada, Tamil and Telugu Brahmins and not from Brahmin caste in other regions.

Concept of Westernization

Srinivas in his book, *Social Change in Modern India* (1966) has attempted to understand caste mobility and change in Indian society in terms of concepts like Sanskritization, westernization, dominant caste and secularization.

Of two processes, Sanskritization and westernization, Sanskritization seems to have occurred throughout Indian history and still continues to exist. Westernization, on the other hand, refers to changes introduced into Indian society during British rule and which continue in some cases with added momentum in independent India.



Indian Railways played a crucial role in Westernization

Westernization unlike Sanskritization is not confined to any particular section of Indian population, and its importance, both in the number of people it affects and the ways in which it affects them, is steadily increasing. The achievement of independence has in some ways quickened the process of westernization, and it is not unlikely that independence was a necessary precondition of such acceleration.

It is beyond doubt that British rule produced radical and lasting changes in Indian society and culture. It was unlike any previous period in Indian history as the British brought with them new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and

values. The new technology and the revolution in communications enabled the British to integrate the country as never before in its history. During the 19th century, the British slowly laid the foundations of modern state by surveying land, settling the revenue, creating a modern bureaucracy, army, police, courts, schools, colleges, universities, railways, posts and telegraphs, roads and canals and printing press. The profound and many sided changes brought about by them in Indian society and culture deserve a volume in itself. One obvious result was that books and journals with schools made possible the transmission of modern as well as traditional knowledge to large number of Indians. Knowledge was now no longer the privilege of a few hereditary groups. The newspapers made the people, dwelling in different parts of the world, aware of each other.

Christian missionaries from Europe knew India long before the arrival of British. However, during the early days of the East India Company, the entry of European missionaries into India was banned, which was lifted in 1713 when British parliament permitted them to enter the country under a new system of licensing. This eventually threw the entire subcontinent open to missionary activity.

In the first half of 19th century, the British, with the support of enlightened Indian opinion, abolished such institutions as Sutte or Sati (1829), female infanticide, human sacrifice and slavery (1833). The Indo-British impact was profound, many sided and fruitful.

Srinivas has used the term westernization to characterize the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule. The term also subsumes at different levels- technology, institutions, ideology and values.

Westernization, Urbanization and Industrialization

Srinivas has distinguished conceptually between westernization and the two other processes usually concomitant with it -- urbanization and industrialization.

There is common consensus among the scholars that industrial revolution resulted in an increase in the rate of urbanization and highly industrialized areas are treated as highly urbanized, but urbanization is not a simple function of industrialization. We have references about urban cities of Indus Valley culture and places dealing with ancient civilizations of India like Gaya, Prayag, Varanasi etc. Thus, urban cities were existing even in pre-industrial world.

While the most westernized groups are generally found in big cities, a caution must be uttered against equating westernization with urbanization. Even in a country such as India, it is possible to come across groups inhabiting rural areas which are more westernized in their style of life than many urban groups. The former are to be found in areas where plantation or commercial crops are grown or which have a tradition of supplying recruits to the Indian army.

Westernization results not only in the introduction of new institutions (for example, newspapers, elections, Christian missions etc. but also changes in old institutions. Thus, while India had schools long before the arrival of the British, they were different from British introduced schools in that they had been restricted to upper

caste children and transmitted mostly traditional knowledge. Other institutions such as army, civil service, law courts etc. were similarly affected.

Westernization and Modernization

A popular term for the changes brought about in a non-western country by contact, direct or indirect with a western country is modernization. Daniel Lerner in his book, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958: 45-49), has opted for the term modernization over westernization after considering the suitability of both. According to him, modernization includes a disquieting positivist spirit touching public institutions as well as private aspirations. But positivist spirit is not enough, a revolution is essential. Modernization is also marked by increasing urbanization which has, in turn, resulted in the spread of literacy. The urbanization has tended to enhance media exposure and finally enhanced media exposure is associated with wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation (voting). Modernization also implies social mobility.

A mobile society has to encourage rationality for the calculus of choice. It shapes individual behaviour and conditions its rewards. People come to see the social future as manipulable rather than ordained and their personal prospects in terms of achievement rather than heritage.

Modernization means only an increased effectiveness in goal attainment with no increase in the rationalization of the goal setting process. Modernization, thus involves the rationalization of ends, which means that the goals chosen by a society should be rational and the subject of discussion. It needs to be pointed out here the social goals are, in the final analysis, the expression of value preferences and therefore, non-rational. The public discussions of goals can in no way guarantee their rationality. Rationality can only be predicted of the means but not of the ends of social action.

The term westernization, unlike modernization, is ethically neutral. It does not carry the implication that it is good or bad, whereas modernization is normally used in the sense that it is good.

Concept of Secularization

Srinivas is of opinion that British rule brought with it a process of secularization of Indian social life and culture, a tendency that gradually become stronger with the development of communications, growth of towns, cities, increased spatial mobility and spread of education. The two World Wars and Mahatma Gandhi's civil disobedience campaigns, both socially and politically mobilized the masses, also contributed to increased secularization. After independence, there began a deepening as well as broadening of the secularization process, as witnessed in such measures as the declaration of India as a secular state, the constitutional recognition of equality of all citizens before law, the introduction of universal adult suffrage, and the undertaking of a programme of planned development.

As mentioned earlier, that Sanskritization is also spreading and it seems paradoxical that both Sanskritization and secularization are gaining ground in modern India. Of the two, secularization is a more general process- affecting all

Indians, while Sanskritization affects only Hindus and tribal groups. Broadly, it would be true to say that secularization is more marked among the urban and educated groups and Sanskritization among the lower Hindu castes and tribes. It is necessary; however; to reiterate that one of the results of westernization of a country (secularization is subsumed under westernization) - is a reinterpreted Hinduism in which Sanskritic elements are predominant.



Secularization promotes Sanskritization: Ma Vaishno Devi (left) Darshan has been facilitated with the launch of dedicated helicopter service (right)

The term secularization implies that what was previously regarded as religious is now ceasing to be such. It also implies a process of differentiation which results in various aspects of a society- economic, political, legal and moral, becoming increasingly discrete in relation to each other. The distinction between church and state; and the Indian concept of secular state, both assume the existence of such differentiation.

Another essential element in secularization is rationalism, a comprehensive expression applied to various theoretical and practical tendencies which aim to interpret the universe purely in terms of thought or which aim to regulate individual and social life in accordance with the principles of reason and to eliminate as far as possible or to relegate to the background everything irrational. Rationalism involves, among many other things, the replacement of traditional beliefs and ideas by modern knowledge.

Hindus were more affected by the secularization process than any of the other religious groups in India. The concepts of pollution and purity of Hinduism were greatly weakened as a result of variety of factors. Different sections of Hindus are affected in different degrees. The effect of secularization can be seen in daily life, rituals, ceremonies, occupations etc.

Concept of Dominant Caste

M.N. Srinivas developed the concept of dominant caste on the basis of long and continued study in Rampura in his paper entitled, 'Dominant Caste in Rampura' (American Anthropologist). According to him, a feature of rural life in many parts of India is the existence of a dominant land owning caste.



Jaats are a dominant caste across villages in northern India

For a caste to be dominant, it should own a sizable amount of the arable land locally available, have strength of numbers and occupy a high place in local hierarchy. When a caste has all the attributes of dominance, it may be said to enjoy decisive dominance. Occasionally there may be more than one dominant castes in a village. Thus, according to him, a caste may be said to be dominant when it preponderates numerically over the other castes and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power. A large and powerful caste group can be most easily dominant if its position in local-caste hierarchy is not too low.

Srinivas, in the light of caste ethnography in Rampura suggest that the peasants in Rampura enjoy all the elements of dominance. The identification of dominant caste gives a better understanding of the features of rural social organisation, as the council of the dominant caste tries to create a structure of authority within each group it has to deal with. The dominant caste plays a very important role in the settlement of disputes, which are settled by the traditional village and caste council and not by modern statutory Panchayat. The leaders of dominant caste not only settle disputes between members of different castes but are also frequently approached by non-dominant castes for settlement of their inter caste and even domestic disputes.

According to Srinivas, there are four factors related to dominant caste. They are: numerical strength, control of resources, i.e. land, possession of political power, and socio-religious status. New factors affecting dominance have emerged in the

last eighty years or so. Western education, jobs in the administration and urban sources of income are all significant in contributing to the prestige and power of particular caste groups in the village. The introduction of adult franchise and Panchayati Raj (local self government at village, tehsil, and district level) since independence has resulted in giving a new sense of self respect and power to low castes particularly Harijans, who enjoy reservation of seats in all elected bodies from village to union Parliament. The long term implications of these changes are probably even more important, especially in those villages where there are enough Harijans to sway the local balance of power one way or the other. In the traditional system, it was possible for a small number of people belonging to a high caste to wield authority over the entire village, when they owned a large quantity of arable land and had a high ritual position. Now, however, in many parts of rural India, power has passed into hands of numerically large land owning peasant castes. It is likely to remain there for some time, except in villages where Harijans are numerically strong and are also taking advantages of the new educational and other opportunities available to them. Endemic factionalism in the dominant caste is also another threat to its continued enjoyment of power.

No longer is dominance a purely local matter in rural India. A caste group which has only a family or two in particular village, but which enjoys decisive dominance in the wider region, will still count locally because of the network of ties binding it to its dominant relatives. What is equally important is that others in the village will be aware of the existence of this network. Country wise, a caste which enjoys dominance in only one village, will find that it has to reckon with the Caste which enjoys regional dominance.

S.C. Dube (1961) and B.K. Roy Burman (1978) have disagreed with Srinivas over his concept of dominant caste. S.C. Dube holds that instead of any caste group, an individual dominates in the society. He is of the opinion that power remains concentrated in a few individuals rather than diffused in the caste. Roy Burman has used the concept of dominant communities in place of Srinivas' concept of dominant caste. According to him, the dominant communities have several dimensions such as control over resources, social status, maintenance of law etc.

Concept of Spread

In order to understand the diversity within Hinduism in India, M.N. Srinivas developed the concept of spread in his book, Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India (1952). According to him, Hinduism has a long history in course of which it has spread over the whole India. Buddhism, in origin a Hindu schism, is now religion of great part of Asia. While explaining the concept of spread, Srinivas has talked about four types of Hinduism. They are: (i) local Hinduism, (ii) regional Hinduism, (iii) all India or national Hinduism and (iv) peninsular Hinduism.

According to Srinivas, local Hinduism has a local spread, in which Hindus inhabiting in a local area share common beliefs, rituals and performances. Regional Hinduism has a more restricted spread over a particular region in terms of common cultural, linguistic and geographical boundary within a country. According to him, in Malabar, Coorg proper is a smaller area within it. All India Hinduism is common Hindu beliefs, rituals and festivals shared by all Hindu inhabitants of the nation.

For instance, places like Gaya, Ganga Sagar, Kurukshetra, Rameshwaram etc. attract Hindus of all parts of the country on different religious occasions. The great Hindu festivals like Holi, Dashara, Dipawali, etc. are celebrated by Hindus inhabiting in all parts of the country. Peninsular Hinduism spreads over the entire part of Indian peninsula.

Concept of Vertical and Horizontal Caste Solidarity

M.N. Srinivas in his books, *Caste in Modern India* (1962) and *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays* (1962), opines that Varna model has produced a wrong and distorted image of caste. He considers it necessary for the sociologist to free himself from the hold of Varna model, if he wishes to understand the caste system, specially in the middle regions which are missed under the influence of Varna model. Although he avoids giving a clear cut definition of caste, he does believe that the structural basis of Hindu society is caste. He examines the interrelationship between various facets of castes and sub castes in common unity and region wise setting.

Observing the diversities of castes in India, M.N Srinivas propounds the concept of 'vertical' and 'horizontal' solidarity of Indian caste system. He observes some common elements of local culture shared by all castes living in a region from the highest to the lowest. Thus, the Brahmin and Harijan of a region speak common language, observe some common festivals, and share some common deities and beliefs. Srinivas calls this unity of castes as Vertical solidarity. Horizontal solidarity is contrary to vertical solidarity. In Horizontal solidarity, members of a single caste share common rituals, beliefs, traditions etc. irrespective of their regions and language. Thus, Brahmins of south, north and central India share more or less common Sanskritic traditions and rituals. Srinivas calls this solidarity among the members of a caste as horizontal solidarity.

Contributions to Village Studies

The year 1955 was a landmark in the history of social anthropological researches on village in India, because in this year three books namely *Indian Village* by S.C. Dube, *Village India* (ed) by McKim Marriot, an American anthropologist and *India's Villages* (ed) by Srinivas came into existence. Srinivas (ed) book, *India's Villages* (1955) consists of thirteen articles contributed by 5 American, 5 British and 3 Indian anthropologists. American anthropologists were Beals, Mandelbaum, Gough, Marriot and Martin. British anthropologists as contributor of articles in the book were: Bailey, Collin, Carstairs, Miller and Newell. Indian anthropologists were: Dube, Sharma and Srinivas. Except one paper by Mandelbaum, all papers were based on fieldwork conducted by them in different villages of India. These papers reveal several important concepts as well as preliminary methodological and theoretical leads concerning rural sociology. The concepts of Sanskritization, dominant caste, universalization, parochialization, unity and extension, caste ties, intercaste ties etc. are among the major leads which found fuller treatment in later works on village studies.

MARXIST SOCIOLOGY (A.R. DESAI)

Akshay Ramanlal Desai (1915-1994) consistently advocated and applied dialectical-historical model in his sociological studies. Desai was greatly influenced by Marx, Engels and Trotsky. He was one of the pioneers in introducing the modern Marxist approach to investigations of Indian society. Desai alone among Indian sociologists consistently applied Marxist methods in his treatment of Indian social structure and its processes. He was a doctrinaire Marxist. He rejects any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities. It is essentially a secular phenomenon. The nature of tradition is economic. He finds it in family, village and other social institutions. He also does not find the origin of tradition in western culture.

Desai studied Indian society from Marxian perspective and also used history fruitfully. His studies of nationalism and its social configuration, of community development programmes for villages, of the interface between state and society in India, of the relationship between polity and social structure, of urban slums and their demographic problems, and finally his study of peasant movements are all based on a Marxist method of historical dialectical materialism.

Economic relationship is predominantly a stabilizing factor in the continuity of traditional institutions in India, which would undergo changes as these relations would change. Desai thinks that when traditions are linked with economic relations, the change in the latter would eventually change the traditions. It is in this context that he thinks that caste will disintegrate with the creation of new social and material conditions, such as industries, economic growth, education, etc.

He considers that the emerging contradictions in the Indian process of social transformation arise mainly from the growing nexus among the capitalist bourgeoisie, the rural petty bourgeoisie and a state apparatus, all drawn from similar social roots. This thwarts the aspirations of the rural and industrial working classes by use of its sheer power and of its skilful stratagems. The contradiction, however, is not resolved. It only takes new cumulative forms and re-emerges in the form of protests and social movements. The social unrest is rooted in the capitalist path of development followed by India, bequeathed to it as a legacy of the national movement.

Pre- British India:

Indian village was a self-sufficient unit in pre-British period. The village population was mainly composed of peasants. The peasant families enjoyed traditional hereditary right to possess and cultivate its holding from generation to generation. Village economy was based on agriculture carried on with the primitive plough and bullock power and handicraft by means of primitive equipment. The village council was the de facto owner of the village land and represented the village community. All exchange of products produced by the village workers was limited to the village community. The village did not have any appreciable exchange relations with the outside world.

Further, the society almost completely subordinated the individual to the caste, family and the village panchayat. Indian culture was feudal and predominantly mystical in character. This was due to the fact that the society was economically on a low level, stationary and socially rigid. Whatever changes occurred were quantitative and not qualitative in character.

British Impact- Transformation of Indian Society:

The transformation of the pre-British India from feudal economy to capitalist economy was a result of the British conquest of India. The British government adopted the capitalist path of development in their political and economic policies at three levels, viz., trade, industry and finance. Introduction of new economic reforms by the British government disrupted the old economic system.



Desai argues that British rule in India created the conditions that were conducive for the rise of Indian nationalism

It decayed the old land relations and artisans with the emergence of new land relations and modern industries. In place of village commune appeared modern peasant proprietors or Zamindars, as private owners of land.

The British impact not only led to the transformation of the economic anatomy of Indian society, but also its social physiognomy. The class of artisans disappeared with modern industry. It gave rise to new class structure in agrarian society with categories like Zamindars, tenants, peasant proprietors, agricultural labourers, moneylenders and merchant class. Further, the new land revenue system, commercialization of agriculture, fragmentation of land etc. also led to the

transformation of Indian village. All these resulted in growing polarization of classes in agrarian areas, poverty in rural areas and exploitation by the owners of land.

Similarly, in urban society, there were capitalist industrial working class, petty traders, professional class like doctors, lawyers, engineers etc.

The British also introduced railways, postal services, centralized uniform law, English education, modern industry etc, which brought qualitative change in Indian society. Although the British government had various exploitative mechanisms in India, but unintentionally these efforts led to unification of Indian society. Role of railways and press was significant.

These brought the scattered and disintegrated Indians into the mainstream. The implication was social movements, collective representations, national sentiments and consciousness among Indian people and formation of unions at various levels. Such a social and infrastructural set-up gave rise to nationalist freedom movement and awakening of Indian nationalism.

Desai applies the Marxist approach to the study of nationalism in India during the British rule. He applied historical-dialectical materialism to the study of various types of movements – rural and urban, caste and class structure, social mobility, education and other aspects of Indian society. Desai's book was a trendsetter not only for its Marxist orientation, but also for the way it cross-fertilized sociology with history. Desai employed production relations for the explanation of traditional social background of Indian nationalism. Desai traces the emergence of Indian nationalism from dialectical perspective.

According to Desai, India's nationalism is the result of the material conditions created by the British colonialism. The Britishers developed new economic relations by introducing industrialization and modernization.

State and Society after Independence:

Desai critiqued the theories of modernization accepted by a large number of academic establishments. He clearly stated that in reality the concept assumed modernization on capitalist path a desirable value premise. It, however, served as a valuable ideological vehicle to the ruling class pursuing the capitalist path.

Indian state evolved its bourgeois constitution and the leadership is representing capitalist class and is reshaping the economy and society on capitalist path. The slogan of socialistic pattern is a hoax to create illusion and confuse the masses. The real intentions and practices are geared to the development on capitalist lines.

According to Desai, the bourgeoisie is the dominant class in India. The Indian society is based on the capitalist economy. The dominant culture in our country is therefore the culture of the dominant capitalist class. Indian capitalism was a by-product of imperialist capitalism.

Indian capitalism was born during the declining phase of world capitalism when, due to the general crisis of capitalism, even in advanced capitalist countries, the ruling bourgeoisie, not cognizant of the cause of the crisis, have been increasingly abandoning rationalism and materialist philosophies and retrograding to religio-mystical world outlooks.

Desai argues that Indian bourgeoisie built up a fundamentally secular bourgeois democratic state, which has been imparting modern, scientific, technological and liberal democratic education. This class and its intelligentsia have been, in the cultural field revivalist and more and more popularizing supporting and spreading old religious and idealistic philosophic concepts among the people. The idealistic and religio-mystical philosophies of the ruling bourgeois class, further reinforced by crude mythological culture rampant among the masses, constitute the dominant culture of the Indian people today.

The social role played by this culture is reactionary since it gives myopic picture of the physical universe and the social world, a misexplanation of the fundamental causes of the economic and social crises, opiates the consciousness of the masses and tries to divert the latter from advancing on the road of specific solutions of their problems.

Agrarian struggles after independence, Desai suggests, are waged by the newly-emerged propertied classes as well as the agrarian poor, especially the agrarian proletariat. Whereas the former fight for a greater share in the fruits of development; the poor comprising pauperized peasants and labourers belonging to low castes and tribal groups struggle for survival and for a better life for themselves. Thus, Desai maintained, progress could be achieved only by radically transforming the exploitative capitalist system in India.

Desai also highlighted the repressive role of the state and the growing resistance to it. Desai wrote about the violation of the democratic rights of minorities, women, slum dwellers in urban India, press and other media by the state.

In his studies of nationalism, analysis of rural social structure, the nature of economic and social policies of change in India and the structure of state and

society, he has consistently tried to expose the contradictions and anomalies in policies and process of change resulting from the capitalist-bourgeoisie interlocking of interest in the Indian society.

According to Desai, the polarization of class interest, especially of the bourgeoisie, is the foundation of modern society in India. It has thus inherent in it the class contradictions and the logic of its dialectics. This has been thoroughly exposed by Desai in his several writings.

Relevance of Marxist Approach:

In the fifties and early sixties, American structural-functionalism and British functionalism dominated sociological research in India. However, Desai undeterred by these imperialistic influences continued to write on Indian society and state from the perspective of Marxist scholarship. In his address to the All India Sociological Conference, Desai narrated that the dominant sociological approaches in India are basically non-Marxist, and the Marxist approach has been rejected on the pretext of its being dogmatic, value-loaded and deterministic in nature.

The relevant approach, according to Desai, is the Marxist approach as it could help to study of government policies, the classes entrenched into state apparatus and India's political economy. Desai writes: "I wish the social science practitioners in India break through the atmosphere of allergy towards this profound and influential approach and create climate to study the growing body of literature articulating various aspects of Indian society, the class character of the state and the path of development." Thus Desai emphasized on the relevance of the Marxist approach to the study of Indian society.

According to him, the Marxist approach helps one to raise relevant questions, conduct researches in the right direction, formulate adequate hypotheses, evolve proper concepts, adopt and combine appropriate research techniques and locate the central tendencies of transformation with its major implications.

Desai highlights certain crucial aspects of Marxist approach to the study of Indian society. The Marxist approach helps to understand the social reality through the means of production, the techno-economic division of labour involved in operating the instruments of production and social relations of production.

For understanding the post-independence Indian society, the Marxist approach focuses on the specific type of property relations which existed on the eve of independence and which are being elaborated by the state as the active agent of transformation both in terms of elaborating legal-normative notions as well as working out actual policies pursued for development and transformation of Indian society into a prosperous developed one. Hence, the Marxist approach will help the Indian scholars to designate the type of society and its class character, the role of the state and the specificity of the path of development with all the implications.

Desai argues that property relations are crucial because they shape the purpose, nature, control, direction and objectives underlying the production. Further, property relations determine the norms about who shall get how much and on what grounds.

In brief, the Marxist approach gives central importance to property structure in analyzing any society. It provides "historical specification of all social phenomena". Moreover, "this approach recognizes the dialectics of evolutionary as well as revolutionary changes of the breaks in historical continuity in the transition from one socio-economic formation to another".

Marxist analysis of Indian society:

Marx pointed out that different sub-formations within a society could not be understood adequately if not seen in the context of the historical level. Thus, the Marxist approach endeavours to locate, within a specific society, the forces which preserve and forces which prompt it to change, i.e., the forces driving to take a leap into a new or a higher form of social organization, which would unleash the productive power of mankind to a next higher level. He further argues that changes need to be interpreted from the perspective of production relations. And it is precisely the method he has applied.

The Marxist approach further considers that focusing on the type of property relations prevailing in the Indian society as crucial-axial element for properly understanding the nature of transformation that has been taking place in the country.

This approach does not demand crude reducing of every phenomenon to economic factor; it also does not deny the autonomy, or prevalence of distinct institutional and normative features peculiar to a particular society. For instance, according to Desai, it does not deny the necessity of understanding the institution like caste system, religions, linguistic or tribal groups or even specific cultural traditions which are characteristics of the Indian society.

The Marxist approach, in fact, endeavors to understand their role and the nature of their transformation in the larger context of the type of society, which is being evolved, and understand them in the matrix of underlying overall property relations

and norms implicit therein, which pervasively influence the entire social economic formation.

Desai feels that adoption of the Marxist approach will be helpful in studying the industrial relations, not merely as management-labour relations, but as capital-labour relations, and also in the context of the state wedded to capitalist path of development, shaping these relations.

Similarly, it will help understand the dynamics of rural, urban, educational and other developments, better as it will assist the exploration of these phenomena in the larger context of the social framework, which is being created by the state shaping the development on capitalist path of development.

The Marxist approach will also assist in understanding why institutions generating higher knowledge products, sponsored/ financed and basically shaped by the state pursuing a path of capitalist development, will not basically allow the paradigms and approaches to study, which may expose the myth spread about state as welfare neutral state and reveal it as basically a capitalist state.

Conclusion:

A.R. Desai ably showed how the Marxist approach can be applied in understanding Indian social reality. Desai undertakes an economic interpretation of Indian society. Desai applies historical materialism framework for understanding the transformation of Indian society.

Desai's definition of tradition is a watershed. He does not trace it from caste, religion or ritual. The dialectical history of India that he presents very clearly shows that traditions have their roots in India's economy and production relations.

Desai developed the Marxian framework to outline the growth of capitalism in India. He provided an analysis of the emergence of the various social forces, which radically altered the economy and society in India within the context of colonialism. The state which emerged in India after independence, he postulated, was a capitalist state.

Desai explored the relations between the state and the capitalist class. To him, the administrative apparatus of the state performed the twin functions of protecting the propertied classes and suppressing the struggles of the exploited classes.

Desai also took on the traditional communist parties and the Marxist scholars who spoke of the alliance with the progressive bourgeoisie, of semi-feudalism, of foreign imperialist control over Indian economy, and who postulated a 'two-stages theory of revolution' or accepted a 'peaceful parliamentary road to socialism' in India.

What is wrong with Desai is that he was very profound when he applies principles of Marxism in analyzing Indian situation but fails at the level of empirical support. Yogendra Singh considers that the main limitation of Desai's approach is the lack of substantial empirical data in support of his major assertions, which can easily be challenged.

Desai remarked on the absence of a comprehensive analysis of the class character, class role and the economic, repressive, ideological functions of the post-independence Indian state by scholars. Further, Desai argues that the methodology adopted by social scientists is apt to understand social reality from the ideology of capitalism. But that is a false finding.

Desai's works include a number of edited volumes on rural sociology, urbanization, labour movements, peasant struggles, modernization, religion, and democratic rights. They are a rich source of reference material for students, researchers and activists. The large amount of work produced by Desai is also testimony to the missionary zeal with which he carried on his endeavour.

Desai not only did give notice to the mainstream that Marx has a place in Indian sociology, but also he provided a forum for radical-minded scholars to broaden their horizon of research.

IAS GURUKUL

IMPACT OF COLONIAL RULE ON INDIAN SOCIETYSOCIAL BACKGROUND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

Traditional Indian historiography explains rise and growth of Indian nationalism in terms of Indian response to stimulus generated by British Raj through creation of new institutions, new opportunities, resources etc. In other words, the growth of Indian national consciousness in the latter half of the nineteenth century was not to the liking of British colonial rulers. At first, British scholars and administrators denied the existence of any feeling of nationality in India. In 1883 J.R. Seeley described India as mere 'geographical expression' with no sense whatsoever of national unity. In 1884 John Strachey, an ex-civil servant, told the alumni of Cambridge University, "This is the first and most essential thing to learn about India that there is not, and never was an India". He further forecast that India will never become a united nation.

When the closing decade of the 19th century and first decade of the 20th century demonstrated that nationalism had grown and was gaining strength, British scholars struck a new posture. The authors of the Montford Report claimed credit that British rule was the harbinger of nationalist upsurge in India; it wrote, "The politically-minded Indians...are intellectually our children. They have imbibed ideas which we ourselves set before them and we ought to reckon it to our credit. The present intellectual and moral stir in India is no reproach but rather a tribute to our work". R. Coupland in a more forthright language wrote "Indian nationalism was the child of the British Raj". Coupland forgot to mention that Indian nationalism was an unwanted child of the Raj whom it refused to feed at birth and sought to strangle it subsequently.



Nationalism is part of our daily lives today

It would be more correct to say that Indian nationalism was partly the product of a worldwide upsurge of the concepts of nationalism and right of self determination initiated by the French Revolution, partly the result of Indian Renaissance, partly the offshoot of modernisation initiated by to British in India and partly developed as a strong reaction to British imperial policies in India.

1. Impact of British Rule British colonial rulers followed modern methods-political, military, economic and intellectual---to establish and continue their stranglehold over India and for fuller economic exploitation of India's resources. A dose of modernization was an essential concomitant of the colonial scheme of administration and this modernization, distorted thought it was-generated some developments and one of these was growth of Indian nationalism.

2. Political Unity of India Imperial Britain conquered whole of India from the Himalayas in the north to Cape Comorin in the South and from Assam in the east to the Khyber Pass in the west. They created a larger state than that of the Mauryas or the great Mughals. While Indian provinces were under direct British rule, Indian states were under indirect British rule. The British sword imposed political unity in India. Common subjection, common institutions, common laws began to shape India in a common mould. Despite imperial efforts to sow communal, regional and linguistic dissensions, pan-Indianism grew. The establishment of political unity fostered the spirit of one-mindedness.

3. Establishment of Peace and Administrative Unification of India

After the chaotic conditions of 18th century (partly created by the aggressive wars waged by European trading companies), the British rulers established peace and orderly government in India. British scholars take pride in the fact that Pax Britannica brought prolonged peace and order for the first time in India.

The British also established a highly centralised administrative system in India. Percival Griffiths refers to the impersonality of British administration to be its most important characteristic i.e. the fundamental character of administration did not change with the change of top administrators like Secretaries of State and Viceroys (as had been the case with all previous empires in India). Further, administrative unification had important effects in many other fields. A highly-trained, professional, Indian Civil Service managed the district administration in all parts of India. A unified judicial setup, codified civil and criminal law rigorously enforced throughout the length and breadth of the country imparted a new dimension of political unity to the hitherto cultural unity that had existed in India for centuries. In the words of Edwyn Bevan, the British Raj was like a steel-frame which held the injured body of India together till the gradual process of internal growth had joined the dislocated bones, knit up torn fibres and enabled the patient to regain inner coherence and unity.

4. Development of rapid means of transport and communications

The necessities of administrative convenience, considerations of military defence and urge for economic penetration and commercial exploitation were the drives behind planned development of modern means of transport. A network of roads linked one province with another and the metropolitan centers with mofussil areas.

For more than anything else the development of railways has unified the country. The construction of railways began in India in the 1850s and by 1880 some 8500 miles of rail track had been built, extending to 25000 miles by 1900. Apart from many other advantages, the railways have facilitated the growth of nationalism. As early as 1865 Edwin Arnold wrote, "Railways may do for India what dynasties have

never done-- what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not effect by government, nor the cruelty of Tipu Saheb by violence- they have made India a nation". The development of the modern postal system and the introduction of electric telegraph in the 1850s helped to unify the country. A cheap 1/2 anna uniform postage rate for inland letters and still cheaper rates for transmission of newspaper and parcels brought about a transformation in the social, educational, intellectual and political life of the people. National literature could be circulated through the post offices that operated in every nook and corner of the country. The electric telegraph brought about a revolution in the speedy transmission of messages.

Thus, the modern means of communications enabled people living in different parts of India to maintain regular contacts with one another and thus promoted the cause of nationalism. In fact, modern political organizations like the Indian National Congress, the All -Indian Trade Union Congress, the All India Kisan Sabha, the All-India Muslim League could neither have come into existence nor could function on a national scale without the facilities provided by modern railways, motor buses or the communication facilities provided by the Post and Telegraph Department.

5. Introduction of Modern Education The introduction of modern system of education afforded opportunities for assimilation of modern western ideas which in turn gave a new direction to Indian political thinking. Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, T.B. Macaulay and Lord William Bentick (then Governor General) took a momentous decision in 1835 when they inaugurated the system of English education in India. Asked to give his opinion about the possible effect of English education upon the probable maintenance of the British government in India, Trevelyan argued before the Indian Committee of the House of Lords in 1835 that "the British raj in India could not last forever. It was bound to die one day either at the hands of those Indians who subscribed to the indigenous model of political change or at the hands of those who had been educated in English and subscribed to the new British model of political change. If it was to die at the hands of the latter, it would take a long time and the severance of the British connection with India would be neither violent nor harmful to Britain, for cultural and commercial bonds would continue". Macaulay struck a different note, though the end-result he envisaged was not very different. In the course of a speech before the House of Commons in 1833, Macaulay said, "It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system until it has outgrown that system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European language, they may, in some future age demand European institutions".

The English system of education though conceived by the rulers in the interests of efficient administration opened to the newly educated Indians the floodgates of liberal European thought. The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, Bentham, Mill, Spencer, Rousseau and Voltaire inspired the Indian intelligentsia with the ideals of liberty, nationality and self-government and made clear to them the anachronism of British rule in India.

The newly-educated class usually adopted the professions of junior administrators, lawyers, doctors, teachers etc. Some of them visited England to receive higher education. While in England they saw with their own eyes the working of political institutions in a free country. On their return to India, these persons found the atmosphere cringing and slavish with the total denial of basic rights to citizens. These vilayat returned Indians with the ever-expanding English educated class formed the middle class intelligentsia. This English educated intelligentsia, somewhat conscious of political rights, found that despite the promises contained in the Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 the doors of higher services remained closed to the Indians. This realization drove discontent and frustration among them and this discontent proved infectious. Aurobindo and many others turned nationalist only after the doors of the coveted service were closed to them. These intelligent and well-informed persons formed the nucleus for the newly arising political unrest and it was this section of the society which provided leadership to the Indian political association.

The spread and popularity of the English language in all parts of India gave to the educated Indians a common language—a lingua franca—through the medium of which they could communicate with one another and transact their conferences and congresses. In the absence of such a lingua franca it would have been very difficult for the Bengalis, the Punjabis, the Tamilians, the Maharashtrians etc., to come on a common platform or organise a movement of an all-India character.

6. Emergence of Modern Press The emergence of the modern press both English and vernacular was another offshoot of British rule in India. It was the Europeans who first set up printing presses in India and published newspapers and other cheap literature. Gradually the vernacular press came into existence and developed on the western pattern. In spite of the numerous restrictions imposed on the press by the colonial rulers from time to time Indian journalism made rapid strides. The latter half of the 19th century saw an unprecedented growth of Indian-owned English and vernacular newspapers. In 1877 there were about 169 newspapers published in vernacular languages and their circulation reached the neighbourhood of 100,000.

The Indian press has played a notable role in mobilizing public opinion, organising political movements, fighting out public controversy and promoting nationalism. Newspapers like the Indian Mirror, the Bengalee, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, Bombay Chronicle, the Hindu Patriot, the Mahratta, Kesari, Andhra Prakasika, The Hindu, Indu Prakash, Kohinur etc. in English and different Indian languages exposed the excesses of British Indian administration apart from popularizing among the people the ideas of representative government, liberty, democratic institutions, home rule and independence. It may not be an exaggeration to state that the press became the mirror of Indian nationality and the primary medium of popular public education.

7. Rise of the Middle Class Intelligentsia

British administrative and economic innovations gave rise to a new urban middle class in towns. The new class readily learnt English for it promoted employment and gave a sense of prestige. This class, prominent because of its education, new position and its close ties with the ruling class came to the forefront. P. Spear writes, "The new middle class was a well integrated all-India class with varied background but a common foreground of knowledge, ideas and values ... It was a minority of Indian society, but a dynamic minority.... It had a sense of unity of purpose and of hope". This middle class proved to be the new soul of modern India and in due course infused the whole of India with its spirit. This class, provide leadership to the Indian National Congress in all its stages of growth.

8. Influence of Historical Researches

Historical researches in ancient Indian history conducted mostly by European scholars like Max Muller, Monier William, Roth, Session etc opened new vistas of India's rich cultural heritage. In particular, the excavations conducted by archaeologists like Marshall and Conningham created a new picture of India's past glory and greatness no less impressive than that of ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome. The scholars praised the Vedas and Upanishads for their literary merit and excellent analysis of the human mind. The theory put forward by European scholars that the Indo-Aryans belonged to the same ethnic group of mankind from which stemmed all the nations of Europe gave a psychological boost to educated Indians. All these gave a new sense of confidence to the educated Indians and inspired them with a new spirit of patriotism and nationalism.

9. Impact of Contemporary European Movements

Contemporary strong currents of nationalist ideas which pervaded the whole of Europe and South America did stimulate Indian nationalism. A number of nation states came into existence in South America on the ruins of the Spanish and Portuguese empires. In Europe the national liberation movements of Greece and Italy in general and of Ireland in particular deeply stirred the emotions of Indians. Educated Indians touring Europe were greatly impressed by these nationalist movements. We find Surendranath Banerji delivering lectures on Joseph Mazzini and the Young Italy movement organized by him. Lajpat Rai very often referred to the campaigns of Garibaldi and the activities of Carbonaris in his speeches and writings. Thus, European nationalist movement did lend strength to the developing nationalism in India.

10. Progressive Character of Socio-Religious Reform Movements

In the 19th century educated Indians began to examine afresh their religious beliefs and customs and their social practices in the light of new knowledge of western science and philosophy which they had acquired. The result was various religious and social reform movements in Hindu religion like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society. Similar movements reformed Muslim, Sikh and Parsi societies also.

In the religious sphere the reform movements combated religious superstition, attacked idolatry, polytheism and hereditary priesthood. In the social sphere, these

movements attacked the caste system, untouchability and other social and legal inequalities, these movements were progressive in character for they sought reorganisation of society on democratic lines and on the basis of ideas of individual equality, social equality, reason, enlightenment and liberalism.

Most of the religious societies had no political mission; all the same whosoever came under their influence rapidly developed a sense of self respect and spirit of patriotism. Since many reform movements drew their inspiration from India's rich cultural heritage, these promoted pan Indian feelings and spirit of nationalism.

11. Racialism One unfortunate legacy of the Rebellion of 1857 was the feeling of racial bitterness between the rulers and the ruled. The Punch cartooned Indians as half-gorilla, half-negroes. The Anglo Indian bureaucracy developed an attitude of arrogance and contempt towards the Indians. They somehow came to the conclusion that the only argument that worked effectively with the Indians was superior force. These Europeans developed their own social code of ethics and worked out the theory of a superior race. The Indians were dubbed as belonging to an inferior race and no longer worthy of any trust. The Indians were frequently referred to as a nation of liars, perjurers and forgers. The Anglo Indian lobby produced books glorifying the western races, particularly the English. This narrow approach evoked a reaction in the Indian mind and put the educated Indians on the defensive.

12. Economic Exploitation The impact of British rule on the Indian economy was disastrous. Jawaharlal Nehru has summed up the Indian viewpoint when he writes, "The economy of India had...advanced to as high a stage as it could reach prior to the Industrial Revolution" but "foreign political domination...led to destruction of the economy she had built up, without anything positive or constructive taking its place", the net result being "poverty and degradation beyond measure". The general object of British policies-even though claimed to be social welfare by some British scholars-was a systematic destruction of traditional Indian economy.

The sharp reaction to discriminatory British economic and fiscal policies gave rise to economic nationalism in India. In the first half of the nineteenth century Britain was in the vanguard of Industrial Revolution and-needed cheap raw material and a market for her industrial products. Interests of imperial Britain required that Indian economy be subordinated to British capital. Policies of India in all fields - agriculture, heavy industry, finance, tariffs, foreign capital investment, foreign trade, banking etc. were all geared to the preservation of the colonial economy.

In spite of British intentions to the contrary, modern capitalist enterprise made a beginning in India in the 1860s. This development alarmed the British textile manufacturers who started clamouring for revision of Indian tariff rates to suit their sectional interests. The classic example is the controversy of Cotton Duties which were frequently shuffled at the lobbying of British capitalists. The pound Re-exchange ratio was also manipulated to the disadvantage of Indian industry and foreign trade. All these developments made it clear that whenever British economic interests clashed with Indian economic development, the latter had to be sacrificed.

The extravagant civil and military administration, the denial of high posts to Indians, the ever mounting Home Charges, the continuous drain of wealth from India resulted in stagnation of Indian economy. The cumulative effect was increasing misery of the people. Periodical famines became a regular feature of Indian economic life. During the second half of the 19th century 24 famines visited various parts of India taking an estimated toll of 28 million souls. What is worse is that even during the famine times, export of food grains from India continued.

Indian nationalists developed the "theory of increasing poverty in India" and attributed it to Britain's anti India economic policies. They tagged poverty and foreign rule. This psychology developed a hatred for foreign rule and love for Swadeshi goods and Swadeshi rule. The spirit of nationalism received a powerful stimulus in the process.

13. Lord Lytton's Reactionary Policies The short-sighted acts and policies of Lord Lytton acted like catalytic agents and accelerated the movement against foreign rule. The maximum age limit for the I.C.S. examination was reduced from 21 years to 19 years, thus making it impossible for Indians to compete for it. The grand Delhi Durbar of 1877, when the country was in the severe grip of famine, solicited the remark from a Calcutta journalist that 'Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning.' Lytton put on the statute book two obnoxious measures-the Vernacular Press Act and Indian Arms Act (1878). Lytton's unpopular acts provoked a great storm of opposition in the country and led to the organisation of various political associations for carrying on anti government propaganda in the country.

14. Ilbert Bill Controversy The Ilbert Bill controversy raised passions on both sides which did not easily subside. Ripon's government sought to abolish judicial disqualification based on race distinctions and the Ilbert Bill sought to give Indian members of the Covenanted Civil Service the same powers and rights as their European colleagues enjoyed. The Bill raised a storm of agitation among the members of the European community and they all stood united against the bill. Ripon had to modify the bill which almost defeated the original purpose. The Ilbert Bill controversy proved an eye opener to the Indian intelligentsia. It became clear to them that justice and fairplay could not be expected where the interests of the European community were involved. Further, it demonstrated to them the value of organized agitation.

MODERNIZATION OF INDIAN TRADITION

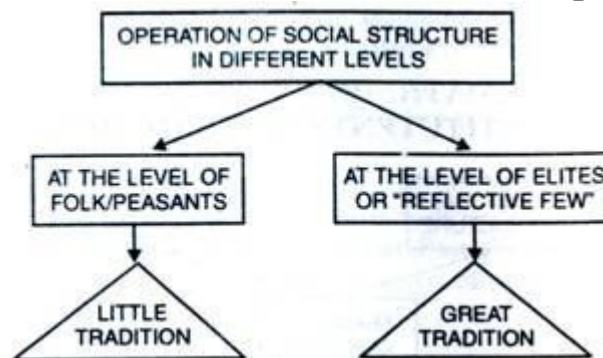
Yogendra Singh in his famous book 'Modernization of Indian Tradition' has made an attempt to analyse the process of modernization in India from a systemic sociological perspective. In course of his analysis he has concentrated on the two key concepts namely 'social structure' and 'tradition' because they constitute the core of social realities. Prior to Singh's work most of the studies on social change have focused either on social structure or tradition. But Singh made an integral study by throwing light on both these aspects.

In the beginning he made a critical review of the prevailing sets of conceptual formulations on social change and modernization. He made a critical analysis of the concepts of change in the cultural traditions, such as Sanskritization, Westernization, Little and Great Tradition, Universalization and parochialization employed by the social scientists and pointed out their short comings in the analysis of structural changes and their logical inadequacies. Thereafter he proceeded to present a new paradigm as illustrated below.

Cultural Structure		Social Structure		
Source of Change	Little tradition	Great tradition	Micro structure	Macro structure
Hetero Genetic change	Islamization	Secondary Islamic Contact	Role differentiation	Political Innovations
Orthogenetic changes	Primary Westernization	Secondary Westernization	New legitimations	New Structure of elite, bureaucracy, industry etc.
	Sanskritization or traditionalization	Cultural renaissance	Pattern recurrence, compulsive migration or population shift	Elite Circulation, succession of king, rise and fall of cities and trade centers

The paradigm has two dimensions namely the sources from which social change begins and the nature of social phenomena undergoing such changes. The latter can be categorised as tradition and social structure respectively. The sources of changes may be endogenous or exogenous. By endogenous sources of social change he means the sources lying within the social system from which social change originates. Exogenous sources refer to the sources lying outside the system. The term 'tradition' refers to the value themes. It is characterized by four attributes such as hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence. He divided tradition into

two categories namely Great Tradition and Little Tradition. Great Tradition implies the cultural beliefs and practices which are held throughout the country. This is of pan Indian character: On the other hand, Little Tradition comprises the cultural beliefs and practices held by the folk through oral tradition and localized adaptations of cultural roles and values of the Great Tradition. Both Hindu and Islam traditions of India were rooted on the principles of hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence. Modernization of tradition in both the traditions means a change from hierarchy to equality, from holism to individualism, from continuity to historicity and from transcendence to this worldly rationalism and secularism. Under the impact of westernization there emerged universal legal system, educational modernization, expansion of communication networks, technologies, urban centres and the modern political institutions. All these account for the institutionalization of a parallel new Great Tradition.



In the sphere of little tradition two forces of change namely Sanskritization and Islamization which emanate from within the Hindu and Islam tradition respectively. Sanskritization refers to the process by which a low Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high frequently twice born caste. Islamization refers to conversion to Islam. It was determined by such structural factors as redefinition of self-image, frustration from the closure of the existing system of stratification and anticipation that conversion would improve social changes. Like Sanskritization, Islamization was popular among the lower castes.

Y. Singh attributed the sources of breakdown of Indian process of modernization to the structural inconsistencies such as: democratization without spread of civic culture (education), bureaucratization without commitment to universalistic norms, rise in media participation (communication) and aspiration without proportionate increase in resources and distributive justice, verbalization of a welfare without its diffusion in social structure and its implementation as a social policy, over-urbanization without industrialization and finally modernization without meaningful changes in the stratification system. Over and above, in the views of Singh, modernization in Indian society has taken to conciliatory pattern. It has shown the wonderful capacity to absorb the shocks of tensions and contradictions. This minimizes the chances of structural breakdown. Democratic values have taken root in the political system. The cultural gap existing between the various kinds of elite has not contributed to the generation of conflict in modernization ideology. Traditions thrive in the process of modernization without creating hurdles on its path. Adoptions of Green Revolution in the countryside and family welfare

measures to control the growth of population are the new hopeful signs of modernization without breakdown.

However, Singh's approach to modernization of Indian tradition suffers from certain limitations. He has focused only on selected sociological variables such as Little Traditions, Great Traditions, Macro and Micro structures and their forms. Some other variables like the demographic and economic variables have been left untouched. In spite of these limitations Singh's paradigm of modernization is unique. It presents a broad and integrated view relating to modernization in India.

PROTESTS & MOVEMENTS DURING COLONIAL PERIOD

During the colonial rule of India, a lot of protests and movements gathered momentum in the various cross - sections of our society. The agricultural workers or the peasants started movements demanding reduction of rent on agricultural land while the lower castes people started movements for overcoming the structural rigidity of caste system and adopting humanitarian approach for their being placed on equal footing with the high caste Hindus. Various socio-religious movements were initiated by great reformers of India to eradicate many of the superstitious practices and irrational elements prevailing in our society.

So the protests and movements during this period can be categorised into three groups

- (1) Peasant Movements
- (2) Backward caste movements
- (3) Socio religious movements

Let us discuss all the above protests and movement one by one

1. PEASANT MOVEMENTS

The study of peasants' movements had emerged as an important area in the study of social movements in India. Since India is essentially an agrarian country, it is natural that the study of agrarian problems has assumed a central place in sociological issues.

While talking about land reforms we observe the complexity of our agrarian system. Patterns of landownership, tenancy, use and control of land, all reflect the complex nature of agrarian structure. The complexity of agrarian structure is also manifested in the agrarian class structure which has existed since long in rural areas. The diversity of land systems and agrarian relations has produced an elaborate structure of agrarian classes. The latter vary from one region to another. However, based on the nature of rights in land and the type of income derived from it, Daniel Thorner has identified three major agrarian classes in India. They are (a) Maliks, (b) Kisans, and (c) Mazdoors. Big landlords and rich land owners are included under the category of Maliks. Kisans are inferior to Maliks comprising self-cultivating owners of land. They are small landowner and tenants. Mazdoors earn their livelihood from working on others' lands. This category includes poor

tenants, sharecroppers and landless labourers. This classification of agrarian classes broadly reflects the Indian reality.

But it needs to be recognized that the agrarian hierarchy, as indicated just now, corresponds with the caste hierarchy which we find in different parts of the country. The rich landowners and moneylenders mainly belong to the upper castes. The middle and small peasants come from the traditional peasants castes. The landless labourers belong primarily to the lower castes. Such position merely shows a pattern. It does not refer to the exact situation in the rural areas.

We have mentioned the nature of agrarian class structure here to understand the structural background in which movements have been launched by different classes of peasantry. D.N. Dhanagare's study of peasant movements in India helps us to know the nature of these terms, peasant movement refers to all kinds of collective attempts of different strata of the peasantry either to change the system which they felt was exploitative, or seek redress for particular grievances without necessarily aiming at overthrowing the system. Peasant movements thus include all kinds of movements, violent and nonviolent, organized and sporadic.

India has a long history of peasant movements. The nineteenth century India is considered a treasure house of materials on peasant heroism. The most militant peasant movement of this period was the Indigo Revolt of 1859-60 in Bengal. Only a decade later, similar violent disturbance took place in Pabna and Bogra in Bengal in 1872-73. These struggles were directed against Zamindars who were the symbols of exploitation and atrocities. The landowning and money lending classes had consolidated their position not only in Zamindari areas but also in Raiyatwari and Mahalwari areas. The small landholders, tenants and share croppers were the victims of the moneylender's tyranny. Accordingly, the peasant revolted against the oppression of the powerful agrarian classes. One of such revolts in Raiyatwari areas is known as the Deccan Riots of 1875 that occurred in western Maharashtra. A series of Moplah uprisings in Malabar region of southern India also took place throughout the nineteenth century. They were expressions of longstanding agrarian discontent among the poor Moplah peasantry.

It is fascinating to note that peasant's grievances also became a component of the India's freedom struggle during the early twentieth century. The Champaran Movement in 1917, the Kheda Satyagrah of 1918 and the Bardoli Satyagrah of 1928 were the major non-violent anti-British struggles. Since Mahatma Gandhi was involved in these Satyagrahs, they are popularly known as Gandhian agrarian movements. Most of these movements took up relatively minor agrarian issues but they succeeded in arousing political awareness among the masses. Thus, the most significant aspect of these movements was their simultaneous involvement in the nationwide struggle for freedom.

However, peasants in other parts of the country were not inactive. They were equally restive and raised their grievances. Between 1920 and 1946 several peasant organizations and movements emerged in Bihar and Bengal which protested against the deplorable conditions of the middle and poor peasants.

But just before independence, it was the Tebhaga struggle of 1946-47 in Bengal, which was the most effective and widespread of all peasant movements. It was a struggle of share croppers (bargadars) to retain two third share of the produce for themselves. The movement was the outcome of the politicization of the peasantry which was made possible because of the efforts of the Communist Party of India and the Kisan Sabha. The Telangana peasant struggle, which occurred on the eve of India's independence, was another important struggle of the poor peasants. It developed in the Nizam ruled Hyderabad State in 1946 and lasted for five years till it was called off in October 1951.

We have briefly discussed above the nature and features of peasant movements to familiarise ourselves with the role of social movements in social change. True, these movements have not always been successful in achieving their immediate goals but they created the climate which produced post-Independence agrarian reforms.

KISAN SABHA

Long before the nationalist movement, there was tension and unrest among the peasant community and a number of uprisings occurred due to many socioeconomic factors.

But there was no political consciousness or well-organized action among the peasant community. It was after 1918 that Kisans began to develop political consciousness. It was Gandhi, who by dint of his charismatic leadership and symbolic activities which captivated the peasant's imagination, brought them out of political darkness and involved them in national movement. The peasant community came in contact with many intellectuals and political leaders. The effects of urban working class movements, other great revolutions like Russian revolution along with the factors that gave rise to Indian nationalism, opened their eyes, and they began to feel that it was not God but the government who was responsible for their deplorable condition.

Though Gandhi made the "peasant speak for the Congress, he did little to make the Congress speak for the peasant". The grievances were not only against the government but also against the landlords and Zamindars. So while fighting against the British government they also began their fight against the Zamindars. But the National Congress could not support their cause. It apprehended the danger of dividing people into different groups on the basis of economic interest. The primary aim of the Congress was to achieve national liberation for which have it had to fight against British government. The division of people would have caused damage to the national struggle. Besides, many Zamindars and landlords were also in Congress. All these prevented the Congress leadership from raising their voice against ravages of Zamindari system and supporting the tillers.

The leaders of the Kisans could realize that the Congress would not fight against the Zamindars and capitalists. They felt the need of forming their own associations to protect the interests of the peasantry. So, after the Non-Cooperation Movement, the process of formation of independent class organizations of the Kisans started. In 1923 Ryot's association and agricultural labour unions were formed in Andhra.

In 1926-27 the Kisan Sabhas were formed in Punjab, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In 1928, the Andhra Provisional Ryots' Association was started.



The most liberal outlook of Gandhi, his decision to halt the civil disobedience movement just when it was gathering momentum and strength, brought dissatisfaction in the minds of many Congress leaders resulting in divisions within the party. This, along with other factors lead to the formation of Congress Socialist Party in 1934. The Communist Party of India also began to take shape in the thirties. By this time Kisan Sabhas grew up in many parts of the country. The Bihar Kisan Sabha grew up into a strong organization after 1934. In 1935, provincial Kisan Sabha was formed in U.P.

The Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party of India joined together in 1936. These left forces took up the cause of Indian peasantry. Many nationalist revolutionaries, majority of whom were communists and socialists met at Lucknow under the presidentship of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. On 11th April, 1936, the All India Kisan Sabha took its birth.

It was a landmark in the history of peasant movement in India, for an All India organization of Indian peasantry come in to existence with a programme of common demands and expressing the aspirations of entire Kisan community of this vast land, AIKS adopted the Red Flag as its banner which symbolized international solidarity and unity of the proletariat peasantry. It sought to integrate the struggle, for land with the fight for freedom, and started its fight against feudal and imperialist exploitation making an invaluable contribution to the national struggle for complete independence.

When the All India Kisan Sabha adopted its manifesto in 1936, agrarian revolution was still lying in the future. The Kisan Sabha, therefore, adopted maximum and minimum programmes and did not fail to emphasize the need of an anti-imperialist

revolution. According to the manifesto, the object of the Kisan Sabha was to secure complete freedom from economic exploitation and the achievement of full economic and political power to the peasants and the workers. In the maximum programme, there was the demand of abolition of Zamindari and the vesting of land in the tillers.

The Sabha followed the technique of mass revolution by carrying all the sections of peasantry with it. The Sabha spoke for rich and middle peasant and put up the fight for poor peasants. In his presidential address of AIKS conference in 1938, Acharya Narendra Dev emphasized that "our task today is to carry the whole peasantry with us... If romantic conceptions were to shape our resolves and prompt our actions we would aspire to organize first the agricultural labourer and semi proletariat of the village, the most oppressed and exploited rural class but if we do so...the peasant in that case remain aloof from the anti imperialist struggle".

From that time the AIKS went on expanding in its size and functions. In 1938, a Kisan school was established in Nidubrole to teach the Kisans the methods of carrying on propaganda and getting organized. The most important functions among them were the many historic Kisan agitations that were organised. The most important among them were Tebhaga movement in Bengal, Bakhshat movement in Bihar, Punnapra, Vayalar in Kerala, Pepsu Tenant's Armed Struggle in Punjab and Telangana armed struggle in Andhra Pradesh.

It continued its fight up to independence in 1947. After political independence, the nature and aim of this Sabha has changed. AIKS is now a branch of Communist Party of India. Now its major aim is the protection of rights of peasantry and to free them from the socioeconomic exploitation. Along with this, other Kisan organizations like Bhartiya Khet Mazdoor Union, Bhartiya Krishak Samaj grew up to fight for the cause of peasants. The AIKS was divided subsequently. After that the different groups never succeeded in uniting again in one organization. After the independence, socialists had organized Hind Kisan Panchayat. Another peasant union known as United Kisan Sabha was organized under the leadership of Jogesh Chandra Chatterji.

Thus, after independence, the entire peasant community has been divided along political lines. Different organizations are working as the branches of different political parties. As such, none of them is able to bring any major relief for the peasant community. Rather the divisions and subdivisions have created tension and conflict among the peasants themselves which has stood as a barrier on realization of common ends of the peasant community. However, the AIKS still continues to be the dominant organization having its links with many international peasant associations such as United Peasant Party of Poland, Farmers Mutual Aid Association of Germany, Pakistan Kisan Committee of Pakistan, Agricultural Farm Labour Federation of Bangladesh, All of Agriculture PDR of Yemen, Agricultural Workers Union of Vietnam, Peasants Cooperative of D.R.A. of Afghanistan etc.

TELANGANA MOVEMENT

This movement was launched in the state of Andhra Pradesh against the former Nizam of Hyderabad. The agrarian social structure in the Nizam's Hyderabad was of a feudal order. It had two kinds of land tenure systems, namely, raiyatwari and jagirdari. Under the raiyatwari system, the peasants owned patta and were proprietors of land; they were registered occupants. The actual cultivators of the land were known as shikmidars. Khalsa were chieftain's land, and out of revenue collected from these lands, personal expenses of the royalty were met out. The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes were the hereditary collectors of revenue for khalsa villages. In jagir villages, the tax was collected through jagirdars and their agents. Both the jagirdars and the Deshmukhs wielded immense power at the local level.

The region of Telangana was characterized by a feudal economy. The main commercial crops, viz., groundnut, tobacco and castor seed, were the monopoly of the landowning Brahmins. The rise of Reddys and peasant proprietors further strengthened the high castes and propertied class. The non-cultivating urban groups, mostly Brahmins, Marwaris, Komtis and Muslims, began to take interest in acquiring land. Consequently, the peasant proprietors slid down to the status of tenants at will, sharecroppers and landless labourers.

Following were the main causes of the movement:

(1) The Nizam's former Hyderabad state had a feudal structure of administration. In the jagir area, the agents of the jagirdar who were the middlemen, collected the land taxes. There was much of oppression by the jagirdar and his agents. They were free to extort from the actual cultivators a variety of taxes. This condition of exploitation remained in practice till the jagirdari system was abolished in 1949.

On the other hand the Khalsa land or the raiyatwari system was also exploitative though the severity of exploitation in the khalsa system was little lesser. In the khalsa villages, the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes worked as intermediaries. They were not in the payroll of the jagir administration; they were only given a percentage of the total land collection made by them. The Deshmukhs and Deshpandes then developed a habit to cheat the peasants by creating fraud in the land records. Thus, in countless instances they reduced the actual cultivator to the status of tenant-at-will or a landless labourer.

In both the systems of administration, i.e., jagir and khalsa, the peasants were exploited by the intermediaries appointed by Nizam. High taxes, fraud with the record and exploitation resulted in creating discontent among the poor peasants

(2) Yet another cause of peasant movement in Telangana was the exploitation by the big peasants. D.N. Dhanagare informs that the jagirdars and the Deshmukhs had thousands of acres of land in their possession. The families of these big peasants and their heads were called Durra or Dora. It means, the master or lord of the village. Dhanagare says that the Dora exploited the small peasants and agricultural labourers. This exploitation, in course of time, became legitimized with

the big farmers. It was considered to be the privilege of the Dora to exploit the masses of peasants. Dhanagare observers:

Such exaction had become somewhat legitimized by what was known as the vetti system under which a landlord or a Deshmukh could force a family from among his customary retainers to cultivate his land and to do one job or the other - whether domestic, agricultural or official, as an obligation to the master.

(3) In the whole former state of Nizam a system of slavery, quite like that of Hali of south Gujarat, was prevalent. This system was known as Bhagela. The Bhagela were drawn mostly from aboriginal tribes who were tied to the master by debt. According to Bhagela system, the tenant who had taken loan from the landlord was obliged to serve him till the debt is repaid. In most of the cases, the Bhagela was required to serve the landlord for generations.

(4) The Reddis and Kammars were notable castes who traditionally worked as traders and money lenders. They exercised a great deal of influence in the countryside. They wanted to pull down the dominance of Brahmins agriculturists in the state.

(5) The Telangana region was economically backward. The development of agriculture depended on the facilities of irrigation. The commercial crops could hardly be taken without irrigation facilities. Though the lack of irrigation was realized by Nizam and he provided irrigation facilities to the peasants both in Khalsa and jagir villages; but these facilities were largely cornered by the big farmers.

(6) Land alienation was not new to the former Hyderabad state. Between 1910 to 1940, the frequency of land dispossession increased. On the one hand, the land possessed by the non cultivating urban people, mostly Brahmins, Marwaris, and Muslims increased and on the other hand the tribal peasants got reduced to the status of marginal farmers and landless labourers. Describing the impact of land-alienation on the poorer peasants D.N. Dhanagare writes:

As result of growing land alienation many actual occupants or cultivators were being reduced to tenants-at-will, sharecroppers or landless labourers....in fact, where rich Pattedars held holdings too large to manage they tended to keep a certain amount of irrigated land to be cultivated with the help of hired labour and turned over most of their dry lands either to Bhagela serfs or to tenant cultivators on very high produce rents.

The Telangana peasant unrest did not erupt overnight. It took about three to four decades. Actually, till 1930, the poor condition of the peasants had reached its culmination. Meanwhile, there had been much transformation in agricultural economy. The Telangana economy, which was only subsistence economy, had grown into market economy by the 1940s. With the change in capitalistic agricultural economy, there was no change in the status of the tenants and share croppers. Actually, the modes of production and exchange remained pre-capitalist or semi feudal and emerged as the major source of discontent among the poor peasantry in Telangana. On the other hand, with the termination of Second World War, there was a terrible fall in wholesale prices. The price trends strengthened the

position of moneylenders and traders who tightened their grip on indebted small Pattedars and tenants. One of the bitter consequences of the forces of change has been an increase in the number of agricultural labourers. It appears that there was enough discontent among the lower segments of peasantry. Peasants were only waiting for some opportunity to engineer some insurrection.

The course of events that led to the Telangana peasant struggle can be described as under:

(1) The Telangana peasant movement was engineered by Communist Party of India (CPI). It is said to be a revolution committed by Communists. The Communist Party started working in Telangana in 1936. Professor N.G. Ranga had laid down the regional level peasant organization in Telangana.

This regional organization was affiliated to the All India Kisan Sabha - an organ of CPI. Within a period of three or four years, say by 1940, the CPI had established its roots in the former Hyderabad state. During the period from 1944 to 1946, the Communist activities increased in several of the districts of Hyderabad. A proper framework was therefore, prepared for launching a peasant movement in Telangana.

(2) The next event which took place in Hyderabad and more accurately in Telangana was the famine of 1946. All the crops failed and there was a crisis for the availability of fodder. The prices of food, fodder and other necessities of life increased. This was a crisis of the tenants and the sharecroppers. Actually, the year 1946 provided all opportunities for engineering the peasant struggle. In the early July 1946, the peasants resisted the government orders. Militant action was taken by the CPI-led peasants.

(3) The CPI made an objective to mobilize the peasants. It took up a campaign to propagate the demands of the lower peasants. By the middle of 1946, the Communist propaganda was fully intensified and covered about 300 to 400 villages under its influence. The movement during the period was slow but the peasants showed enough resistance to the government dictates. However, it must be mentioned that in the mobilization of peasantry, only Telangana local peasants participated.

(4) The second conference of CPI was held in March 1948. It resolved to give a revolutionary turn to the peasant movement in Telangana. The peasants later on were organized into an army and intermittently fought guerrilla wars. Writing about this part of the course of events of Telangana peasant struggle Hamza Alvi observes

“.....Telangana movement had a guerrilla army of about 5000. The peasants killed or drove out the landlords and local bureaucrats and seized and distributed the land. They established governments of peasant 'soviets' which were integrated regionally into a central organisation. Peasants rule was established in an area of 15,000 sq. miles, with population of four million. The government of the armed peasantry continued until 1950; it was not finally crushed until the following year. Today, the area remains one of the political strongholds of the Communist party.”

(5) Besides the peasant agitation, a parallel discontent was also taking place in Hyderabad. A paramilitary voluntary force, organized by Kasim Rizvi, was taking its roots. The members of this voluntary organization were known as Razakars. This organization was against the peasants. The peasants consolidated their movement in the face of the oppression of Nizam, activities of Razakars and the authority crisis in Hyderabad.

(6) On September 13, 1948, the Indian army marched into Hyderabad and within less than a week the Nizam's army, police and the Razakars surrendered without resistance. The police action, taken by the newly framed Central government of independent India, was very quick to suppress the peasant movement. D.N. Dhanagare elaborates the police action as under:

On India's part the police action was taken to stop the Razakars frenzies, as they not only created anarchic condition within the state but also posed a serious threat to the internal security of neighbouring Indian territory. The police action was, therefore, unsavoury but essential.... once the Razakars were overpowered, and a military administration set up.....the offensive was immediately directed at the peasant rebels in the troubled districts of Telangana. The superior Indian army spared no measure to suppress the communist squads.

The peasant movement in Telangana had to be withdrawn. Actually the police action gave a death blow to the Communist led Telangana peasant movement and struggle; the movement had to suffer a lot. Fighting with the Indian army over 2,000 peasants and party workers were killed. By August 1949 nearly 25,000 Communists and active participants were arrested; by July 1950 the total number of detainees had reached 10000. This should suffice as an index of the intensity of Telangana peasants struggle.

The Telangana peasant movement continued for about five years. Its outcomes can be enumerated as below:

(1) The struggle had the participation of a mixed class of peasantry. Though the rich peasants, mainly the Brahmins, had their involvement in the struggle; the major achievement was that the struggle for the first time brought together the tenants, sharecroppers and the landless labourers. This was by all means a very big achievement of the struggle. The Kamma and the Reddy castes who belonged to the rich class of peasants though gained enough but the movement consolidated the strength of poor peasants, particularly the tribals, who were the victims of vetti or bonded labour.

(2) Yet another benefit of this struggle was in the favour of the Communist Party. The Communists, for a long time to come, exercised their hegemony over the entire state of Hyderabad.

(3) Though the Communist Party, as a whole, benefited from the Telangana peasant struggle, it had its own losses also. Ideologically, the party got split from top to bottom. One group of Communists supported the struggle while another decried. The second group: argued that the struggle was no less than terrorism.

Writing about the division of Communist Party during the struggle, P. Sundarayya writes:

It is relevant to mention here that during the course of the struggle, particularly during the phase of its last two years, the Communist Party from top to bottom was sharply divided into two hostile camps, one defending the struggle and its achievements and the other denouncing and decrying it as terrorism, etc. Those who opposed this struggle had even openly come out in the press, providing grist to the mill of the enemies in maligning the struggle and the Communist Party that was leading it. This sharp political ideological split, though enveloping the entire party in the country, was particularly sharp and acute in Telangana.

(4) So far as the demands of the poor agricultural classes were concerned the movement was a failure. Surely, there were some gains to Kamma and Reddy - the rich peasants, but the gains of the poor peasants such as sharecroppers were quite meagre.

The Telangana peasant struggle, it must be boldly said, was from above and not from the peasants themselves. No single agrarian stratum initiated the movement. It was all the handiwork of the Communist Party. Despite the failed story of Telangana struggle it must be admitted that it was a source of inspiration for the Communists as a whole in the country. D.N. Dhanagare very rightly makes his conclusive statement about the outcome of the movement when he says:

Telangana insurrection was no more successful than other peasant resistance movements in India. Like all other movements, though, the Telangana struggle also became the source of legends and inspiration for the radical left in India. Recently, there has been a renewed interest, academic as well as political, in the study of the Telangana struggle - its silver jubilee celebrations by all shades of Communist Party in India, became, however, an occasion for mutual mudslinging.

NAXALBARI MOVEMENT

The Naxalbari peasant struggle was launched in March-April 1967. This movement had Tebhaga (1946) peasant movement as its torchbearer. The light provided by Tebhaga inspired the Naxalbari movement. The prime objective of this movement was to change the whole society, not the conditions of peasants only. Then, the Naxalbari movement was highly charged by the ideology of violence. The idiom of the movement was that power comes from the barrel of gun and not by slogans and non-violence. The movement was aimed at the total annihilation of the big farmers, landlords and jagirdars. Nothing short of it could change the structure of society. Naxalbari is a police substation in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. It is in the name of the police substation that the movement is known all over.



Naxal soldiers at a training camp

One principal feature of the region of Darjeeling is the high percentage of sharecroppers. It is because of this that the Naxalbari movement was essentially a movement launched by sharecroppers. In the beginning the movement remained restricted to three police stations only, namely, Phanisidewa, Naxalbari and Khoribari, having a population of about one lakh. The percentage of sharecroppers in and around these three police stations came to around 65% to 50%. The commonly grown crops by the people predominantly include paddy and jute. The Rajbansis are the most preponderant community of the region. They constitute more than 50 percent. It is said that earlier this community was a tribal group known as Koch. With the growing influence of Brahminism in the region, some affluent sections of Koch adopted the nomenclature of Rajbansis. This created social differentiations among the Kochs - one section became Rajbansi, another converted to Islam, and the third one adhered to the original Koch stock. In the process of political development which took place in the Tarai region, the Rajbansis acquired larger portions of land and came to be known as Jotedar. A Jotedar is a person who holds in severalty, joint or in common, a piece of land for which he pays revenue directly to government through his agents. At a later stage, the Jotedar legally became the owner and controller of jotes. Jotes could also be purchased or acquired as gift.

The Jotedar was the peasant proprietor. He leased-out lands to tenants - raiyats, who paid annual rents to him. He also granted land to tenants-at-will, praja. The praja paid rent in kind. The tenants-at-will, as elsewhere in the country, were fully dependent on Jotedar for their seeds, plough, cattle and agricultural implements. The seed advanced was deducted at harvest time from the produce and the balance was shared equally. Below the Jotedar were small farmers, adhiaris who cultivated small patches of land on equal share basis.

The production relations in the Darjeeling district, where the uprising was concentrated, consisted of the nexus of Jotedar-rayat-praja-adhiar. Under this

system, the cultivator was merely reduced to the status of a sharecropper. The sharecropper was completely in a state of dependency and suffered exploitation and succumbed to bondage.

While writing anything on the Naxalbari peasant movement it must be observed categorically that the movement was started by sharecroppers. Second, it was inspired by Tebhaga, the region now being in Bangladesh. Following are some of the important causes of the movement:

(1) The landlord used to take a larger share out of the produce made by the sharecropper. The general share taken by the landlords varied from one-half to one third- this was quite excessive. The sharecroppers, which included rayat, praja and adhiar, demanded reduction of the share of produce.

(2) Another cause of the movement was the demand for the regulation and distribution of benami lands in an appropriate way by the peasants.

(3) The sharecroppers had no power with them. They were helpless under the bondage of the big landholders. It was the major cause for the uprising.

(4) The Naxalbari movement was admittedly a movement of the peasants but above all the major cause of the movement was the class war, between the big farmers and the ordinary peasants.

(5) The sharecroppers alleged that they were against their dependency on the big farmers. The big farmers were guided by the motto: "I will feed you, you produce for me". Such a kind of dependency was not acceptable to the tenants-at-will, the praja and the landless labourers.

(6) The praja had to submit to begar, which is to work as Hali or Vetti.

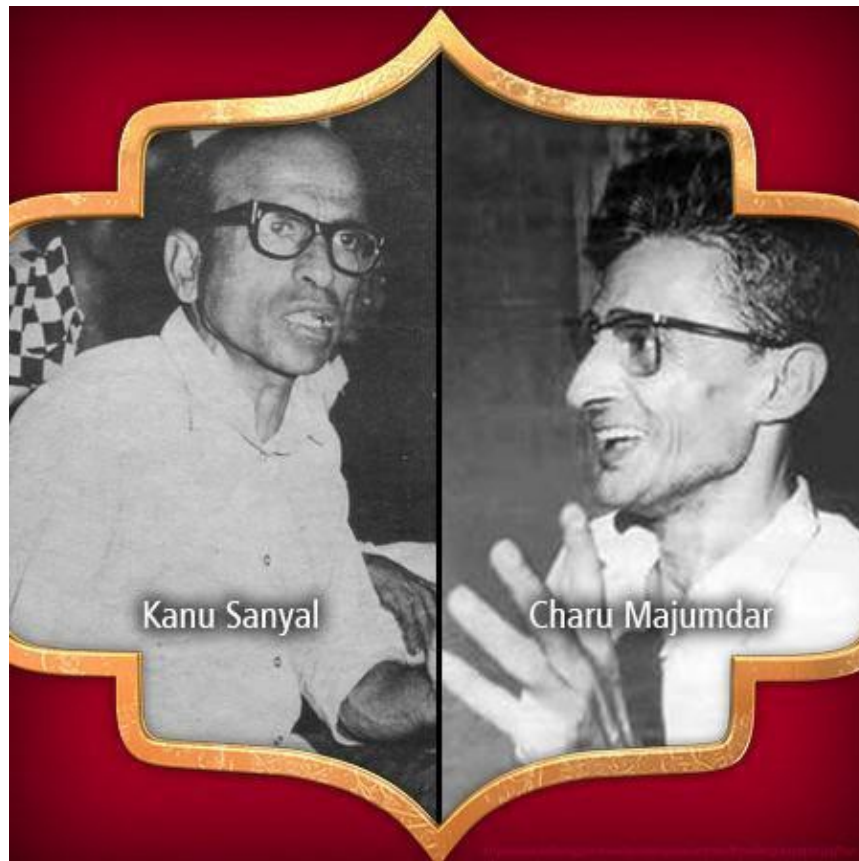
(7) The judiciary of the district was in all cases in favour of the big farmers. The praja were always victimized by the judiciary.

The production relations between the Jotedar, that is former Rajbansis with the praja, adhiar, that is sharecroppers were strained. The exploited masses of the peasants were groaning to engineer a revolutionary struggle.

The course of events that led to the Naxalbari movement can be described as under:

(1) Charu Majumdar was the leader of Naxalbari movement. There was a group of revolutionary leaders known as Siliguri group. This group gave out six documents known as the guidelines for the peasants. The documents advocated the ideology which worked behind the Naxalbari movement. The sum and substance of the six documents included that militancy was the guiding ideology for capturing power. Majumdar and his group preached violence to the peasants saying that land was to be given to the tiller and Congress was to be defeated. The mobilization of the peasantry was made on the lines of class consciousness. It was planned to establish a people's government after annihilating the jotedar-jamindar through

armed revolution. The participants to the struggle were the peasants who were sharecroppers and who identified big farmers - jotedars as their class enemy. Thus, the movement was mobilized against the landed propertied class. For this movement it can safely be said that the broad-based peasantry, inclusive of all its strata, was involved in the struggle.



Leaders of the Naxalbari uprising

(2) During the month of March 1967, the violent leaders of the movement killed a money lender within the jurisdiction of Naxalbari police station. This murder was followed by a series of other murders and one after another the jotedars and sahuikars were killed by the participants of the movement.

(3) The messages of the Movement were given through several slogans. Some of the slogans were borrowed from Tebhaga peasant movement. Throughout the area the leadership to movement was given by Panchnam Sarkar, Kanu Sanyal and others.

(4) In course of time the movement got ablaze in different parts of West Bengal. College students including female participated in the movement. The movement, thus, was not only a movement of the peasants but the society at large.

The Naxalbari movement was essentially against the big farmer, that is, jotedar. Though there was no immediate gain of the struggle, it definitely influenced the course of peasant movements in the country. The Naxalbari movement was a

specific struggle ideologically oriented to Marxian socialism. In the jotedar adhiari relation there was a visible contradiction in capital and labour. The deprivation of adhiari and for that matter for rayat and praja was due to the process of differentiation resulting from the forces of history and modernization. The rank and file of the Communist Party had made the adhiaris conscious of the contradiction which turned them to pauper. Yet another outcome of the Naxalbari movement was that like other movements of the country, it did not stand for structural changes in the old feudal system. Instead, the movement, ideologically and operationally too, stood for systematic change which could end exploitation and operations inherent in the semi feudal system.

BACKWARD CASTES MOVEMENTS

The foundation for the Backward caste movement was laid by the great social reformer of Poona Jyothirao Phule. He was the first to have revolted against the tyranny of caste in general and Brahminical dominance in particular. He established the Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873 which spearheaded the non Brahmin movement. Phule undertook social reforms by establishing schools and hostels for the low caste people in order to elevate their status. He appealed to the non-Brahmin castes and particularly the depressed castes to liberate themselves from mental and religious slavery. He preached against idol worship and superstitions. He also pleaded for communal representation. Prof. Ghurye observes, "Phule's demand for special representation for non Brahmins in the services and local bodies went unheeded till the last decade of the 19th century when the Maharaja of Kolhapur took up the non-Brahmin cause".

Sri Sahu Maharaj as the Leader of Satya Shodhak Samaj : Satya Shodhak Samaj movement was further carried by Sri Sahu Maharaj of Kolhapur after the death of Jyothiba Phule in 1980. Sri Sahu Maharaj, who was a prince, appreciated the cause of Phule and decided to continue the same. He started schools and hostels for exclusively non-Brahmin students. He had shown inclination towards Arya Samaj and decided to carry the message of the Vedas to the downtrodden castes. He raised some basic questions relating to caste, laws of caste membership; sanctions of the Shastras for caste in its present form, etc.

Sri Sahu was more interested in getting communal representation to the depressed and the downtrodden castes. Thank mainly to his efforts, special representation through mixed electorates was conceded to the non Brahmins in the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. Due to his efforts certain percentage of posts for non-Brahmins were reserved. Sri Sahu separated judiciary form the executive functions in his home state.

The greatest contribution of Sri Sahu Maharaj is the fact that he supported and inspired many of the non Brahmin organizations such as Somavamshi Arya Kshatriya Jnana Vardhak Samaj, Gujarati Untouchables Depressed Classes Mission Society, Kurmi Kshatriya Samaj, Maratha Samaj, Mohammedan Samaj, Lingayat Samaj in Mysore, Justice Party in Tamil Nadu, and so on. He gave all the

support to these organizations and helped them to be united as one single Non Brahmin Movement.

Justice Party and the Non Brahmin Movement: The Second Phase

The discontentment of the Non Brahmins began to express itself through various efforts to organize the non-Brahmins in the city of Madras. A Vellala medical student by name of Mudaliar established a Dravidian Association Hostel in Madras in June 1916 with the help of non-Brahmins. He also started a joint stock company called South Indian People's Association Ltd. for the purpose of publishing English, Telugu and Tamil newspapers to express the grievances and problems of the non-Brahmins. Dr. J.M. Nair, Sir P.T. Chettiar and T. Mudaliar also joined this association and made it stronger. This association which advocated the cause of the non-Brahmins started dailies in English by name Justice, in Tamil by name The Dravidian, and in Telugu by name Andhra Prakashika. Finally, they set up the South Indian Liberal Federation which later on came to be called the Justice Party.

The Non-Brahmin Manifesto of the Justice Party The Justice Party released the non-Brahmin Manifesto in December 1916. It was directed against the Brahmins who had dominated the fields of education, public service and politics. It revealed an extremely high concentration of the Brahmins (who constituted only 3% of the total population of the Madras Presidency) in all the important positions. The chief leader of Justice Party Movement, Dr. J.M. Nair announced that without a provision for communal representation the reforms would be a failure. He made known to his people through the Manifesto that the Brahmins had secured 94% of the positions in Madras Provincial Civil Services 1892 and 1904. He also said that in 1904, 77 out of 140 Deputy Collectors were Brahmins and in 1913, 93 out of 128 permanent district Munsifs were Brahmins, 450 out of 650 registered graduates of the Madras University were found to be Brahmins in 1914. The non Brahmins Manifesto which highlighted these statistics demanded a provision for communal representation. The Justice Party with this slogan contested elections and captured polls and formed its ministry in 1920-23. It was defeated in 1926 but it acquired power once again in 1930. But the Congress Party dislodged the Justice Party in 1937 by successfully winning the elections. Justice Party had played a notable role during 1920-35 as a ruling party.

Justice Party- A Party of Elites and not Masses?

It should be noted that though the Justice Party claimed to represent the non-Brahmins as a whole, in practice the depressed castes and Muslims were considered separately. As Andre Beteille has pointed out "The Justice Party was in a very real sense an elite party dominated by urban, western educated, landowning and professional people. It contained a number of Rajas, Zamindars, industrialists, lawyers and doctors. It was by no means a mass party and it is doubtful whether any serious effort was made to draw peasants and workers into the organization".

SELF RESPECT MOVEMENT

The non-Brahmin movement assumed the form of the Self Respect Movement when E.V. Ramasami Naicker became its leader. Ramasami Naicker, a Baliya Naidu had begun his political career with the Congress. But he was unhappy with the way in which the non-Brahmins were treated within the Madras Congress organization and hence he decided to come out of it. He was also very much annoyed with Gandhiji's support of a purified Varna ideology. He left the Congress Party to start the Self Respect Movement [1925].



**There is no god, there is no god,
there is no god at all !**

**He who invented god is a fool. He
who propagates god is a
scoundrel. He who worships god
is a barbarian!**

- Periyar E.V. Ramasami

Call to Reject the Brahminical Culture and Religion: The Self Respect movement aimed at the rejection of the Brahminical culture and religion. It rejected the caste system and the supremacy of the Brahmins in all respects. It considered the Brahminical religion and culture as the main instrument of enslaving Tamilians. Naicker as a leader of this movement publicly ridiculed the Puranas as fairy tales, not only imaginary and irrational but also totally immoral. He carried on an active propaganda in an attempt to rid people of puranic Hinduism. He condemned religious ceremonies which required the priestly services of the Brahmins. In strong words he denounced caste rules, child marriage, enforced widowhood and attacked the Laws of Manu, which he regarded as totally inhuman. According to Naicker, the Laws of Manu were designed to maintain the supremacy of Brahmins and to enslave the other caste people to them.

Attempts to Advocate Dravidian Culture: Ramasami Naicker championed a new system of values in which all people could enjoy self respect. By directly attacking the Brahmins and making fun of their religious culture he sought to obtain the support of a large number of lower caste people. Naicker claimed that the lower classes and the lower sections of the Tamilian society represented the Dravidian culture. He considered Dravidian culture superior to Brahminical Aryan culture. Formulation of the Dravidian ideology as opposed to Aryan ideology was the very basis of Self Respect Movement.

Ramasami Naicker represented a new type of leader. He did not have English education and was able to speak in Tamil only. Unlike the Justice Party which

drew support from middle and upper-middle class Hindus in both Tamil and Telugu areas, the Self Respect movement concentrated almost entirely on Tamil districts and on groups low in the caste hierarchy including the untouchables. He used Tamil as the medium of communication. Tamil newspapers reflected his thought which was anti-Brahminical, anti-Aryan, anti-Sanskrit and anti-North Indian. As a result of that the movement got the support of the uneducated, untouchables, the depressed and the exploited sections of the community, women and rural youth. The movement took a violent turn when a copy of the Manu Smriti was burnt by the supporters of the movement in 1920.

As M.N. Srinivas point out; this movement was explicitly anti Brahmin. It encouraged non-Brahmins not to call upon Brahmin priests to perform wedding and other rituals. Its followers were required to use the Tamil language for all political and other purposes. These followers were claiming themselves to be Dravidians and members of a sovereign independent state. As M.N. Srinivas writes "the movement was anti-Brahmin, anti north, anti Hindi, anti Sanskrit and finally anti-god. It included an attempt to rid Tamil of long established Sanskrit words, and to introduce the singing of exclusively Tamil songs at public concerts".

Demand for Dravidasthan: The Self Respect movement became very radical and violent. The movement demanded the establishment of the Dravidasthan on the same line as Pakistan. Naicker at this stage was able to find out an effective young leader by name C.N. Annadurai, a Tamil Vellala, who was very fluent in both English and Tamil. Impressed by Annadurai's ability and talent, Ramasami Naicker gave him an important role in the activities of the Self Respect movement.

The Dravida Kazhagam [D.K.]

In December 1938, Naicker was elected president of the Justice Party. As a leader of this party he raised the slogan "Tamil Nad for Tamilians" [or non-Brahmins]. In 1944 the Justice Party formally changed into the Dravida Kazhagam [D.K.] under the leadership of C.N. Annadurai. Its main aim was the realization of a separate Dravidian or non-Brahmin country. Thus the Self Respect movement which arose as a protest against Aryan culture turned into an explicit political movement.

The Dravida Kazhagam under the leadership of Annadurai continued to pursue anti-Brahminism in the social and cultural fields. This expressed itself in assaults on individual Brahmin priests, destroying images of Hindu deities, trying to burn copies of the epic Ramayana, insulting the puranas, epics, Manu Smriti, Sanskrit literature and so on. The epic Ramayana was regarded by DK as an expression of Aryan racialism.

Annadurai and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK): The differences of opinion between Annadurai and Ramasami Naicker led to a split in Dravida Kazhagam leading to the establishment of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK] in 1949 under

the leadership of C.N. Annadurai. The primary objective of DMK was to establish Dravidanad. During the initial years, the DMK was also an advocate of Tamil separatism and was anti north, anti-Hindi and anti-Sanskrit. But in course of time there was a softening of its stand. As Oommen notes: "Once the Brahmin dominance in Tamil Nadu declined, it became imperative for the movement to shift its goal from anti Brahminism if it were to survive. Thus, after a short period during which the movement pursued the goal of establishing a sovereign Dravidian state, it settled for the objective of moderating north Indian dominance (economic and linguistic) and for greater authority for states within the federal set up and promotion of Tamil nationalism and culture within the frame work of the Indian Union thereby becoming a regional movement".

The DMK proclaimed a casteless society, an egalitarian Dravidanadu to which the depressed and the downtrodden could pledge their allegiance. As in Self Respect movement, the DMK also claimed to remove all superstitious beliefs based on religion and tradition. No member of this party was allowed to wear the sectarian marks of faith across his forehead. Members were urged to boycott the use of Brahmin priests in ceremonies. The movement campaigned vigorously for widow remarriage and inter-caste marriages. The reformed marriage rites of the DK and the DMK gained wide acceptance among non-Brahmins of Tamil Nadu

Impact of the Non-Brahmin Movement

According to Andre Beteille, the non-Brahmin movement led to some important consequences.

1. According to him, the most important consequence of the movement was the introduction of "communal" or caste idiom into south Indian politics. It created an impression that in virtually every political contest it was very important whether a person was Brahmin or non-Brahmin.

2. Secondly, it created alliances which cut across linguistic and cultural divisions.

3. Other than the above ones mentioned by Beteille, the movement led to some other consequences.

- (i) The movement made the leaders to extol the virtues of Dravidian culture as against the Aryan gods and culture.

- (ii) The leaders adopted a secessionist strategy to achieve their independence and self respect.

- (iii) The movement combined Dravidian cultural ideology with political separatism

- (iv) The movement had a tremendous appeal to the lower middle classes, lower castes and untouchables.

- (4) The movement was by no means a mass movement. As M.N. Srinivas pointed out "The opposition to Brahmin dominance did not come from the low and the oppressed castes but from the leaders of the powerful, rural dominant castes such as the Kammas and Reddis of the Telugucountry, the Vellalas of Tamil country, and the Nayar of Kerala."

Non Brahmin Movement in Karnataka

The non Brahmin movement which took place in Madras had its impact on the princely state of Mysore. Lingayats and Okkaligas - the two dominant castes of Mysore, in addition to the minority community, the Muslims felt that they were also dominated and bossed over by the Brahmins. The Okkaligas and Lingayats established their caste associations in 1906 and 1909 respectively. By 1917, different ethnic and cultural groups in Mysore formed a common association called the Praja Mitra Mandali. This Mandali made an appeal to the Maharaja of Mysore in 1918 requesting him to reserve posts in public services and education institutions for the non-Brahmins. The Maharaja appointed the Miller Committee to look into the demands of the Mitra Mandali. The Miller Committee of Mysore State finally recommended all the demands of the Mandali. Because of this recommendation the Okkaligas and Lingayats have availed themselves of maximum benefits in the field of education, employment and politics. They have also been able to excel and oust the Brahmins from their position of command and control in different fields.

However, the non-Brahmin movement in Mysore was different from the one that had been taking place in Madras. Firstly, unlike the Dravidian movement of Tamil Nadu, the movement in Karnataka did not alienate the backward classes and the Muslims. Secondly, the anti-Brahmin ideology in Mysore has not assumed the form of a pro-Dravidian and anti Aryan, anti north or anti Sanskrit image.

SOCIAL REFORMS MOVEMENTS DURING COLONIAL PERIOD

A reform movement attempts to improve conditions within an existing social system without changing the fundamental structure of the society itself. Reforms are often linked with belief systems, rituals and life styles of the concerned people. There are several examples of reform movements in India. The most well-known reform movement was the Bhakti (devotional) movement of medieval India. It was an all-India movement which involved the lower caste people and the poor. It insisted on love of God as the most significant thing in religion. It protested against ritualism and caste barriers. Thus, the primary objective of the movement was to reform world view and social practices of the people. It never tried to transform the social system radically, but advocated partial changes in the value system.



Sati was banned after pressure was mounted by Brahma Samaj movement

Several reform movements also engendered the socio cultural regeneration, which occurred in the nineteenth century in India. It started with the formation of the Brahma Samaj in Bengal in 1828 which had branches in several parts of the country. Apart from the Brahma Samaj in Bengal, the Prarthana Samaj in Maharashtra and the Arya Samaj in Punjab and north India were some of the other reform movements among the Hindus. The work of reformation was also undertaken by other organizations which were led by the backward castes and the members of other religious groups. For example, the Satya Shodhak Samaj of Jyothiba Phule in Maharashtra and the Sri Narayan Dharma Paripalan Sabha in Kerala were started by the backward castes. Similarly, the Ahmadiya and Aligarh movements represented the spirit of reform among Muslims. The Sikhs had their Singh Sabha and the Parsees, the Rehnumai Mazdeyasana Sabha. The major concerns of these movements and the organizations were no doubt religious reform, but the social content was not missing from them. These movements brought about remarkable changes in the life of the people.

ARYA SAMAJ

The Arya Samaj movement was an outcome of reaction to western influences. It was revivalist in form though not in content. The founder, Swami Dayanand, rejected western ideas and sought to revive the ancient religion of the Aryans.

Mulshanker (1824-83) popularly known as Dayanand was born in a Brahmin family living in the old Morvi state in Gujarat. His father, a great Vedic scholar, also assumed the role of the teacher and helped young Mulshankar acquire good insight into Vedic literature, logic, philosophy, ethics etc. Dayanand's quest for the truth goaded him to yogabhyas (contemplation or communion) and to learn yoga it was necessary to leave home. For fifteen years (1845-60) Dayanand wandered as an ascetic in the whole of India studying Yoga. In 1875 he formally organized the first Arya Samaj unit at Bombay. A few years later the headquarters of the Arya Samaj was established at Lahore. For the rest of his life, Dayanand extensively toured India for the propagation of his ideas- Aryan religion to be the common religion of all, a classless and casteless society, and an India free from foreign rule. He looked on the Vedas as India's 'Rock of ages' - the true and original seed of Hinduism. His motto was 'Go back to the Vedas'. He gave his own interpretation of the Vedas. He disregarded later texts as the work of lesser men and responsible for the evil practices of idol worship and preached unity of god-head. His views were published in his famous work Satyarth Prakash (The True exposition).

Dayanand launched a frontal attack on the numerous abuses (like idolatry, polytheism, belief in magic, charms, animal sacrifices, feeding the dead through Shradhs etc.) that had crept into Hindu religion in the 19th century. He rejected the popular Hindu philosophy which held that the physical world is an illusion (maya), that man's soul is merely a part of God, temporarily separated from God by its embodiment in the illusory mask of the body and that man's object, therefore, was to escape the world where evil existed and to seek union with God. Against this belief, Dayanand held that God, soul and matter (prakriti) were distinct and eternal entities and every individual had to work out his own salvation in the light of the eternal principles governing human conduct. In rejecting monism, Dayanand also gave a severe blow to the popular belief in predetermination. The Swami contended that human beings were not playthings of fate and as such no one could avoid responsibility for his actions on the plea that human deeds were predetermined. Dayanand accepted the doctrine of karma, but rejected the theory of niyati (destiny). He explained that the world is a battlefield where every individual has to work out his salvation by right deeds.

Dayanand challenged the dominant position of the Brahmin priestly class in the spiritual and social life of the Hindus. He ridiculed the claim of priests that they could act as intermediaries between man and God. The Swami asserted every Hindu's right to read and interpret the Vedas. He strongly condemned the caste system based on birth, though he subscribed to the Vedic notion of the four-Varna system in which a person was not born in any Varna (caste) but was identified as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra according to the occupation he followed. The Swami was also a strong advocate of equal status between men and women; he pleaded for widow remarriage and condemned child marriages. In a sarcastic language he described the Hindu race as "the children of children".

It should be clearly understood that Dayanand's slogan of 'Back to the Vedas' was a call for revival Vedic learning and Vedic purity of religion and not revival of Vedic times. He accepted modernity and displayed patriotic attitude to national problems.

The creed and principles of the Arya Samaj first defined at Bombay in 1875 were revised at Lahore in 1877. The Ten Principles were approved by Dayanand and have remained unaltered to this day. The principles are: (1) God is the primary source of all true knowledge. (2) God who is All-truth, All-knowledge, Almighty, Immortal, Creator of universe, alone is worthy of worship. (3) The Vedas are the books of true knowledge. (4) An Arya should always be ready to accept truth and abandon untruth. (5) All actions must conform to dharma, that means after due consideration of right and wrong. (6) The principal aim of this Samaj is to promote the world's well-being, material, spiritual and social. (7) All persons should be treated with love and justice. (8) Ignorance should be dispelled and knowledge increased. (9) Everybody should consider his own progress to depend on the uplift of all others. (10) Social well-being of mankind should be placed above the individual's well being.



The logo of Arya Samaj

Perhaps the most phenomenal achievement of the Arya Samaj had been in the field of social reform and spread of education. The Samaj based its social programme entirely on the authority of the Vedas, of course conditioned by rationalism and utilitarianism. The Arya Samaj's social ideals comprise, among others, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the equality of sexes, absolute justice and fair-play between man and man and nation and nation and love and charity towards all. The Arya Samaj lays great emphasis on education and enjoins on all Arya Samajists to endeavour to diffuse knowledge and dispel ignorance. The D.A.V institutions spread over the length and breadth of the country are a standing proof of the educational achievements of the Samaj. The nucleus for this movement was provided by the Anglo Vedic School established at Lahore in 1886. The education imparted in D.A.V. institutions combines the best of the modern and classical Indian studies. The orthodox opinion in the Arya Samaj which stands for the revival of Vedic ideal in modern life set up the Gurukula Pathshala at Haridwar in 1902.

The Arya Samaj movement gave pride, self-confidence and self-reliance to Hindus and undermined the belief in the superiority of the white race and western culture. As a disciplined Hindu organization, it succeeded in protecting Hindu society from the onslaught of Islam and Christianity. Rather, the Samaj started the Shuddhi movement to convert non-Hindus to Hinduism. Further, it infused a spirit of intense patriotism. The Samaj always remained in the forefront of political movement and produced leaders of the eminence of Lala Hans Raj, Pandit Guru Dutt and Lala Lajpat Rai. Dayanand's political slogan was 'India for the Indians'.

While the Brahmo Samaj and the Theosophical Society appealed to English educated elite only, Dayanand's message was for the masses of India also. The Arya Samaj movement has taken deep roots in the Panjab, Haryana, the Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan.

SATYA SHODHAK SAMAJ

In western India, Jyothirao Govindrao Phule (1827-90), struggled for the lower castes. Jyotiba was born at Poona in 1827 in a Mali caste (his family members supplied flowers, garlands etc., to the Peshwa's family and came to be called Phule).

Some incidents of Brahminical arrogance changed the outlook of Jyotiba. Once Jyotiba was scolded and insulted by a Brahmin for his audacity in joining a Brahmin marriage procession. The Brahmins also opposed Jyotiba in running a school for the lower castes and women. The Brahminical pressure compelled Jyotiba to close the school.

Jyotiba believed that the Brahmin under the pretext of religion tyrannized over other castes and turned them into their slaves. Jyotiba was ever critical of the Indian National Congress leaders for their neglect of the interest on the weaker sections. He maintained that the Congress could not be called truly national unless it showed general interest in the welfare of the lower and backward castes.

In 1873, Jyotiba started the Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth-Seeking Society) with the aim of securing social justice for the weaker sections of society. He opened a number of schools and orphanages for the children and women belonging to the all castes. He was elected as a member of the Poona Municipal Committee in 1876.

Jyotiba's publications include Dharma Tritiya Ratiya Ratna (Exposure of the Puranas), Ishara (A Warning), Life of Shivaji, etc. In 1888, Jyotiba was honoured with the title Mahatma.

SRI NARAYAN GURU DHARMA PARIPALANA SABHA (SNDP)

In the state of Kerala, another leader of the Ezhava caste (an untouchable caste), Shri Narayan Guru (1854-1928) established the SNDP (Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam). In Kerala and at many places outside Kerala; Narayan and his associates launched a two point programme for the uplift of the Ezhavas. Firstly, to give up the practice of untouchability with respect to castes below their caste. As a second step, Narayan Guru built a number of temples which were declared open to all castes. He also simplified rituals regarding marriage, religious worship and

funerals. Narayan Guru achieved notable success in transforming the untouchables groups into a backward class. He openly criticized the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi for their lip sympathy towards the lower castes. He criticized Gandhiji for his faith in ChaturVarna, which he maintained is the parent of the caste system and untouchability. He pointed out that the difference in caste is only superficial and emphasized that the juice of all leaves of a particular tree would be the same in content. He gave a new slogan "One religion, one caste and one God for mankind".

RAMKRISHNA MISSION

The didactic rationalism of the Brahmo Samaj appealed more to the intellectual elite in Bengal, while the average Bengali found more emotional satisfaction in the cult of Bhakti and yoga. The teachings of Ramakrishna Mission are based on ancient and traditional concepts amidst increasing westernization and modernization. The Ramakrishna Mission was conceived and founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897, eleven years after the death of Ramakrishna.

Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1834-86) was a poor priest at the Kali temple in Dakshineswar near Calcutta. His thinking was rooted deeply in Indian thought and culture, although he recognized the Truth in all religions. He considered and emphasized that Krishna, Hari, Rama, Christ, Allah are different names for the same God. Unlike the Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission recognizes the utility and value of image worship in developing spiritual fervour and worship of the Eternal Omnipotent God. However, Ramakrishna put his emphasis on the essential spirit, not the symbols or rituals. He stood for selfless devotion to God with a view to the ultimate absorption in Him. This spirituality and compassion for suffering humanity inspired those who listened to him.

It was left to Swami Vivekananda (Narendranath Datta, 1862-1902) to give an interpretation to the teachings of Ramakrishna and render them in an easily understandable language to the modern man.



Ramakrishna Paramhansa (left) and his disciple Swami Vivekananda (right)

Vivekananda emerged as a preacher of neo-Hinduism. He attended the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893 and made a great impression by his learned interpretations. The keynote of his opening address was the need for a healthy balance between spiritualism and materialism. He envisaged a new culture for the whole world where the materialism of the West and the spiritualism of the East would be blended into a new harmony to produce happiness for mankind.

The Swami decried untouchability and the caste system. He strongly condemned the touch-me-not attitude of Hindus in religious matters. He regretted that Hinduism had been confined to the kitchen. He frowned at religion's tacit approval to the oppression of the poor by the rich. He believed that it was an insult to God and humanity to teach religion to a starving man. Once he said, "Him I call a Mahatma whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratma. So long as millions live in hunger and ignorance I hold every man a traitor who while educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to man". Thus, Vivekananda emphasized the fundamental postulate of his Master that the best worship of God is through service of humanity. In this way he gave a new social purpose to Hinduism.

Ever since its inception the Ramakrishna Mission has been in the forefront of social reform in the country. It runs a number of charitable dispensaries and hospitals, offers help to the afflicted in times of natural calamities like famines, floods, epidemics.

Vivekananda never gave any political message. All the same, through his speeches and writings he infused into the new generation a sense of pride in India's past, a new faith in India's culture and a rare sense of self-confidence in India's future. He was a patriot and worked for the uplift of the people. "So far as Bengal is

concerned” writes Subhash Bose “Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement”.

The Theosophical Movement

The Theosophical Society was founded by westerners who drew inspiration from Indian thought and culture. Madame H. P Blavatsky (1831-1891) of Russo German birth laid the foundation of the movement in the United States in 1875. Later Colonel M.S. Olcott (1832-1907) of the U.S army joined her. In 1882 they shifted their headquarters to India at Adyar, an outskirt of Madras. The members of this society believe that a special relationship can be established between a person's soul and God by contemplation, prayer, revelation etc. The Society accepts the Hindu beliefs in reincarnation, karma and draws inspiration from the philosophy of the Upanishads and Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta school of thought. It aims to work for universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The Society also seeks to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man. The Theosophical Movement came to be allied with Hindu Renaissance.

In India the movement became somewhat popular with the election of Mrs. Annie Besant (1847-1933) as its President after the death of Olcott in 1907. Early in her life Mrs. Besant lost all faith, in Christianity, divorced her husband, an Anglican clergyman, and came in contact with theosophy (1882). In 1882 she formally joined the Theosophical Society. After the death of Madame Blavatsky in 1891, Mrs. Besant felt lonely and decided to come to India. Mrs. Besant was well acquainted with Indian thought and culture and her approach was Vedantic as is very evident from her remarkable translation of the Bhagavad Gita. Madame Blavatsky's main emphasis had been on the occult than spiritualism. Mrs. Besant found a bridge between matter and mind, Gradually Mrs. Besant turned a Hindu, not only in her views but also in her dress, food, company and social manners. In India, under her guidance, Theosophy became a movement of Hindu revival.

Talking of the Indian problem, Annie Besant once said: "The Indian work is, first of all, the revival, strengthening and uplifting of ancient religions. This has brought with it a new self-respect, a pride in the past, a belief in the culture, and as an inevitable result, a great wave of patriotic life, the beginning of the rebuilding of a nation". Besant laid the foundation of the Central Hindu College in Benares in 1898 where both the Hindu religion and western scientific subjects were taught. The College became the nucleus for the formation of Benares Hindu University in 1916. Mrs. Besant also did much for the cause of female education. She also formed the Home Rule League on the pattern of the Irish Home Rule movement.

The Theosophical Society provided a common denominator for the various sects and fulfilled the urge of educated Hindus. However to the average Indian the philosophy of Theosophical Movement seemed rather vague and deficient in positive programme and as such its impact was limited to a small segment of the westernized class.

Muslim Reform Movements

If Hindu mind had responded to western influences with a desire to learn, the first reaction of the Muslim community was to shut themselves in a shell and resist western impact.

The earliest organized Muslim response to western influences appeared in the form of the Wahabi movement (which may more aptly be called the Walliullah Movement). It was essentially a revivalist movement. Shah Walliullah (1702-62) was the first Indian Muslim leader of the 18th century who expressed concern at the degeneration which had set in among Indian Muslims. He voiced his anguish at the ugly departures from the purity of Islam. His contribution to the Muslim reform movement was twofold (a) He urged the desirability of creating a harmony among the four schools of Muslim jurisprudence which had divided the Indian Muslims. He sought to integrate the best elements of the four schools (b) He emphasized the role of individual conscience in religion. He held that in cases where the Quran and the Hadith could be liable to conflicting interpretations, the individual could make a decision on the basis of his own judgement and conscience.

Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Bareilvi popularized the teachings of Walliullah but also gave them a political colour. They aimed at creating a homeland for the Muslims. The beginning was made by a fatwa (ruling) given by Abdul Aziz declaring India to be dar-ul-harb (land of kafirs) and the need to make it dar-ul-Islam. The campaign was initially directed against the Sikhs of the Panjab. After the British annexation of the area in 1849, the movement was directed against the British. The movement was crushed by the superior military force of the British in the 1870s.

The Aligarh Movement

A legacy of the Revolt of 1857 was the official impression that the Muslims were the arch conspirators in 1857-58. The Wahabi political activities of 1860s and 1870s confirmed such suspicions. However, a wind of change was perceptible in the 1870s. W.W. Hunter's book *The Indian Musalman* made a vigorous plea for reconciling and rallying the Muslims around the British government through thoughtful concessions. A section of the Muslim community led by Syed Ahmed Khan was prepared to accept this stance of official patronage. These Muslims felt that the Muslim community would forgo its rightful share in the administrative services if they shut themselves in shell and resist modern ideas.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's (1817-98) name stands out conspicuous among the Muslim reformers of the nineteenth century. Born in Delhi in 1817 in a respectable Muslim family, he received education in the traditional Muslim style. He was in the judicial services of the company at the time of the Rebellion of 1857 and stood loyal to the government. He retired from service in 1876. In 1878 he became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council. His loyalty earned him a knighthood in 1888. Syed Ahmed tried to modernize the outlook of the Muslims. He tried to reconcile his co-religionists to modern scientific thought and to the British rule and urged them to accept services under the government. In this objective, he achieved great success.



Aligarh Muslim University is today ranked amongst top Indian Universities

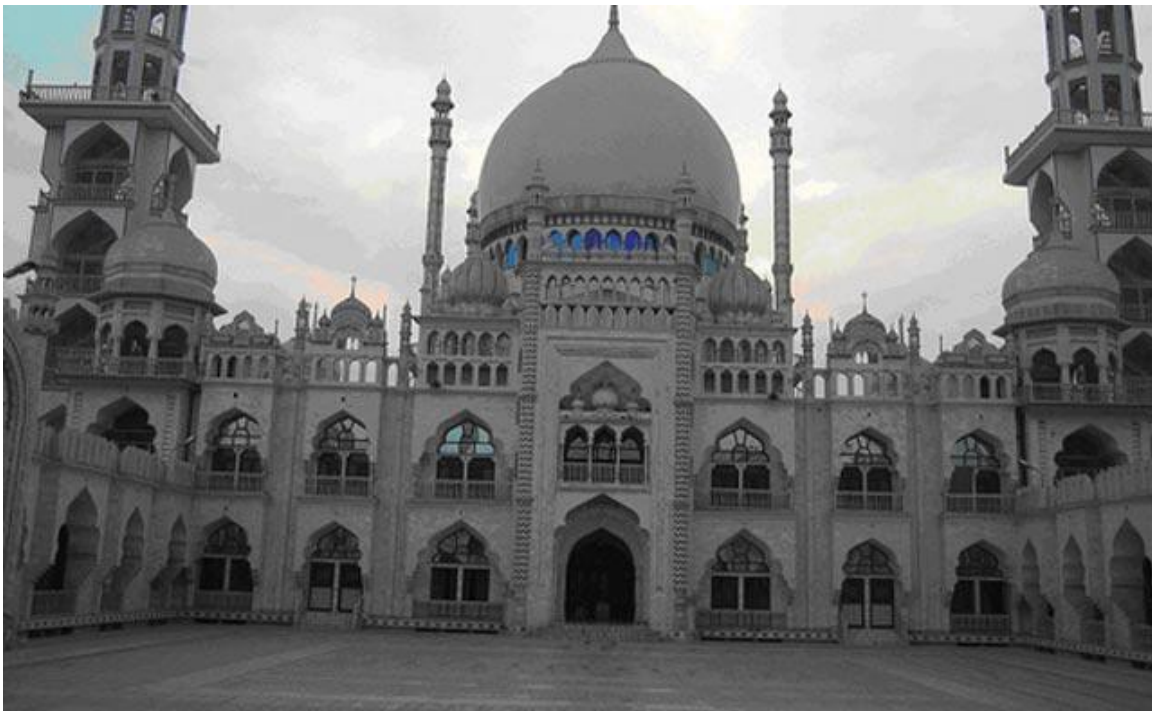
Sir Syed also tried to reform the social abuses in the Muslim community. He condemned the system of piri and muridi. The pirs and faqirs claimed to be followers of the Sufi school and passed mystic words to their disciples (murids), He also condemned the institution of slavery and described it as un-Islamic. His progressive social ideas were propagated through his magazine Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq (Improvement of Manners and Morals)

In his masterly work Commentaries on the Quran, Sir Syed criticized the narrow outlook of traditional interpreters and gave his own views in the light of contemporary rationalism and scientific knowledge His emphasis was on the study of Koran. The word of God, he said, should be interpreted by the work of God which lies open before all to see.

In the field of education, Sir Syed opened the M.A.O College at Aligarh in 1875, where instruction was imparted both in western arts and sciences and Muslim religion. Soon Aligarh became the centre of religious and cultural revival of the Muslim community. The school became the nucleus for the formation of the Muslim University in 1920.

The Deoband School

The orthodox sections among the Muslim Ulema who were the standard bearers of traditional Islamic learning were organized: (i) to propagate among the Muslim the pure teaching of the Koran and the Hadith and (ii) to keep alive the spirit of jihad against the foreign rulers.



Darul Uloom Deoband in Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh is majestic

The Ulema under the leadership of Muhammad Qasim Wanotavi (1832- 80) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1828-1905) founded the school at Deoband in the Saharanpur district of the U.P. in 1866. The object was to train religious leaders for the Muslim community. The school curricula shut out English education and western culture. The instruction imparted was in original Islamic religion and the aim was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. In contrast to the Aligarh movement which aimed at welfare of the Muslim community through western education and support of the British government, the Deoband school did not prepare its students for government jobs or worldly careers but for preaching of Islamic faith. It was for its religious instruction that the Deoband school attracted students not only from all parts of India but from the neighboring Muslim countries also.

In politics, the Deoband school welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. In 1888 the Deoband Ulema issued a religious decree (fatwa) against Syed Ahmed Khan's organizations (the United Patriotic Association, and The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Association). Some critics observe that the Deoband Ulemas' stance did not stem from any positive political philosophy or any opposition to British government but was mainly influenced by their determination to oppose Sir Syed Ahmed's activities.

The new Deoband leader Mahmad-u Husan (1851-1920) sought to impart a political and intellectual content to the religious ideas of the school. He worked out a synthesis of Islamic principles and national aspirations. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema gave a concrete shape to Hasan's ideas of protection of the religious and political rights of the Muslims in the overall context of Indian unity and national objectives.

Sikh Reform Movements

The rationalist and progressive ideas of 19th century also influenced the Sikh community. In 1873 the Singh Sabha movement was founded at Amritsar. Its objective was twofold. It planned to bring to the Sikh community the benefits of western enlightenment through modern education. It also countered the proselytizing activities of the Christian missionaries as well as Hindu revivalists. The Sabha opened a network of Khalsa schools and colleges throughout the Punjab.

The Akali movement was an offshoot of the Singh Sabha movement. The Akali movement aimed to liberate the Sikh Gurudwaras from the control of corrupt mahants who enjoyed the support of the government. In 1921 the Akalis launched a non-violent, non-cooperation Satyagrah movement against the mahants. The government resorted to repressive measures but had to bow before popular opinion and passed the Sikh Gurudwaras Act in 1922 which was later amended in 1925.

The Akali movement was a sectarian or a regional movement but not a communal movement. The Akali leaders played a notable role in the national liberation struggle though some dissenting voices were heard occasionally.

Parsi Reform Movement

The Parsi community could not remain unaffected by the changes that swept India. In 1851 a group of English educated Parsis set up the Rehnumai Mazdeyasani Sabha or Religious Reform Association for the object of "the regeneration of the social condition of the Parsis and the restoration of the Zoroastrian religion to its pristine purity". Naoroji Furdunji, Dadabhai Naoroji, K.R. Cama were in the forefront of the movement. The newspaper Rast-Goftar (Truth-Teller) propagated the message of the Association. Parsi religious rituals and practices were reformed and Parsi creed redefined. In the field of social reform, attention was focused on improvement of lot of Parsi women in society like removal of pardah system, raising the age of marriage and education of women. Gradually the Parsis emerged as the most westernised section of Indian society.

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IAS GURUKUL

UNIT B: SOCIAL STRUCTURE

IAS GURUKUL

RURAL & AGRARIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURETHE IDEA OF INDIAN VILLAGE AND VILLAGE STUDIES

VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Village community is the original abode of human civilization. The human civilization has been reared up in the cradle of village community. It has rightly been remarked that God made the country and man made the city. Village setting is the happy paradise of Nature who blesses it with innumerable number of peculiarities that make it evergreen and self sustaining. In course of time, the forces of industrialization and urbanization have brought about a new transformed form of human habitat called urban communities. But the village community till continues as the primary place of human living throughout the globe.



An Indian village scene

Coming to Indian scene Gandhiji, the father of the nation used to say "Village constitutes the very heart of India." Prof. A.R. Desai is of opinion that "The real India lives in villages. It is the theatre wherein the quantum of rural life unfolds itself and functions. Like every social phenomenon village is a historical category". Emphasizing on stability and importance of village community, Charles Metcalfe writes 'Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down, revolution succeeds revolution, Hindu, Mughal, Pathan, Marathas, Sikhs and English are masters in turn. But village community survives'.

Generally, village community consists of number of families living in direct interaction with each other in a definite territory, sharing a common folk culture, having a certain degree of community sentiment and a relatively autonomous organization, the structure and function of which is decided by the villagers themselves. Primary occupations based on nature are the dominant modes of

occupation of such families. The most common occupations are agriculture, fishery animal husbandry and the ancillary activities. As Charles Metcalfe writes, "village communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations." Thus, village community is a number of families living in physical proximity with each other in a definite geographical area. They share sorrows, sufferings and pleasure with one another and develop community consciousness. They enter into definite social, economic and cultural relations which distinguish them from others who do not belong to that village community.

Historical Evolution of Village Community: Its

Birth:

From time immemorial man has been living in villages. In pre historic era when he was leading a nomadic or barbarian life, he was very much dependent on nature and was not conscious about the organized life or about agriculture. He was wandering in search of food here and there and could not settle anywhere. In the course of time, his mental horizon expanded and he acquired knowledge and skill to procure food and to fulfill his material needs from a particular tract of land. This led to the end of nomadic life and people settled permanently on some river banks and fertile areas. Owing to this, first village communities developed on river banks and fertile areas which could provide the soil and climate for agriculture. In course of time he learnt he could provide the ploughing to the land with the help of animals, planting different trees for fruits etc. All these contributed to the permanency of his settled life in a particular geographical area. In this context Desai remarks that "the rise of village is bound up with the rise of agricultural economy in history. The emergence of the village signified that man passed from the nomadic mode of collective life to the settled one. This is basically due to the improvement of tools of production which made agriculture and hence, settled life on a fixed territorial zone, possible and necessary. When some families lived together in the same area they began to share each other's joy, sorrows and sufferings and thus a pattern of common life emerged. This led the foundation of village community.

At the initial level various ecological factors played the vital role for the birth of village community. They are as follows.

(i) Land

The most important factor responsible for the birth of village community was land. Number of families settle in a particular track of land because of the fertility of land. If the land is sandy, rocky, uneven it becomes difficult to carry on agriculture there and village community cannot develop there. In the deserts of Sahara and Arabia human habitation is rare. In mountain area there are no big villages. On the other hand, in the plains of Nile, Thames, Ganga, Jamuna, Narmada etc. a number of villages have grown up mainly due to the fertility of land.

(ii) Water

There is a saying that 'where is water, there is life.' The facility of water plays a very important role in the development of village community. Without water neither human life nor the plant life is possible. Man requires water for his personal use and for agriculture. If water is not available, the most fertile and cultivable land becomes use less. River is the main source of water. So village communities develop on river banks. Even due to this facility of water, small villages grow up in the heart of deserts with farms in oasis. It is also found that the great ancient civilizations of the world have grown and developed in the places where fertile land and sufficient water is available freely. Therefore, along with land, water is an important factor for the growth of village community.

(iii) Climate

A favourable climate is most essential for human health and agriculture. For example, in temperate climate people can live with health, vigour, vitality and can be industrious. In extreme climate man cannot lead a natural and prosperous life. This is why in equator and polar regions the village people still lead a nomadic life: Due to the favourable climatic conditions, the village communities of Europe are more developed than the village communities of India. The low standards of living in India are a derivative effect of the hot climatic condition. Thus, climate plays a very vital role in the emergence of village communities.

Its Growth:

After man learnt the use and technique of community living; a number of social, economic and political relations emerged which in turn led to the growth and expansion of village community. The relations went on expanding in their intensity and complexity in such a manner that finally separate institutions grew up to direct and conduct different aspects of village life. Thus, in the process different systems like social, economic and political emerged. Let us discuss these in brief to have an overall idea about them.

Social System

When men permanently settled on the river belts they gradually developed relationship with each other. Since man was different from other animals and had some rationality in him, he could think and plan for his social life. He made various mutual agreements with his fellow beings regarding the satisfaction of his basic urge like sex. The phenomenon of marriage with all its rites and rituals evolved gradually. With the passage of time different types of relationships grew up. Various institutions had to be created to cater to man's multifarious needs. Various agreements, with the passing of generations grew up into customs and traditions. Gradually, a complex social system evolved and developed in many dimensions.

Economic System

At first every individual family had to produce all things that it needed with the growth of population the demands for various necessary commodities grew and it became impossible for a particular man to produce all the things. Hence, people

divided various jobs like forming, carpentry, black smithy etc, among themselves. This needed again another system for transfer and exchange of goods and services and slowly the notion of marketing set in. Along with these developments several new types of relationships and agreements grew up. A separate system dealing with production, distribution and consumption gradually emerged with various institutions and laws.

Political System

At first man was living in free state of nature, where there was no security of his life. To save himself from the wild animals and to get assistance at the time of troubles, he made different agreements with his fellow beings and led a group life. Different rules, regulations needed to be framed for the proper management and betterment of group life which led to the emergence of many political relations. With the growth of new associations and institutions the complexity grew leading to a complex political system.

The gradual emergence of all these socio-economic and political relations made the village community a full-fledged self-sufficient social unit with all its unique features and functions.

Characteristics of Village Community

Village community has certain basic and specific characteristics. The nature of village community can be properly understood by an analysis of its characteristics. The important characteristics are as follows.

1. Agriculture as the dominant mode of occupation

Agriculture is the main occupation in village community. It is not only a mode of production but also a way of life. The entire village life is influenced by it. Smith remarks that "agriculture and the collective enterprise are the bases of rural economy. The farmer and the countryman are almost synonymous terms". MacIver also proclaims that "the predominant occupation of agriculture has other attributes which impress themselves on the mentality of the countryman and are reflected in his social life. He is not, like urban wage earner, an employee working under immediate supervision at a task specially assigned to him. Whether he is a tenant or free holder, even where he is a serf, his time and season, his varying task his alteration of work and rest are set for him not by the commands of a master but by the exigencies of nature." Thus, agriculture is the predominant mode of occupation of villagers which influences the entire gamut of relationships in rural getting.

2. Small Size of the Village Community

Village communities are comparatively small in size. Due to it a sense of belongingness and primary group relationship develop among the villagers. Smaller the group the more intimate it is. Thus, in village community a deep, intense and enduring type of relationship is found among people. A deeper sincerity of interests in affairs-of fellow beings, intensity of community sentiment, we feeling, feeling of dependence, are all due to the small size of village community.

3. Dominant Role of Family and Neighbourhood

Family occupies a very dominant position in village community. It acts as the main agent of social control. It also determines activities of the people like marriage, religious performances, political affiliations etc. Such dominant position of the family also provides impetus for marked stability of village community. About the role of family MacIver says "in rural areas where the family is relatively dominant and self contained, a group responsibility prevailsThe status of an individual is likely to be the status of the family. Property is likely to be thought of as a family possession. Family opinion develops about most matters of interests and is apt to permeate all its members".

Neighbourhood also plays a very important role in village community. It is constituted of almost identical cluster of huts and houses. Neighbours are intimately related with each other. They assist each other during the time of difficulties. Their topic of gossip is common and everybody is under constant guidance of the whole neighbourhood. This reciprocal relationship in the community makes everyone to act according to the prevailing ways.

4. Homogeneity of life

The village community has comparatively a greater degree of homogeneity. It means that people are more or less alike in village community and have relatively similar ways of life. It is mainly due to the agriculture as the predominant mode of occupation. Other occupations also exist in rural communities. But they are in small scale and more or less linked with the dominant occupation of agriculture. The roles of the carpenters, blacksmiths are centred around agriculture. Thus, the predominance of single occupation and the common way of living in a particular area for generations together make the village life relatively more homogenous.

5. Simplicity and frugality of living

Simplicity and frugality of living is another important characteristic of village life. Most of the individual farmers possess a small size of the cultivatable land. The agricultural production is limited due to many a natural as well as manmade factors. By dint of his hard labour and sweat, a farmer gets the substantial amount of crops by which he maintains his family. The ill practices like theft, robbery, misconduct etc. are not significantly visible in villages. The villagers lead an idealistic life in accordance with the norms of family and caste. Generally they do not make false pretence and boasting. Their life is plain and open. They are not so much mad after the material possessions and are satisfied with whatever they have in their hands. All these make them relatively simple, sober and soft.

6. Faith in God and religion

Most of the village people are illiterate and ignorant. They have strong belief in God and religion. They are nearer to nature. Nature causes heavy loss and devastation for the rural people. Thus, villagers develop a kind of fear for the natural forces and start worshipping them with a view to get escape from their wrath. Such nearness to

nature also determines the attitude of farmers towards land, animals, health, natural calamities etc. For all these religion becomes part and parcel of rural social life.

7. Group Feeling and Mutual Cooperation

In the village life, group feeling of altruism occupies an important place. Villagers are ready to sacrifice their own interests or even life for the sake of village. They lead a life based on cooperation and mutual understanding. Agriculture, the major occupation of the villagers is sort of co-operative enterprise. It needs a lot of manpower necessitating the people to co-operate with each other. Therefore, cooperation is a natural necessity of the village community. This co-operation is based on love, affection, goodwill and fellow feeling. Due to these things, the social relationships in a village community become genuine, deep and permanent.

8. Common Ideology and Culture

In village community people have common ideology due to their compact living in a definite locality. When people live in a definite locality for years together or over generations, a common ideology and belief naturally emerges out of their group life. Generally, in village, people have common views on politics, religion, customs etc. They cultivate common cultural traits, behavioural patterns and follow common customs and traditions.

9. Lack of Specialization

In village community there is no or little specialization. Even in occupational activities, although different sections of population are supposed to practice different types of occupation, there is no such specialization in modern sense of the term. For example, agricultural occupation is a common occupation in rural community. Persons belonging to different castes are engaged in agriculture. Due to lack of specialization there is less innovation and discovery. People are governed more by traditional norms than by scientific tenets.

10. Low Density of Population

Comparatively, the concentration of population at a particular space is very low in a rural area. In urban centres a large number of people concentrate within a specified territory which leads to high density of population. But, in rural areas people are scattered over a large stretch of land living with a much lower density of population.

11. Hard Working and Painstaking

Village people are very hard working and painstaking. Their life is governed by nature. Neither they feel suffocated in summer, nor chilled in winter, nor afraid of the lightning and thunders of the rain. Hard conditions of life and the hardships of agricultural activities make them physically more painstaking from the very childhood.

12. Poverty and Illiteracy

Poverty and illiteracy are the constant friends of village life. Owing to pressure on land, it is fragmented into small holdings which results in poor productivity. Besides, there are also a number of landless labourers in village community. The income of villagers is very low. They have to take coarse rice and wear rough clothes.

The ever increasing poverty deprives them even from elementary education what to speak of highly expensive technical, specialised education. Those minority who can afford such are led by blind beliefs and religious dogmas which kills their initiative for higher education.

13. Caste System

Caste system is another unique characteristic feature of village community. The whole village community is divided into many groups on the basis of caste system. All the important aspects of social life are influenced by the caste norms. Social intercourse, ritual performances, occupation everything is decided by caste Panchayats.

14. Less intensity of mobility and change

Social mobility in village community is less intensive. Because people are generally following the same occupation, the change of occupation or change of caste is not permissible. One's status and position is permanently fixed on the basis of birth in a particular caste and family.

The speed of social change in village community is very low due to the rigidity of customs, traditions and value system. Therefore the village community is comparatively less progressive. Smith has remarked that "Urban community may be said to resemble swiftly moving river, where water churns about incessantly. Rural community is a quiet pond with small waves created by cool breeze." Zimmerman comments, "Rural community is similar to calm water in a pail and the urban community, to boiling water in a kettle."

15. Local Self Government

In early days, village was an independent, self-sufficient and autonomous organization. The villagers tried to manage their own affairs by themselves through the traditional institutions like caste Panchayats and village Panchayat. Every village was a 'little republic' having everything for its members.



A village Panchayat

Nowadays, a number of steps are being taken by the government to reorganise these 'republics', which have lost their vitality during modern periods of Indian history. These local self-governing bodies run the day-to-day life of village community through informal methods and thereby preserve its socio-economic identity.

16. Rigidity of Social Control

In village community, the primary institutions play a very significant role in exercising social control. Such primary institutions are family, caste council, neighbourhood group etc. These institutions regulate the behaviour of individuals through informal means. Due to the rigidity of value system, customs, traditions etc, the observance of these informal rules becomes obligatory for members. There is little chance of deviation from it, and any such deviation is severely criticised and punished by the people in most informal manner.

17. Tradition

The age old tradition is a peculiar characteristic of village community. Village community is custom bound and tradition ridden. The minds of villagers are so much pre-occupied with traditional beliefs and faiths that the diffusion of new ideas and beliefs take place very slowly.

Types of Village Communities

With differential climatic and historical conditions different types of village communities have emerged in different periods of human history. They differ from each other in their social systems, folk cultures, traditions etc. For example, a wide variance is marked between a Saxon village, the German Mark, Russian Mir, Indian Gram, village of feudal Europe, American village and western European villages etc. Different social thinkers and sociologists have classified village communities into different types on the basis of several factors. The major types may be discussed as follows.

(A) On the basis of residence

On the basis of residence Harold J. Peake has classified village communities into following three types.

(i) Migratory Villages: The people of this type of villages live for months or for a season in a particular locality, arrange their foods from natural resources in the form of wild fruits, animal meats etc. When the food supply at a place exhausts, they shift to another place where they can find adequate amount of foods.

(ii) Semi-Permanent Villages: In semi permanent agricultural villages people reside for few years at a particular place and migrate to another place due to the exhaustion of the productivity of land. The duration of residence is more as compared to migratory type of villages. In this type of village, people keep domestic animals like cow and goat but do not cultivate the land for agriculture. They generally burn down the small trees and bushes etc. and sow seed over the earth which gives them some crops after rainfall. And when the people find that land is not yielding required amount of food grains, they leave the place for another new settlement.

(iii) Permanent Agricultural Villages: In such type of villages people live permanently for generations. They develop farm practices, village organisation and social relations within their own villages as well as with their neighbouring villages. Usually they do not change their place of living and place of cultivation. In such type of villages permanent households are created. The number of households may vary from any little number to hundreds or thousands.

(B) On the basis of settlement

On the basis of settlement Meitzen has classified village communities into two heads namely nucleated and dispersed villages.

(i) Nucleated Village - In the nucleated villages the residents dwell in one cluster and it has a dense population. The different families live in physical proximity with each other and lead a common life. Their farms are spread around the village dwelling. Their farm land may be scattered in many plots or may be consolidated in a block.

(ii) Scattered Villages- In this type of village families are scattered over a relatively large piece of land. The villagers live separately in their respective farms, which is away from one another. Since their houses are dispersed they have a lesser degree of contact with each other. Their social life assumes a different form. However, some sort of relationship binds all the families together. Generally they participate in common festivals and observe common functions.

(C) On the basis of organization:

On this basis villages may be classified as follows.

(i) Co-operative Villages

In this type of village, land is owned individually and people pull their resources together for common cultivation and farming. Generally cooperative houses are organised to supply them their necessary commodities. The Mosavidin type of village of Israel, cooperative village in India and Saxon village in Germany fall in this group.

(ii) Semi Collective Villages

In such villages land belong to the collective body. All means of production and resources are owned collectively. The people work together for production of food grains and other essential goods. With regard to consumption, they get their monthly or annual dues fixed according to the income of the village. The income of villagers is not associated with the number of hours worked by members of a particular family. The families receive their quota according to the numerical strength of the family.

(iii) Collective Villages

In this type, villagers live in a communal settlement where all property is collectively owned and all the arrangements are done on a collective basis. Member of the village only render their labour to the common pool and get all the necessities of life like food, clothing, housing, education etc. There is common dining hall, common store and communal kindergarten in the village. The old and disabled persons are also maintained from the common funds. As a whole, such type of village gives full security for the whole life of a person, his children and dependents.

(D) On the basis of Land Ownership

On this basis, villages may be classified into following two categories.

1) Land Lord Villages

In such villages land is owned by individual family or a few number of families known as landlords. The landlords possess all the rights over the land but give the land to the tenants. The landlords also impose rent on the land which tenants usually pay. They (landlords) give certain percentage of rent to King or government

and keep a good percentage for themselves. Such type of villages existed in India before the abolition of intermediaries in agricultural sector.

2) Ryotwari Villages

In Ryotwari villages, farmers are the owners of the land and they cultivate it. They directly pay the rent to the government without any intermediary. Such villages are known as Ryotwari villages where land is owned by Ryots or cultivators.

Besides these important classifications of village community, S.C. Dube has made a comprehensive classification of Indian village communities on the basis of following criteria.

1. Classification of villages according to the size of population, area, land etc.
2. Classification according to caste and racial elements.
3. Classification on the basis of ownership of land.
4. Classification on the basis of authority and privileges.
5. Classification on the basis of local traditions.

VILLAGE STUDIES

The British Raj, incidentally, brought out systematic reports about village life in India. Ramakrishna Mukherjee was the first sociologist who analysed the social organisation of village communities when he had written the Rise and Fall of the East India Company. He informs that up to the advent of the British in India, the village community system had been noted by several authorities. He finds out that village social organisation was almost absent or rudimentary in the south west extreme of the-sub-continent, such as in the present-day state of Kerala and in other parts of country village had been the dominant institution in society.

The British officers of the East India Company found out the main features of the village communities in India and on the basis of their exhaustive description British Parliamentary Papers on India's villages were prepared. It could therefore be said to be the beginning of village studies though the purpose of these studies was administration.

If we analyse the village studies available to us from the period of British Raj to the present day, we could put the scholars or agencies working on the studies into three categories as under:

1. studies/reports brought out by administrators
2. studies conducted by economists; and
3. studies prepared by sociologists and anthropologists.

Studies/Reports brought out by Administrators

First detailed findings about Indian villages were made by East India Company's officials in the Madras presidency. At a later stage, Holt reported about the existence of village communities in northern India. Mackenzie & Sir Charles Metcalfe, members of the Governor General Council brought out details about the Indian village life. In the same vein Elphinstone noted the presence of village communities in the Deccan in his report. The first Punjab Administrative Report was published in 1852 after the consolidation of the power in that territory was brought out. The accounts given by Baden Powell (1899) gave the impression that "all land must have some landlord, which was under him". The British Parliamentary Papers recorded quite categorically that the previously the Zamindars (i.e., revenue farmers, who were turned into land owners during British rule) were essentially accountable managers and collected revenue, and not lords and proprietors of the lands, that the sale of land or in any other way for realising arrears of land revenue, appears to be unusual, if not unknown in all parts of India, before its introduction by government into the Company's domination and that stresses still remained to show that the village community system existed also in this part of India.



The future of India lies in its villages

— Mahatma Gandhi —

Gandhi glorified traditional village life and called for Gram Swaraj

If we go into the official records of East India Company, Ramakrishna Mukherjee concludes that village community system flourished practically all over India. It appears that the villages up to the advent of British India were autonomous. Jurisdiction of the village authorities extended over houses, streets, bazaars (markets), burning grounds, temples, wells, tanks, wasteland, forests, forests lands, that the village council looked after the village differences, settled village disputes, organised works of public utility, acted as a trustee for minors and collected the government revenue and paid them into the central treasury.

The village autonomy was also manifested in the decision making process pertaining to a village. Each village had its representatives for decision taking. Local executive officers were usually hereditary servants and not the members of

the central bureaucracy; they usually sided with the local bodies in their tussle with the central government.

Perhaps, the pioneering work on village studies was done by Gilbert Slater (1918). Slater, while writing in his introduction to the study of some South Indian villages, observes:

“Villages came before towns and even in the most industrialized countries, where all economic questions tend to be studied from an urban point of view, it is well to be reminded that the economic life of a town or city cannot be understood without reference to the lands which send its food and raw material, and the villages from which it attracts young men and women. The importance of rural activities and of village life in India in view of the enormous preponderance of its agricultural population over that engaged in mining, manufacture, commerce and transport is not likely to be overlooked and last of all in southern India, which has no coal mines and no great industry like cotton manufacture in Bombay and jute in Bengal.”

Studies conducted by Economists

After the First World War it became clear to the British Raj and the Indian National Congress, that there was a marked deterioration in India's rural economy. There was abject poverty, squalor and disorganization of village societies; the rumblings of rural discontent began to reach the ears of the government and the educated public in towns and cities. Prior to the end of First World War, the Asian countries had become conscious about the writings on Asian Mode of Production given by Karl Marx. This brought the intellectuals of the country awareness about the plight of the Indian peasantry. The classic description given by Marx on the basis of the literature available to him runs as below:

“Those small and extremely ancient Indian communities, some of which have continued down to this day; are based on possession in common of the land on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts, and on an unalterable division of labour, which serves, whenever a new community is started as a plan and scheme ready-cut and decide... The chief part of the production is destined for direct use by the community itself, and does not take the form of a commodity.

Hence, production here is independent of that division of labour brought about in Indian society as a whole, by means of the exchange of commodity. It is the surplus alone that becomes a commodity, and a portion of even that not until it has reached the hands of the state into whose hands from time immemorial, certain quantity of these products has found its way in the shape of rent in kind. The constitution of these communities varies in different parts of India. In those of the simplest form, the land is tilled in common, and the produce divided among the members. At the same time, spinning and weaving is carried on, in each family as subsidiary industry. Side by side, with the masses thus occupied with one and same work, we find the 'chief inhabitant', who is judge and police in one, the book keeper who keeps the accounts of the village and registers everything relating thereto; another official who prosecutes criminals strangers travelling through and

escorts them to the next village and maintains the boundaries against neighbouring communities; the water observer, who distributes the water from the common tanks for irrigation; the Brahmin, who conducts the religious services; the school master, who on the sand teaches the children reading and writing; the calendar-Brahmin, or astrologer, who makes known the lucky or unlucky days for seed time and harvest, and for every other kind of agricultural work; a smith and a carpenter, who make and repair all the agricultural implements; the potter, who makes all the pottery of the village; the barber, the washerman, who washes clothes; the silversmiths, here and there the poet, who, in some communities replaces the silversmith, in other, the school master. This dozen of individuals is maintained at the expense of the whole community.”

The British Raj, after the First World War, realized that agrarian crisis was imminent in the villages. It appointed the first Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1926. The Indian National Movement also took note of the economic crisis which the peasantry had to suffer. Commenting on the role of national movement in studying the economic crisis of the villages, Ramakrishna Mukherjee observes:

Contextually, the Indian National Movement played a significant role for one of its fruitful by-products was to create interest of social scientists in village studies. The mass movement of 1920s, led by Gandhi and based essentially the on rural question, synchronised with series of village studies carried out in different parts of India.

S. J. Patel (1952) has described the nature of agrarian crisis almost all over India by the end of First World War. He observes:

With the end-of the First World War, beginning of an agrarian crisis was accompanied by the entry of peasants into the political arena, as exemplified during the Champaran and Kheda campaigns led by Gandhiji. As a result, the cultivator of the soil began to attract considerable attention from the students of Indian society.

G. Keatings and Harold Mann in Bombay, Gilbert Slater in Madras and E.V. Lucas in Punjab initiated intensive studies of particular villages and general agricultural problems. The results of these investigations evoked great interest and stressed the necessity still for the further study.

Historically, the origin of village studies with the economic perspective really goes back to the period beginning after First World War to the attainment of independence. During this long period, the condition of peasantry in the country as a whole was worst. There were famines, famine reports and the general poverty gripped with indebtedness. It was realized by the leaders of the struggle for independence to understand the reasons for the appalling poverty of the masses of villagers.

The Punjab Board of Economic Enquiry organised village surveys conducted by individual workers since 1920s. The Bengal Board of Economic Enquiry was set up in 1935 and it conducted village surveys. Again Tagore's Visva Bharti took up village surveys around Shanti Niketan. J.C. Kumarappa was a Gandhian economist. He developed Gandhian economic perspective by conducting surveys in

the villages. Writing introduction to Kumarappa's book, *An Economic Survey of Matar Taluka* (1931), Kalelkar wrote:

“ If there is one thing that characterizes the educated man in India and distinguishes him from those elsewhere, it is his abysmal ignorance of the actual rural conditions in his own country. There are some people who are anxious to see India industrialised. But none of them have secured the bedrock of statistics collected from the mouth of the peasants themselves. The present survey is unique in this respect.”

Even during 1940s decade social scientists in India showed considerable interest in village studies. Only it could be noticed that henceforth the social scientists began to launch extensive enquiries by covering large tracts in the light of the picture of rural society already built up by means of the ever increasing numbers of isolated village studies. Concurrently, they were often found to concentrate on specific aspects of the rural problem in a particular area.

If we critically examine the village studies made by economists, voluntary agencies and commissions, we would find that the focus of enquiry invariably was economic status of the village people. Poor status of agriculture, drought and famine indebtedness were the major thrust of rural studies. Commenting on the status of village studies largely during the period after First World War till independence; Ramakrishna Mukherjee writes:

Economic and material well-being of the rural folks had thus become the pre-occupation with those undertaking village studies as the situation dictated. This course of development and outcome of village studies meet evidently an important need of the country and the government. So it may not be fortuitous that from a different motive it was thought up by the British East India Company as early as 1689.

Actually, the interest of the British Raj in promoting the study of villages was to assess the revenue potential of the villagers. The British were interested to increase their trade and at the same time maintain their force. The renewed interest in village studies came after the attainment of independence and particularly the implementation of Indian Constitution. The government decided to take up the task of reconstruction of India's villages. It was argued by the by the social anthropologists and then rural sociologists that when rural studies can help the British Raj to consolidate their colonial reign in India, why could these studies be helpful to build up the new nation from the grassroots. This prompted social scientists; particularly the social anthropologists, to take village studies in a larger way.

Studies Prepared by Sociologists and Social Anthropologists

During the colonial period, the anthropologists were busy in studying the tribal communities. With the village development programmes in operation, the anthropologists found it obligatory to shift to the study of village communities. S.C Dube (1958) explains this shift and observes:

Anthropologists are no longer concerned primarily, or even mainly, with the study of tribal culture; in increasing numbers they are now operating nearer home in village communities where they have discovered challenging possibilities of theoretical and applied social science research.

It was convenient for social anthropologists to shift from tribal studies to village studies. They had been employing the fieldwork method in the study of tribal communities. This method was also suitable for the study of village communities. The concept of ideal folk society, developed by Redfield, was tried out in analyzing the cultures of Latin America, but there it was found almost non operative. While re-examining it Redfield thought that there was nothing wrong in the concept itself. The later studies proved that the folk societies tend to lose increasingly their basic traits when they come into contact with other advanced cultures. Folk societies, thus, gradually transform themselves into village communities and isolate themselves from the ideal types, say, the one constructed by Redfield. The cultural contact gives rise to a continuum, technically known as the folk-urban continuum. The intermediate category between the two polar types presents the peasant societies or the village community.



City based students visiting a village for its study

Yogesh Atal (1969), while evaluating the rural studies conducted in India, observes:

Thus, the processes of change initiated and accelerated by contact have opened new vistas of study. They presented new problems of analysis and research methodology. It was apparent that the holistic approach that could be successfully employed in the study of isolated and remotely situated small tribal communities was not possible here. The 'whole' of the village community was not complete. It

was a part of a wider whole---of a greater society. In order to apprehend the village in its totality, it was deemed essential to take cognizance of extraneous forces and factors that affect the life ways and work ways of the community.

The village studies which were conducted during the first quarter of 1950s had an obvious advantage vis-à-vis survey research. The village surveys which were undertaken by government agencies, commissions and individual scholars were highly extensive. These surveys, however, did not rigorously confirm to explore the depth of rural life.

There are some social scientists who differentiate between rural sociology and rural anthropology. For both these social sciences, the field is common but the methods and techniques are different. Keeping this difference in view it could be said that rural sociology makes a generalized analysis on national level while rural anthropology makes intensive study of particular village communities. In India, however, such a kind of difference is not necessary. Here both sociologists and anthropologists are jointly exploring the village community with a largely common methodology. Rural India provides a good meeting ground for the two disciplines. This effective communication is indeed a healthy trend and one should welcome this happy merging (Atal, 1969).

Decade of the Flood of Village Studies

Social Background

If the village studies during the colonial times were made for consolidating British Raj, in the post-independent era these were conducted for basically two reasons, namely, village development or reconstruction and Panchayati Raj. Village studies thus, became an urgent task for nation-building.

Enumerating the flood of village studies which came in 1955 and afterwards, Yogesh Atal (1969) makes a stock-taking:

'The year 1955 was of immense significance for Indian anthropology and sociology (rural sociology) also. In that year, for the first time, four books and several papers on Indian village were published. These studies were made by Indian as well as American and British social scientists. Dube's *Indian Village*, Majumdar's *Rural Profiles*, Marriott's *Village India* and Srinivas' *India's Villages* were major publications of the year. The same year a conference was also had under the chairmanship of Dr. (Mrs.) Iravati Karve at Madras in which Prof. Robert Redfield also participated. They much discussed the concept of Sanskritisation proposed by Srinivas in *Religion and Society in Coorg*, reiterated by him who thought the discussion had reinforced his belief in its validity. The proceedings of the conference have been published in a book entitled *Society in India*. Later, *Twice Born* (Carstairs, 1957), *India's Changing Villages* (Dube, 1958), *Caste and Communication in an Indian Village* (Majumdar, 1958), *Caste and the Economic Frontier* (Bailey, 1957) and *Village Life in Northern India* (Lewis, 1958) were added to the library of Indian rural studies. Albert Mayer's book *Pilot Project India* (1958) summarises the main achievements of the Etawah project. An *Introduction to Rural Sociology in India*, an anthology edited by A.R. Desai, appeared in a revised and enlarged version in the year 1959. Later, Edrian Mayer's work on caste and

several research papers based on fieldwork in rural areas have appeared in various journals. The yearly sessions of the Indian Sociological Conference have also included discussions on varied and important problems of rural analysis. University departments of anthropology and sociology have been and are undertaking various projects for conducting researches in the rural areas. The Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission, Government of India is also promoting rural research through such centres.

After the decade of 1950s; there has definitely been a thrust in the study of villages. Earlier, the anthropologists were engaged in the study of tribal communities. They also took to the study of castes found in different cluster of villages. The village studies included, largely, caste as a form of stratification. The economic aspect of the village more or less remained neglected. Actually, with the introduction of development plans, economists, sociologists and social anthropologists came together to provide a holistic profile of the village community. Analysing the status of village studies Ramakrishna Mukherjee very rightly observes:

Thus, the frontiers of the three disciplines meet in the field of village study, and so scientists duly equipped to cross the no man's land between the disciplines should also be forthcoming.

The question, therefore, does not boil down to which discipline should undertake the task or that it can be accomplished only by interdisciplinary research. Contrariwise the question throws up the challenge to create interest among those belonging to any one of the disciplines to assume the responsibility and equip themselves accordingly.

Some Issues included in Village Studies

There are few studies which could be categorized as single village studies. In these studies, either the holistic nature of the village communes is discussed or certain specific aspects of rural life are focused. We discuss some of single village studies in this section.

S.C. Dube's (1955) *Indian Village* is a traditional account of Shamirpeth. Shamirpeth is located in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. Dube brings out details about the village and informs that despite there being more than a dozen castes, the village displays integration. The methodology employed in this study is interdisciplinary. Experts from different development departments have contributed towards the completion of study. It is a classic example of structural functional method. The nature of study is holistic.

M.N. Srinivas (1955) edited work *India's Villages* contains village studies conducted by Indian, British and US anthropologists. Among the contributors are included M.N. Srinivas, David Mandelbaum, Eric J. Miller, Kathleen Gough, Mckim Marriott, S.C1 Dube and others. These studies have taken into consideration the totality of the village life. However, some issues are untouched in some of the studies. Some of the contributors have come out with certain conceptual constructs.

The problem of the unity of village has been a major concern of the contributors to *India's Villages*. For instance, the unity of village has been discussed by a number

of scholars. Admittedly, a few people living in a small village, at some distance from other similar villages, with extremely poor roads between them and majority of them being engaged in agriculture activity, must display a strong sense of unity. The unity of the village, it is found, is based on the solidarity of caste. Caste is a strong unifying factor. The concept of dominant caste has for the first time appeared in this edited book. It has been proposed by M.N. Srinivas in his study of Rampura. The methodology employed by the contributors has been structural functional.

Marriott's Village India (1955), yet another edited work, also includes both foreign and Indian social scientists studying villages from the complexity of Indian civilization. The methodology however, is structural functional. The contributors have re-examined the concept of caste. It has been the effort of the editor to make caste more precise and less open textured. It is here that Marriott constructs the concept of universalization and parochialization. These twin concepts have been explained with the concepts of great and little tradition. He argues that there is a constant interaction between the great and little tradition.

Quite close to the studies of Dube, Srinivas and Marriott, is the edited work of D.N. Majumdar, Rural Profiles. It includes contributors belonging to the disciplines of sociology and social anthropology. Some of the concepts developed by Srinivas, namely, Sanskritisation and dominant castes have been re-examined by the contributors of this edited work. For instance, through the concept of de-Sanskritisation, Majumdar suggests a reverse process by which

Brahmin castes also try to identify in some matters with other castes. Most of the studies included the work consisting of single village.

F.G Bailey's (1957) study of two villages in Orissa brings out the problem of caste and class formation. He argues that at the local level economic formulations run across the caste ranking. Bailey employs structural functional method and analyses the rural life in the context of changing agrarian structure.

D.N. Majumdar (1958), in the study of Mohana, a village in Uttar Pradesh considers village as a concept, a way of life. He follows Redfield's concept of little community and applies four specific characters of Redfield's little community. Majumdar's conceptualisation of village runs as below:

The study of a village as an integrated way of living, thinking, feeling or as a constellation of parts, such as material culture, occupation, technology, kinship system all leading to a proper understanding of a little community, has its limitations, particularly in Indian conditions.

The Indian village has a special kind of communication system characterised by caste relations. Majumdar observes:

Here in Mohana live the high castes and the lower castes, here they share a similar pattern of life, here they feel a kind of consciousness of homogeneity, interdependence, and also a sense of security, bond of living together and sharing opportunities and crisis.

G.S. Ghurye (1960) made a new experiment in the village study, in his *After a Century and a Quarter*. The village of the study- Lonikand or the town of Loni was earlier studied by Major Coats in 1819. The description given by Coats has served as a cutting point for Ghurye. He argues that the village is interwoven by pervasive role of religion. The author has described the structure of village community, its social organisation and the changes brought in it during a period of a century and a more in the field of bio-social life of the people. The village pattern of living is brought through a description of representative families. Though the author has not constructed any theoretical formulation, he very interestingly brings out changes in Lonikand from Coats to the present study. In fact, Lonikand is a study unfolding social and cultural change that took place during a long period of 100 years.

Andre Beteille's study of Sripuram is yet another village study which has acclaimed a high reputation in rural sociology. It is an intensive study of a multi caste village in south India. Quite like Ghurye's Lonikand, Sripuram is a study in transformation. He observes that the social change in the village is in the direction of a more open social system. Until recently, village social life was shaped by its division into three caste groups in Sripuram: The Brahmins, the middle-level non-Brahmins and the Adi-Dravida; the caste of a villager determined his position in the class system and power in hierarchy, and caste itself was acquired only by birth.

Beteille's work falls in the domain of rural stratification. On the strength of empirical data he generalises that in village India caste remains a major form of stratification. Class and power operate within the longer ethnic group of the caste. The work raises certain issues pertaining to caste, class and power.

Rural Sociology in India (1969) by A.R. Desai is a very interesting and refreshing work in the field of rural sociology. Desai has provided an interesting introduction to rural sociology in India in its first part. The remaining 16 parts contain village studies done by different anthropologists and sociologists. These parts are actually readings in rural sociology, which include a comprehensive narration and analysis in the domain of historical aspects of village life, Indian village community, rural stratification, agrarian unrest, land reforms, rural industries and institutions, Panchayati Raj, Bhoodan and Gramdan movements, village social change, village studies and theories of agrarian development.

Besides analysing structural and historical aspects of rural sociology A.R. Desai has edited yet another giant work on peasant struggles in India (1979). The edited work provides a panoramic view of tribal and peasant struggles in India during the colonial period. In fact, it is book of readings which gives an insight into various sources, some of which are rare documents, not easily available and have acquired the character of archival importance. This is a praiseworthy attempt to present an all-India picture of tribal and peasant struggles. It is precisely a work couched in Marxian scheme of interpretation.

Desai vehemently argues that some of the issues raised in the work are not merely academic discussions. They determine strategies, shape policies, organise action, and frame approaches towards different sections of the rural population.

There are dozens of village studies which could be included for our analysis. But, the fact remains that in sociology, social anthropology and rural sociology, study of village community has become an established tradition. The issues raised in these studies are several. Some of the issues have been critically debated.

Village studies have become very popular in social anthropology and sociology. Though, some of the issues concerning villages have been continuously raised, a few of the issues have been seriously contested. A few years back (in 1957) a strong protest about treating villages in India as sociological microcosms came from Louis Dumont. Dumont's comments are as below:

“To what extent, we are asked, is an Indian village a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm of India civilisation? But India, sociologically speaking, is not made up of villages. It is true that the idea of the village is present in Indian literature and thought and can affect the unwary sociologists as much as the villager or the modern Indian politician.

To pose the opposition of village to civilisation is at once to have given the village a sociological reality which similar groups may have elsewhere and to have been deceived by the appearances. The idea of the village in Indian civilization, its reinforcement by Mahatma Gandhi, the pragmatic interest of early government officers and the influence of anthropological methods elsewhere in the world have created this fundamental supposition that the clue to an understanding of an Indian society lives in the village.”

Yogendra Singh (1994) argues that a sociological analysis has to be cognitive structural or in other words culturological. It should focus upon the representation or ideas of reality rather than reality per se. Yogendra Singh further analyses Dumont's methodological position and says that our understanding about social reality consists in replacing the simple in the complex, small in the great, in lighting up a restricted area by bringing it back to its environment, which common thought and often thought in general suppresses and if one could add "it also lies in understanding the objective realities of social phenomena in terms of systems of ideas, ideo-structures or representations".

Commenting on Dumont, Yogendra Singh observes:

In fact, villages in India demonstrate many elements of structural unity, such as, sentiment of territoriality, 'political' kinship and economic solidarity, the sense of village identity on many occasions cuts across caste loyalties which usually divide a village.

The authors concerned with the village studies have also raised the question of village unity. As we have seen above, the village unity becomes weakened by caste and political parties. In the villages of Rajasthan we have as elsewhere several evidence to show that the castes of Jat and Rajput very much divide the village organization. One can very easily observe that a single village is divided into many by Jat and Rajput clusters. Viewed in this respect village cohesion or unity is an elusive phenomenon.

Yogendra Singh finds that there are several village institutions which have their network spread over to a number of villages. The inter caste relations are characterized by reciprocity. For instance, the jajmani system ties a single village to a number of villages. The recent studies which we have in social anthropology show that the village unity today has become a fiction. Jajmani system is replaced by cash payment. In fact, in all regions of Indian villages are changing in respect of economic institutions, power structure, and inter caste relationship. A major source of economic change is land reform which has created great sociological impact on village social structure... Land reform in village has been introduced through: (i) abolition of intermediaries; (ii) tenancy reforms; (iii) ceiling on landholdings and redistribution of land (iv) reconsolidation of holdings and prevention of holdings from deteriorating to uneconomic size; (v) emphasis on development of cooperative farming; and (vi) religio-economic movement for gift of surplus land by the rich to the poor as Bhoodan. These measures have been implemented differently in different states they have created some uniform sociological consequences. It appears that the earlier kind of village unity has been replaced by another form of unity constituted by land reforms. If we take a stock-taking of village studies in India, it could be said that villages have remained as a micro-structure since ancient period of history. What Metcalfe observed during the British period that "village communities are little republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations" has been reinforced by Mahatma Gandhi. In other words, Gandhiji observed that a village should be self-sufficient, and should be morally and economically integrated within the Indian society. Yogendra Singh, while emphasising the importance of village in contemporary observes:

The village as a micro-structure has thus not only been recognized but has gradually become a vital aspect of national developmental planning and politico-cultural consciousness.

AGRARIAN SOCIAL STRUCTUREEVOLUTION OF LAND TENURE SYSTEM

Land management is the most crucial aspect of agrarian system and agrarian relations. Tenancy in agriculture land refers to leasing out land by an owner to a person who actually cultivates that land temporarily by his personal labour and pays rent in cash or kind to the owner. The owner, generally, has a subordinate interest in that land as he holds it as a matter of social status or to get an unearned income. As such, the owner is less interested in the improvement of the land as it is not the main source of his living. Such land tenure is far inferior to owner cultivator if we look at it from the viewpoint of tenant's interest.

If we look at the land tenure system in India we find that the land problem is a British legacy. The land structure served the colonial imperialist interests. The main features of land structure in India in the pre-British period were:

- (i) It was a self-reliant village economy where there was a system of barter exchange.
- (ii) The farmers produced enough to sustain and pay taxes to the extent of 1/ 8th of the produce.
- (iii) The function of the king was to collect taxes to protect the grain and provide proper transport of it from one place to the other (R.P. Dutt, 1979).

With the advent of the British rule, in broad terms, three types of land tenure system came to be established:

(i) Zamindari System: It refers to landlord's tenure. The landlords (Zamindars) were intermediaries between the government and the actual cultivators. This system came into being as a result of the East India Company making a huge payment to Mughal administration in 1765 for Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa where they became entitled to realise land revenue. Through permanent settlement in 1793, Lord Cornwallis gave land ownership to Zamindars who could give land for cultivation to anybody and evict one as per his wishes. He was obliged to pay taxes to the government. There were no cultivating owners of land. Zamindari system was run under two types of settlement: (a) Permanent settlement and (b) Temporary settlement. Under the former the land revenue used to be fixed for a long duration while under the later it was for a shorter duration after which the land revenue could always be enhanced. In political terms the Zamindars became their collaborators and stooges of the British.

Summary of three land revenue systems

Particulars	Zamindari	Mahalwari	Ryotwari
Year	1793	1822 [^]	1792 [*]
Provinces	<i>Bengal, North Madras and Banaras</i>	<i>Agra and Oudh, Punjab and Central India</i>	<i>Madras, Bombay, Berar and Central India</i>
Ownership	Earlier individual, later on to Zamindar	Whole village /community based	Individual
Responsibility of payment	Zamindar	Whole Village (village Committee)	Individual
Protagonist	Lord Cornwallis	William Bentinck	Sir Thomas Munro

[^]<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahalwari> ^{*}<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Ryotwari>

By the start of 1940's all the three systems had more or less degenerated to absentee landlordism with sub-letting and rack-renting. There were massive army of landless labourers and tenants-at-will with no proper land records.

(ii) Ryotwari System: It refers to an independent single tenure. Initially this system was promulgated by Thomas Munroe in 1792 for Madras but gradually expanded to Bombay, Central Provinces, Assam, Coorg, etc. Under Ryotwari system the ryot or the registered holder of land was recognised as holding the land directly from the government without any intermediaries. His tenure was 'occupancy tenure' and he continued to be landowner as long as he was paying land revenue to the government. Under this system, land settlement used to be determined by the government as per the fertility of the land for a period varying between 20 to 30 years and on that basis land revenues were collected.

(iii) Mahalwari System: It refers to joint village or village community tenure system and was first introduced in Agra and Oudh Provinces in 1833. Later it was extended to Punjab and parts of Central Provinces. Under this system the, whole mahal (village) was vested with land ownership. The communal ownership of land by the entire village community was the basis of this system. The Numberdaar (village headman) was responsible to, collect maalguzari (tax) and deposit it in the government treasury. The wasteland, trees, wells and ponds etc. were common property resources of the entire village community.

With the advent of independence a number of measures were taken to reform land holding structure and land relations. In fact Indian National Congress, spearheading the freedom movement, was committed to eliminate the intermediary parasites and absentee landlords. Though the aspirations of the tiller of the soil could never be fulfilled totally, yet the agrarian structure underwent important changes. Various measures of land reforms unleashed numerous forces of change.

LAND REFORMS

Agrarian structure forms a critical aspect of any discussion on socio-economic development in India. The issues of economic backwardness and rural tension are all involved in the basic nature of an agrarian society. Land continues to be the mainstay of the people. It constitutes not only the structural feature of rural areas but changes in land relations act as significant indicator of social and economic change.

Concept of Land Reforms

The term land reform has been used both in a narrow and in a broad sense. In the narrow and generally accepted sense, land reform means redistribution of rights in land for the benefit of small farmers and landless people. This concept of land reform refers to its simplest element commonly found in all land reform policies. On the other hand, in a broad sense land reform is understood to mean any improvement in the institutions of land system and agricultural organisation. This understanding of and reform suggests that land reform measures should aim not only for redistribution of land but also undertake other measures to improve conditions of agriculture. The United Nations has accepted this notion of land reform. The UN definition says that the ideal land reform programme is an integrated programme of measures designed to eliminate obstacles to economic and social development arising out of defects in the agrarian structure.

In the present context also, by land reforms we mean all those measures which have been undertaken in India by the government to remove structural anomalies in the agrarian system.

Objectives of Land Reforms

There are no universal motives behind land reforms but some common ones may be found everywhere.

Social justice and economic equality are the major objectives behind land reforms. The ideal of equality has become a part of people's consciousness in the modern world. Particularly in a traditional hierarchical society, the idea of equality has emerged as a revolutionary force. It also subsumes the elimination of the worst forms of discrimination and poverty. The ideology of equality and social justice has been expressed in terms of programmes like land reforms and poverty alleviation.

Secondly, nationalism has been another motivation behind land reforms. Most of the developing countries in the world gained independence mainly after the Second World War. Thus, the achievement of national independence has been associated with the removal of institutional structures created during colonial rule. Such structures may include the ownership of large estates by persons of alien nationality or various forms of land tenures imposed under the Zamindari, a form of land settlement established during the British rule which became a symbol of colonial exploitation. Naturally, it was always a target for the leaders of India's freedom struggle. Accordingly, its abolition became the goal of the first phase of land reform measures after independence.

Thirdly, the urge for democracy in contemporary world is another factor behind land reform programmes. The idea of democracy has become a moving force in political power. The goal of liberty and justice can be achieved only in a democratic society. In this manner, even the poor and the deprived express their grievances and articulate their demands in a democratic way. Thus, environment for reform is created.

Finally, land reform is taken as a means to increase productivity of land. It is thus considered one of the key issues in economic development in agricultural societies. It has been adopted, as a central programme for agricultural development. The basic issues of agrarian reorganisation are resolved through effective implementation of land reform measures.

Land Reforms in India

Land reforms in India got underway both due to political factors as well as due to organisation and mobilisation of peasantry. The political factors were associated first with British rule and later with the growth of nationalism. It created a situation in which undertaking land reform measures became a compulsion for the government. Thus, some agrarian legislation which attempt to protect the rights of tenants dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century.

The poverty of the people and extreme exploitation of the peasantry by Zamindars and moneylenders attracted the attention of political leaders during the freedom struggle. It became an important plank of the programme of the Indian National Congress. A major programme of agrarian reform was presented in 1936 at Jawaharlal Nehru's initiative and Mahatma Gandhi's approval. In his presidential address at Faizpur session of the Congress, Nehru asked for "the removal of intermediaries between the cultivator and States" after which cooperative or collective farming must follow

Almost around the same time, pressure was being created by the increasing number of peasant struggles in different parts of the country. The All India Kisan Sabha in its meeting at Lucknow in 1936 demanded the abolition of Zamindari, occupancy rights for tenants, redistribution of cultivable waste land to landless labourers and others. In fact, between, 1920 and 1946 several peasant organizations emerged which expressed the grievances of the middle and poor peasants. The Kisan Sabha Movement led by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, the Kheda Agitation of 1918, the Bardoli Satyagrah of 1928, and the Tebhaga Movement of 1947 in Bengal were some of the major peasant struggles of the pre-Independence days. Agrarian discontent and injustice had spread throughout the country. These grievances were expressed in widespread conflicts between peasants and landlords. But if seen in the context of their goals these peasant struggles produced positive results. The pressure created by the long drawn struggles compelled the government to work out plans for the redressal of the complaints of peasants. In this sense, peasant movements before the independence assumed historical importance for the land reform programmes that began just after the independence.

Land Reforms after Independence

Shortly after independence ample emphasis was put on land reforms as part of the national policy to transform iniquitous agrarian structure. The strategy adopted was to introduce land reforms through land legislation. It was broadly indicated by the Government of India and enacted by the state legislatures.

The primary objectives of land reforms were:

- (a) To remove motivational and other impediments which arise from the agrarian structure inherited from the past, and
- (b) To eliminate all elements of exploitation and social injustice within the agrarian system so as to ensure equality of status and of opportunity to all sections of the population.

It is obvious from these objectives that land reforms were introduced with a view to modernise agriculture and reduce inequalities in the agrarian economy. These objectives were converted into the following programmes of action:

- (a) The abolition of all forms of intermediaries between the states and the tiller of the soil.
- (b) Conferment of ownership right on the cultivating tenants in the land held under their possession.
- (c) Imposition of ceiling on agricultural land holdings.
- (d) Consolidation of holdings with a view to making easier the application of modern techniques of agriculture, and;
- (e) Rationalisation of the record of rights in land.

Let us now turn to these programmes in some detail.

(a) Abolition of Intermediaries

The British rulers introduced three major forms of land settlements Zamindari, Raiyatwari and Mahalwari -- to gain maximum revenue from land. Under the Zamindari system the rights of property in land were given to the local rent gatherers. These persons were called Zamindars and belonged generally to the upper castes of the community. This new settlement turned the actual cultivators into tenants. This structural change in the land system created a class of intermediary between the State and the actual tillers of the soil. Under the Raiyatwari system, no intermediary owners were recognized. The actual tillers of the soil were given transferable rights in their lands. But under this system also influential Raiyats emerged as powerful landholders. In the Mahalwari settlement, too, a class of intermediaries had emerged.

These intermediaries had no interest in land management and improvement. Moreover, while the Zamindars were required to pay a fixed amount of revenue to

the government, there was no limit on collections from the actual cultivators. Numerous illegal cesses were imposed from time to time. The Zamindari system allowed a high level of absenteeism. Thus, the system was not only unjust but it was also characterized by acute economic exploitation and social oppression.

It was against this background that abolition of intermediary interests became the first target of land reforms during the early years of the Independence. This measure, undertaken all over the country, essentially sought removal of all intermediaries like Zamindar, Jagirdar, Mirasdar and others. It brought cultivators into direct relationship with the state. It conferred permanent rights in land to these actual cultivators. Accordingly, by 1954-55 almost all states abolished intermediary tenures through several land reform legislations. The abolition of intermediary tenures represents a remarkable transition to a modern agrarian structure.

(b) Tenancy Reforms

Use and occupancy of land of another person on a rental basis is known as tenancy. Tenancy land has been a widespread practice in different parts of the country. Different forms of tenancy such as the share cropping system, the fixed-kind produce system, and the fixed-cash practice have existed both in the Zamindari and Raiyatwari settled areas. Under the system, the small farmers and landless people lease a parcel of land for cultivation from rich landowners. These landless cultivators pay rent in kind (produce) or cash to the landowners in return for land.

Almost all the states have legislations restricting the size of holding's which a person or family can own. However, the permissible size varies according to the quality of land. Acquisition of land in excess of the ceiling is prohibited. Land rendered surplus to the ceiling is taken over by the state and distributed among the weaker sections of the community. Though land ceiling laws have been passed within the broader framework suggested by the central government, there are differences among various state laws. In all the acts there are a variety of exemptions from the ceiling. The ceilings that are fixed are also different. While in most states, the ceilings are fixed are very high, in others ample scope is, left for manipulation by the land owners. The process of taking possession of surplus land and its distribution among the landless is rather slow. The total quantum of land declared surplus in the entire country since inception till September 2000 is 73.49 lakh acres. Out of this about 64.84 lakh acres have been taken possession of and 52.99 lakh are have been distributed. The total number of beneficiaries of this scheme in the country is 55.10 lakh, of whom 36 per cent belong to the Scheduled Castes and 15 percent to the Scheduled Tribe.

(d) Consolidation of Holdings

The fragmentation of landholdings has been an important impediment in agricultural development. Most holdings are not only small but also widely scattered. Thus, legislative measures for consolidation of holdings have been undertaken in most of the states. Major focus has been on the consolidation of the land of a holder at one or two places for enabling them to make better use of

resources. Attempts have also been made to take measures for consolidation in the command areas of major irrigation projects.



Land reforms sought to eliminate exploitation and social injustices within the agrarian system

(e) Land Records

The record of rights in land has been faulty and unsatisfactory. The availability of correct and up-to-date records has always been a problem. It is in view of this that updating of land records has been made a part of land reform measures.

However, progress in this respect has been poor. The Five Year Plan documents say that in several states, record of right do not provide information regarding tenants, sub-tenants and crop-sharers. It has further been highlighted that large areas of the country still do not have up-to-date land records. The main reason behind this has been the strong opposition of big landowners.

Nonetheless several states have initiated the process of updating the land records through provisional surveys and settlements. Steps have also been taken to computerise these records. A centrally sponsored scheme on computerisation of land records has been launched with a view to remove the problems inherent in the manual system of maintenance and updating of land records.

Impact of Land Reforms: An Assessment

Ensuring Redistribution of land: Agricultural land ceiling laws are one of the best known efforts of land reforms initiated in India. All Indian states adopted legislations that place ceilings on the amount of land that a person or a family can own. The objective was that excess land beyond the specified ceiling would be distributed to the landless, marginal and the poor. The ceiling laws were enacted and enforced in two phases: i) between 1960-72 when no specific policy prescriptions or guidelines were present ii) from 1972 and after the adoption of national guidelines. According to an estimate, as of 2002, the state governments have re-distributed approximately 5.4 million acres of land to 5.6 million households. West Bengal amounts for 20% of that redistributed land and 47% of the ceiling surplus beneficiaries (Hanstad, 2002:52). According to an estimate, the state governments have allocated 14.7 million acres of government wasteland to poor rural households through land reform. Further it was found that the ceiling legislation also prevented the concentration of landownership. The NSS data on landholdings show that over time the share of land in the largest size-class has declined. But this could be due to the demographic pressure of partitioning family land.

Land Reforms and Reduction of Poverty: It is said that poverty and literacy are both connected to land reforms. Dhanagare (2002) cites an econometric study of India's experience from 1955-1988 that claims that there is robust evidence of a link between poverty reduction and two kinds of land reform, namely tenancy reform and abolition of intermediaries. Another important finding is that land reform can also benefit the landless by raising agricultural wages. Although the effects on poverty are likely to have been greater if large scale re-distribution of land had been achieved, the results suggest that even partial reforms which mainly affect production relations in agriculture can play a significant role in reducing rural poverty. (Dhanagare, 2002). Another study by Parthasarathy and Murthy (1997) (cited in Dhanagare, 2002) also claims that land reform enables an advancement of literacy. Despite limited land reform, a comparison of neighbouring states, like West Bengal and Bihar, or Kerala and Tamil Nadu, points out that superior literacy status is achieved in states where land reforms are implemented successfully. In this manner, land reform and literacy are also connected to each other.

Land Reforms were particularly successful in certain states like West Bengal and Kerala where the communist governments took initiative to frame as well as implement the law in such a manner that it benefited the landless.

West Bengal's land allocation practices emphasize distributing available land to as many landless families as possible rather than trying to give each beneficiary family a full-sized farm. In recent years, the state has been allocating the dwindling supply of ceiling-surplus lands in very small plots, averaging less than one-third of an acre. Field studies have shown that even a fraction of an acre can provide important supplementary benefits to a landless family. Apart

from intensively farming the plots, there were reportedly significant increases in food consumption, income, and social status attributable to the plots.

In other states, the disappointing results were largely due to a lack of political will. In many cases, ceiling legislation was incomplete and allowed large landowners to avoid the law. The laws also failed to provide fair compensation to landowners. Thus, even after policymakers revised the laws, government officials lacked the will to make compulsory land purchases from the relatively powerful landowning class. The lack of adequate land records also made redistribution efforts more difficult. Though there is a need for land reforms still, the lack of political will exists even today.

In Kerala, the Land Reforms Act 1969 which gave ownership rights to cultivating tenants and homestead rights to hutment dwellers is considered as a model in the implementation of land reforms. Land Reforms is said to have played a very important role in materializing some of the positive development achievements of Kerala including higher levels of literacy and lower birth and death rates. But in the recent years studies have shown that land reforms in Kerala have failed to provide adequate land to the actual tillers of the soil. The failures in the implementation of measures such as exclusion of plantations from the ambit of land reforms and non-implementation of the ceiling act are pointed out as reasons for the unsuccessful outcomes of land reforms. But Scaria (2010) claims that there is no linear relation between land reforms and land relations in the state today. Her study shows that the scheduled castes who are the actual tillers of soil, still stand at the bottom even today vis-à-vis ownership of land. In fact multiple factors like fragmentation and uneconomic land holdings, larger processes of commercialization, out migration from the region, the impact of social reforms and demographic pressures on land mediate agrarian social relations in the state.

Despite its potential and reach, the general assessment on land reforms in the Indian context is rather negative. For example, the report of the Task Force on Agrarian Relations of the Planning Commission of India (1973) said in their overall assessment of land reforms, 'The programs of land reform adopted since Independence have failed to bring about the required changes in the agrarian structure.' The lack of political will of the state governments is said to be responsible for this failure. This is amply demonstrated by the large gaps between policy and legislation and between law and its implementation. It is alleged that in no sphere of public activity in our country since Independence has the hiatus between precept and practice, between policy pronouncements and actual execution been as great as in the domain of land reforms (Basu, 2014).

After 1947, Congress governments had the delicate task of balancing the expectations of substantial tenants against the existing power and political connections of the old landlord classes in different regions. This was not easily achieved. The Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition Act of 1952 and the Imposition of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act of 1960 pruned the old landlord

class, though many families were able to preserve wealth and land through various strategies. The land reforms in UP, for which Charan Singh (1902-87) took credit, broke up many of the old estates. Some of the landlord families lacked the skills and connections in law and administration to match the new rulers. Large numbers of substantial tenant-farmer families became outright owners and employers of landless agricultural workers. In UP, wealthy tenants became substantial landowners; but the actual tillers of the soil – landless labourers – found no change to their position. Their position may have worsened in that now the people they worked for were more secure, confident and powerful than ever before. In the sense that landlords were dispossessed, land reform in Uttar Pradesh could be declared accomplished. However, if land reform meant a wider distribution of holdings, little happened. In fact the National Sample Survey data showed the bottom 40 per cent of rural households in UP holding 2.5 per cent of land in 1954 and 2.9 per cent in 1982 (Jeffrey, 2010).

In Bihar, though there was a lot of public enthusiasm created for land reforms and concomitant agrarian change, legal tangles and political obstacles stood in the way of deep changes in land ownership patterns. In fact a Land Reforms Commission, reported in 2008 that almost 75 per cent of the rural population in Bihar was landless or near landless.

While the achievements cannot be discounted for those benefited, significant negative impacts experienced by a far larger group offset the positive results:

Mass Eviction of Tenants: Tenancy reform caused large-scale eviction of tenants. One study estimates that tenant families were ejected from as much as 33 percent of India's agricultural land due to tenancy reform legislation. Though the Land Reforms Act was framed in late 1950s, it was implemented in different parts of the country not before 1965. During this period the landlords got ample opportunity to take care of their interests. A large number of tenants were evicted on the pretext of resumption for self-cultivation. It is widely held that success in tenancy reforms was possible in an area where the tenants were better organized and powerful. But in many cases it has been seen that the very prospect of reforms has led the landlords and joint family landholders to effect large scale evictions of tenants from land. Therefore in such cases tenurial reforms led to a decrease in security of tenure. In his assessment of the impact of Land Reforms Act in Mysore, C.B Damle (1993) alleged that by the time the radical tenancy legislation was tabled in the state legislative assembly for enactment in 1974, nearly 78 per cent of the tenants had already lost their occupancy rights because of their evictions, mostly on the flimsy ground of resumption for self cultivation. Amy Basu (2014) also cites how land ceiling legislation in a number of villages led the members of the joint family to divide the land in smaller proprietary units causing both fragmentation and mass eviction of tenants.

In addition to causing evictions, the tenancy laws caused passive dispossession

of the poor. These laws prevented the poor farmers from accessing land through tenancy. Most rural households believe that landowners risked losing some rights to their land when they rented it out. As a result (1) some landlords chose not to farm their land rather than to lease it out for fear of losing rights and control to tenants; (2) when land is rented, it is given only to people the landowner can trust not to assert rights. For extra protection, the landowner also rotates the tenants to different parcels, often every year. In a country which is largely agricultural and where land is the source of income and social status, the poor households do not fear exploitation as much as they fear not being able to access land to improve their lives. The landless poor households often report that they wish more land was available for rent.

Failure in Land Consolidation: Due to the differences in the quality of land holdings, land consolidation reform was not as effective. Land consolidation is aimed as a process which brings together bits and pieces of land, owned by a person but strewn around in different places, together, such that it facilitates cultivation and boosts productivity. But in the course of distribution of land it was found that land consolidation became a difficult fact because richer farmers used their power to obtain better quality of landholdings. Despite widely introduced legislations in 16 states, land consolidation program was unsuccessful in all except 3 states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to some extent. Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Karnataka made little achievement (Basu, 2014). Factors like heterogeneous land quality affected land consolidation. This was of course not a problem in states like Punjab, Haryana where the land quality was not uneven. In other states, farmers did not want to lose any fertile parcel of land because they were not quite sure about the quality of land to be allocated to them. Land consolidation also suffered because of the resistance of landowners, interpersonal disputes, weak land administration and such reasons. Other factors like lack of scientific land records (especially in the states in the eastern region), corrupt bureaucracy, legal loopholes and lack of technical skill on the part of officials were other causes of failure of land consolidation. Further, small farmers and tenants feared that they would ultimately be evicted and become jobless due to farm mechanization facilitated by land consolidation. As their tenancy rights were not legalized, the tenants were also concerned about the security of their rights, because they thought that land consolidation may be a pretext for their eviction by landlords. Farmers were also hesitant to change the existing arrangements due to their strong sentimental attachment to land parcels.

Proletarianization_ : Studies on agrarian processes in contemporary India show that land reforms were more successful in the subsistence based paddy cultivation areas rather than in areas with commercial plantation. Interestingly, even where the reforms were successful, it is said that most of the beneficiaries were from among the upper and middle castes rather than the lower *dalit* caste groups. However it was found that land reforms were unable to improve the economic status of the beneficiaries much. Although ex-tenants became land

owners and landless labourers got small homestead plots, a large part of the lands were unviable for cultivation. In fact, according to an estimate in the Dakshin Kannada region about 86% of such land distributed to the middle castes was fragmented and unviable (Jodhka,1995). They had to look for alternative sources of income and sometime they even joined the large force of agricultural labourers in the region. This was solely an impact of land reforms. The region saw an increase in the number of agricultural workers who are largely casual labourers. Many ex-tenants who got evicted also joined the rank of agricultural labourers. This trend is known as the proletarianization of labour.

Impact on Agrarian Structure: The land reforms were envisaged as a measure that would lead to both economic development and social justice. It was thought of as an initiative that would help in overcoming the stagnation in agriculture by creating an interest in it. The crux of the land problem was that land was concentrated in the hands of a few who were neither interested in cultivating nor managing it. Alongside, large masses of peasants who were the actual tillers of land were dissociated from it. The fundamental aspect of land reform was to remove this discrepancy which would in turn increase productivity, address social injustice and lead to economic development. But it did not turn out the way it was envisaged.

Although land reform was a program with a radical intent, and its ideology was one of anti- landlordism, oriented towards the general interests of the peasants, it was found that the actual programme of land reform ended up serving the interests of the peasant proprietors rather than of the rural poor. According to P.C. Joshi (1970), the intermediate classes made a joint front with the rural poor to oppose the feudal burdens imposed by the landlord class. But it then made common cause with the landlords in order to oppose any interpretation of land reform which might mean redistribution of land in favour of the rural poor.

Although there was the perception of a crisis of the agrarian system and a widespread peasant discontent on the eve of independence, this feeling was skillfully exploited by the political elites to wrest the maximum benefit for the intermediate classes from the old landed interests rather than for the rural poor. P.C. Joshi (1970) mentions that the content of the agrarian reform program was such that a) they did not seek to attack the land concentration but only to modify it b) that they sought to extend protection not to all classes of tenants but to certain specified sections belonging to the upper strata of the peasantry. Thus, the land reforms in the long run led to the emergence of the new landed classes, consisting primarily of medium land owners and superior tenants, who would henceforth exercise direct control over the economic system and wield enormous political power from the village to the top levels of the power structure. Thus, land reforms did not make any significant difference to the people at the bottom of the agrarian structure or the actual tillers of land, the intermediate classes or the classes of superior tenants were the ones who

benefitted.

Land Reforms and the Exclusion of Women: Historically, land reform has excluded women. A transfer of property rights to the landless and rural poor is said to have increased the bargaining power of the tenants in the wage market. But studies on Andhra Pradesh (cited in Dhanagare, 2002) point out that this was not so in the case of women agricultural labourers, whose families got some waste land as part of land redistribution. They did not share in the improved bargaining position. The responsibility of women for household maintenance, and the diversion of men's incomes into liquor and other channels of personal consumption, left women with lower wages than men and forced women to accept various onerous conditions of work, that men refused to accept. This shows that it is not enough to increase the bargaining power of men only. The realization is that specific attention needs to be paid towards increasing the bargaining power of women as agricultural labourers by allotting them individual land rights as well. Women's ownership of land is necessary to stimulate their labour and investment. In the case of rural male outmigration, ownership of land by women becomes a necessity for acquiring credit and necessary flexibility in management of farm resources.

Conclusion

Thus, land reforms in India have had a mixed record. They had been envisaged as a tool through which the state would directly intervene to improve the conditions of large masses of the rural impoverished poor, who had very low bargaining power in society. The first phase of land reforms in the early 60s was left to the states. But initial enthusiasm for land reform abated because India faced a massive food crisis in the decade of the 1960s and the state's attention had to be directed towards productivity enhancing measures like the Green Revolution.

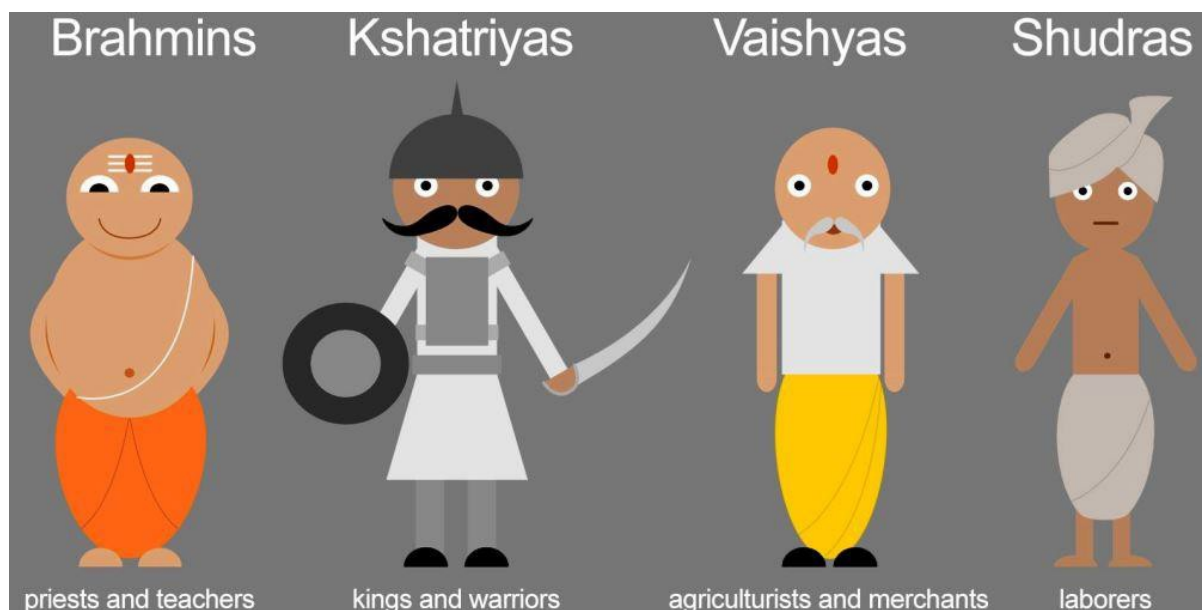
The rising tide of rural unrest in the form of Naxalism in different states forced the government to think of land reforms again and national guidelines were formulated in 1972 regarding reducing land ceilings, introducing family based ceiling on land, tenancy reform and other such similar measures.



Almost a decade later a review undertaken as part of the Sixth Five Year Plan found that land reforms had failed to achieve its goals due to the lack of the political will of the State. In fact, P. S Appu, a long-time observer of land reforms opines that the successful abolition of intermediary interests as against the near- complete failure of tenancy reform and land ceiling legislation and redistribution of ceiling-surplus land has been largely a reflection of the class character and democratic political structure of the post-colonial Indian state and state power.

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) reiterated land reform to be the core of the anti-poverty program of the state and integrated it with mainstream rural development activity. But with globalization and the ushering in of neo-liberal reforms land reforms have become a forgotten agenda of state policy. Market based land reforms were introduced with key financial and technical support of the international agencies and banks which ultimately did not benefit the poor as they were unable to access land.

The rural sector in India today is marked by simmering unrest due to the land acquisition policies of the government which favours the industry. While we witness a gradual shift towards land markets, India is still left with the persistence of a land question.

CASTE SYSTEMPERSPECTIVES ON THE STUDY OF CASTE SYSTEMG. S. GHURYE

Writing on caste in the 1930s, G.S. Ghurye considered certain attributes as definite determinants of caste. For Ghurye, the following six attributes of caste held great significance.

(i) The Segmental Division of Society: Ghurye sees caste with reference to social groups where membership is acquired by birth and status. Social position was derived from the traditional importance of a caste. The segmental division of society refers to its division into a number of groups, each of which had a social life of its own and stood in a relationship of high or low to other castes.

(ii) Hierarchy: A second important attribute of caste followed from this. This is the attribute of hierarchy or the arrangement of the many segments of society according to a definite scheme. This scheme placed groups in positions of superior and inferior or high and low. There was an accepted rule of precedence in the ranking of groups such that Brahmins were placed on top and the untouchables at the bottom of the hierarchy.

(iii) Restrictions on food, dress, speech and custom:

According to Ghurye, the above two attributes reflected in the idea of separation. This separation between groups and maintenance of rank was maintained through restrictions on commensality or inter-dining, marriage, and also by keeping the high and low castes physically separated, placing restrictions on particular forms of dressing, speech and custom. What is meant is that the speech, dress and custom of the high castes could not be copied by the lower castes as by doing so they would be going against the governing rule of caste society. This is the rule that governs pollution and purification from its contagiousness.

(iv) Pollution:

The idea of pollution is a reference to something that is not pure or to the act of becoming impure by loss of purity. Such a loss of purity takes place through contact with polluting objects (such as faecal matter) or persons (such as Untouchables). The castes that were placed lowest were regarded as the most polluting. In fact the degree of pollution was reflected in disabilities suffered by a group; the most polluting castes were the most underprivileged. These disabilities took on many forms. They ranged from the caste being made to live outside the main village boundary, to a denial of access to village wells and temples. In fact, many villages were divided into streets where only particular castes could live and enter. For example, in the village of Kumbapettai in Tanjore, we find three main divisions of Hindu castes: Brahmin, the Non-Brahmin, and the Adi Dravida (untouchable). Each of these lived in different streets in the village, with the Brahmins in the North and the Adi Dravidas in the South of the village separated by paddy fields and a main road.

Similarly even the mere presence of person of low caste or his/her shadow was regarded as polluting. Thus, under the rule of the Marathas and Peshwas, the caste of Mahar (low caste agricultural labourers) was not allowed into the gates of Poona before nine a.m. and after three p.m. as at these times, shadows were too long and could unknowingly fall on a higher caste person and pollute him/her. In some areas particularly the Malabar region, lower castes could neither use nor carry anything that was part of a higher castes style of dressing. This included a restriction on wearing shoes, carrying an umbrella or wearing gold ornaments.

(v) Occupational Association: According to Ghurye, every caste was associated with a traditional occupation.

Since a distinction was made between occupation being clean and unclean and therefore pure and impure, the hereditary occupation reflected a caste's status. For example, the Brahmins engaged in priesthood while the lower castes took up occupations such as those of the barber, cobbler, washerman etc.

(vi) Endogamy: Finally, every caste also maintained its rank and status just by placing taboos not only on commensality, interaction and occupation but also upon marriage relations. Inter-marriages between castes were prohibited. Hence individuals married within the caste i.e. they practised endogamy. Every caste was fragmented into smaller subdivisions or sub-castes, and these were the units of endogamy. For example, the caste of Bania belonging to Vaishya rank divided into various sub-castes such as Shrimali, Porwal, and Modh. The Porwal sub-caste is further divided into Dasa and Visa. Marriage takes place between Dasa and Dasa.

M. N. SRINIVAS

Before we proceed to elaborate upon the contributions made by Srinivas to the study of caste attributes, you have to keep in mind one important fact. All scholars of caste are trying to explain the same social institution—the caste system. The criteria used for explaining are also the same — the attributes of a caste. There is however a difference between the works of these scholars. The basis of this difference lies in the nature of emphasis. What we mean is that while Hutton and Ghurye simply tell us what the various attributes of castes are and how these affect the relationships between castes. Srinivas and Dumont also look at these very attributes but with a different emphasis. For them it is not just the attributes of castes that have significance but the structure of relations that arise between castes on the basis of these attributes as well. The meaning of this will become clear to you as you go through the following sections.

Srinivas sees caste as a segmentary system. Every caste for him is divided into sub castes which are;

- (i) the units of endogamy;
- (ii) whose members follow a common occupation;
- (iii) the units of social and ritual life;
- (iv) whose members share a common culture,
- (v) and whose members are governed by the same authoritative body viz. the Panchayat.

Besides these factors of the sub-caste, for Srinivas, certain other attributes are very important. These are:

(i) Hierarchy: For Srinivas, hierarchy is the core or the essence of the caste system. It refers to the arrangement of hereditary groups in a rank order. He points out that it is the status of the top-most or Brahmins and the bottom-most or untouchables, which is the clearest in terms of rank. The middle regions of hierarchy are the most flexible as regards who may be defined as members of middle ranks. Srinivas in fact says that there are disputes about the mutual positions in the hierarchy. What is meant is that there may be four castes A, B, C and D placed in a hierarchy. One of these may not be ready to accept the place given to it, and seek an alternate rank or position. Further, there is no guarantee that the new position sought will be granted to a caste. For example, in South India, a group of smiths have claimed twice born status. They call themselves the Visvakarma Brahmins, but other castes resent this and even the Harijans do not accept drinking water from them.

Since the rank or status of a caste is closely related to its attributes, a desire to change one's position in the hierarchy means that a change must also be brought about in the nature of attributes. This attempt becomes basis of an important social process called Sanskritisation.

(ii) Occupational Association: Srinivas sees a close relationship between a caste and its occupation. He says that caste is nothing more than the “systematization of

occupational differentiation". Castes are in fact known by their occupations and many derive their name from the occupation followed (i.e. Lohar, Sonar, Kumhar, Chamar, Teli etc.). He also stresses that occupations are placed in a hierarchy of high and low.

(iii) Restrictions on Commensality, Dress, Speech and Custom: These are also found among castes. There is a dietic hierarchy and restrictions on acceptance of food.

(iv) Pollution: The distance between castes is maintained by the principle of pollution. Srinivas too argues that the high castes must not come into contact with anything that is polluting, whether an object or a being. Any contact with pollution renders a caste impure and demands that the polluted caste undergo purification rites. If pollution is serious such as when a high caste person has sexual relations with an untouchable, the person involved may be removed from his/her caste.

(v) Caste Panchayats and Assemblies: Besides the above mentioned attributes of a caste, every caste is subject to the control of an order maintaining body or a Panchayat. Elders of each caste in a village together maintain the social order by exercising their authority collectively. Further, every caste member is answerable to the authority of its caste assembly. The authority of a caste assembly may extend beyond village boundaries to include in its jurisdiction caste members in other villages.

From the above we can see that the attributes of a caste definitely determine the nature of inter-caste relations. It is these caste attributes or customs that also determine the rank of a caste. This becomes most obvious in Srinivas' work on caste mobility or Sanskritisation.

Sanskritisation

We have already seen how every caste is assigned a position in the caste rank order on the basis of the purity or impurity of its attributes. In his study of a Mysore village, Srinivas found that at sometimes or the other, every caste tries to raise its rank in the hierarchy by giving up its attributes and trying to adopt those of castes above them. This process of attempting to change one's rank by giving up attributes that define a caste as low and adopting attributes that are indicative of higher status has been called Sanskritisation. This process essentially involves a change of one's dietary habits - from non vegetarianism to vegetarianism, and a change in one's occupational habits, from an unclean to a cleaner occupation.

We began this section by mentioning how for Srinivas, more important than the attributes was the structure of relations that arises around castes. What this means is that the attributes of a caste become the basis of interaction between castes. The creation of patterns of interaction and interrelations is best expressed in Srinivas' use of concept of the dominant caste. Let us read something about this.

Dominant Caste

To the already existing general attributes of castes, three other important ones are added. These are (i) Numerical strength; (ii) Economic power through ownership of land; and (iii) Political power.

A dominant caste accordingly is any caste that has all three of the above attributes in a village community. The interesting aspect of this notion is that the ritual ranking of a caste no longer remains the major basis for its position in the social hierarchy. Even if a caste stands low in the social hierarchy because of being ranked thus, it can become the dominant, ruling caste or group in a village if it is numerically large, owns land and has political influence over village matters. There is no doubt that a caste with relatively higher ritual rank would probably find it easier to become dominant. But this is not the case always.

We take an example from village Rampura in Mysore to illustrate the above. In this village there are a number of castes including Brahmins, Peasants and Untouchables. The peasants are ritually ranked below the Brahmins, but they own almost all the land in the village, are numerically preponderant and have political influence over village affairs. Consequently, we find that despite their low ritual rank, the peasants are the dominant caste the village. All the other castes of the village stand in a relationship of service to the dominant caste i.e. they are at the beck and call of the dominant caste. We give you another example to illustrate this.

In the village of Khalapur in North-Western Uttar Pradesh, in the 1950s there were thirty-one castes. The Rajput (Kshatriya rank) of Khalapur was the dominant caste as Rajputs had numerical strength and composed forty-two percent of the village population; they had economic power since they owned and controlled ninety percent of the village land; and political power since all the lower castes had to do their bidding. The Brahmins on the other hand were not dominant because they had none of the characteristics of dominance. The villagers believed that Khalapur belonged to the Rajputs even though they ranked below the Brahmins in terms of their ritual status. From the above we see that in Srinivas' view, economic and political factors go hand in hand. Those who have economic influence have political power and use this combination of the economic and the political power to improve their social rank in the social hierarchy. It is this very combination of attributes which is used by a caste in its attempt to sanskritise itself and improve its social rank.

LOUIS DUMONT

A clear statement of caste attributes and how these function to create structures or patterns of interactions is to be found in the work of the French scholar Louis Dumont. In his book *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970), Dumont also attempts an understanding of the caste system.

For Dumont, the starting point of the understanding of the caste system is Bouglé's work. The major emphasis here is therefore put upon three major attributes of caste, namely

- (i) hierarchy (ii) separation (iii) division of labour.

The underlying principal of the caste system for Dumont is the principle of the opposition of the pure and the impure.

Although Dumont also sees castes as segments, for him this does not mean that a caste is simply divided into sub-sections where each is independent of the other. On the other hand each segment is a part of the segment above it. This is somewhat like an onion. You peel off one layer and find another and yet another beneath it and so on. All the layers put together make up the onion.

Dumont sees the caste system as a combination of segments. Each of the segments stands in a relationship of hierarchy to the other; nevertheless, it is inclusive of the other. The terms that Dumont uses for this inequality and relationship between castes is 'the encompassing and the encompassed'. This means that every caste in the hierarchy includes the one below it in its character, i.e., Brahmin position by itself has no meaning. Even though superior to the Kshatriya, it is in relationship and opposition to the latter that the Brahmin has ritual superiority.

This brings us to the second important attribute of caste for Dumont, namely, separation which is both expressive of the pure or impure rank of a caste and at the same time helps maintain the ritual status of a caste. In fact this separation between castes and the need to keep it thus, is made possible by the division of labour and traditional association of every caste with an occupation which it specializes in and also monopolizes. The principle of purity and pollution is the bases of the relationship that arise between castes in the spheres of commensality and marriage.

Restrictions on who one eats with and who one marries are based on the pure or impure rank of the castes involved in the relationship. Only pure castes or castes ranked high or as equals are considered for commensal or marriage relationship.

These relationships are thus determined by the attribute of purity or impurity of a caste. They also are expressive of a separation and hierarchy between castes.

Dumont was deeply influenced by the French intellectual milieu of his times. His study of caste system titled *Homo Hierarchicus* was first published in French in the year 1967 and later translated into English in 1969. For Dumont, equality and inequality are contrasting concepts. He considers egalitarianism to be the value of the West and hierarchy to be the value of the East. Dumont says that caste is not a form of stratification, like class for example. For him, caste is a special form of

inequality, whose essence has to be deciphered by the sociologist. Relationships between castes take place on the basis of certain mental assumptions, which constitute the essence of caste. Dumont identifies hierarchy as the essential value underlying the caste system, supported by Hinduism. This value of hierarchy not only ranks people differentially, but also holds together this complex Indian society. In other words, hierarchy is a value system which integrates our society.

To begin with, let us see how Dumont defines caste. Dumont's definition of caste heavily draws from Bougle. For Bougle, the caste system denotes the following:

- (i) a large number of permanent groups;
- (ii) these groups are specialized;
- (iii) they are separated from each other;
- (iv) these groups are tied up by a hierarchical relationship

Dumont says that at the base of these principles stands a basic principle, i.e., opposition of the pure and the impure. Pure is superior to the impure and has to be kept separate. Says Dumont (1970:43) "whole is founded on the necessary and hierarchical co-existence of the two opposites". The caste system appears to be rational to those who live in it, because of the opposition between the pure and the impure. For example, in a village, you might find both Brahmins and the untouchables. Brahmins are pure and hence supreme and live at the heart of the village whereas the untouchables are considered as impure and hence live outside the village.

Hierarchy in India, says Dumont indicates gradation but not power and authority. Hierarchy is the principle through which the elements are ranked in relation to the whole. In many societies it is religion which provides an understanding of the whole, and thus ranking is basically religious in nature. In the Varna system there are four categories and the category of untouchables. These four categories are divided into two - Shudras and others. Then the category of others is divided into two opposing groups - Vaisyas and others. Finally there is an opposition between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. In India, status (Brahmin) has always been separated from power (King). Not only that, power has been subordinated to status. The King is always subordinate before the Priest. This also means that spirituality has never been given a political chance in India. In many western religions, religious heads wield power also. The Pope, head of Catholic Christians, is a spiritual head and at the same time he is head of his kingdom, the Vatican City.

In Indian society, the King is subordinate to the Priest. But together; they have dominion over the world. The King and the Priest are also dependent on each other. The King can order a sacrifice but only a Priest can perform it. Elsewhere it was mentioned that status is superior to power and there exists a fundamental opposition between pure and the impure. Hierarchy is something ritualistic in nature and supported by religion. Only when power is subordinated to status, this kind of pure hierarchy can develop. The Brahmin, who personifies purity and hence is superior, encompasses the whole system. But a Brahmin along with the King opposes all the other categories of the Varna system.

If you have read the above arguments of Dumont carefully, you will be able to compare the views of Dumont and other scholars who practice the interactional approach. Whereas other interactional theorists talk about a ritual hierarchy and secular hierarchy, Dumont talks about only one, i.e., ritual hierarchy. In fact, for Dumont, a secular hierarchy does not seem to exist because hierarchy itself is religious (ritual) in nature. For example, the Jajmani system understood by many scholars as an economic arrangement is just a religious arrangement (ritual expression) for Dumont. In this section, we have seen how Dumont provides a new way of studying the caste system focusing on the ideology or value system underlying caste. Dumont sees it based on the fundamental opposition between pure and impure. For Dumont, hierarchy is basically of a ritual character.

The Jajmani system, says Dumont (1970) “makes use of hereditary personal relationships to express the division of labour.” Each family has a family at its disposal to provide the specialized services. A washerman family might render its service to another (high) caste family regularly throughout the year. A Shudra family might be under obligation to render services to a high caste family in their farm. These services are personalised and a good part of the wages are in kind (grains). During festivities, the servicing castes may get special clothes or a share in the harvest.

The Jajmani system basically is a form, of division of labour. In Indian villages, there are generally two kinds of castes: those who, own land and those who do not. Those who own much land also wield considerable amount of influence and power in the local context (i.e. village). This dominant caste in former times performed the functions of the king locally, but itself was subordinate to the King of the region. Now, to this dominant caste several 'dependent castes' are attached to perform various functions. These dependent castes earn their subsistence through specialised services rendered to the dominant caste. The untouchables and the specialised castes (e.g. washerman, barber, etc.) are under strong obligation to render personal services to the dominant caste.

Now, Dumont says that the Jajmani system is a ritual expression rather than just an economic arrangement. Dumont says that the Jajmani system is governed by a specific set of ideas. These ideas are capable of imposing limits on the economic power. The principle of hierarchy which determines who is dominant and dominated, justifies the positions of these groups. This principle directly opposes economic activities. In any economic activity the individual has to be the unit. But in the Jajmani system, the village is the unit. Service is rendered by the dependent castes to the community, not just to an individual. Service to the village community by dependent castes is regarded as necessary for ensuring order in society. This view, where there is an ordered whole where each caste is assigned its place, is basically religious in character. Thus, Jajmani system of division of labour is not an economic arrangement or secular interaction. Jajmani system is the religious expression of interdependence, where interdependence itself is derived from religion. Thus, Dumont provides a very different way of looking at the Jajmani system by focusing on the value system underlying it.

Commensal Transactions

Commensal transaction, according to Dumont, denotes the organisation of the caste system. The rules regarding commensal transactions are effectively related to the ranking of castes and the division of labour. They are also linked to the idea of purity. The ranked or stratified interaction between castes reveals the type of contacts avoided as impure. The gradation of food is linked up with the classification of individuals into groups and the relationships between them. Gradation of foodstuffs, in other words, mirrors the stratified reality.

Regarding commensal transactions, purity of the consumer, consuming place and the occasion becomes important. On certain grand occasions, like weddings, Brahmin is the cook, so that a large number of castes can eat in the wedding banquet. Everyday food is distinguished from food for banquets. The question of purity, it must be noted, does not arise in all situations. For instance, washerman is a purifier and may come to the house freely. But when he comes to marriage, to supply the fabrics available with him, he pollutes the situation.

Thus, we understand that, according to Dumont, commensal regulation emphasise hierarchy rather than separation. They also draw on the idea of purity but become crucial within specific circumstances.

Criticisms of Dumont's Approach

An oft-repeated criticism against Dumont's work is that, his theoretical system is not sensitive enough to history. In other words, the features of the caste system as projected by Dumont seem to be unchanging. In reality the caste system has changed in various ways down the ages. Also, Dumont seems to characterize Indian society as almost stagnant, since he places much emphasis on the integrative function of caste system.

As have seen earlier, Dumont makes a clear separation between power and status. How far this is another question. Berreman (1971) argues that power and status could be two sides of the same coin as well. He cites the case of the Gonds. The gonds wherever they have had power in the form of land, have adopted hierarchical symbols of behaviour to justify that status. The purity versus impurity opposition highlighted by Dumont is also not universal. In certain tribal societies status is not anchored in purity but in sacredness.

Moreover, Dumont's view of caste as a rationally ordered system of values (ideology) has also been questioned. Dumont seems to have ignored the number of protest movements which emerged in Indian history questioning the ideology of the caste division itself, through his emphasis on values. Dumont could not see the relationship between castes as conflict ridden. For him, the relations between Varna, especially the Brahmin and Kshatriya are almost complementary.

ANDRE BETEILLE

Andre Beteille defines caste as follows: "Caste may be defined as a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system".

Beteille's writings have focussed on the changes in the caste system in the post independence period of Indian history.

Change from closed system to open system

In his study of Caste, Class and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village, Andre Beteille (1966) wrote that earlier (i.e. in pre-British period) education was a virtual monopoly of the Brahmins who dominated this area. But at the time of his study, the educational system had become far more open, both in principle and in practice. Many non-Brahmin and even untouchable boys attended the schools at Sripuram (the village studied by Beteille) and the adjacent town of Thiruvaiyur. Because of this education, the non-Brahmins and the Adi-Dravidas (the lowest castes) could compete on more equal terms with the Brahmins for white-collar jobs. It also helped them to participate in the political affairs more equally with the Brahmins.

According to Beteille, in the towns and cities white-collar jobs were relatively caste-free. Non-Brahmins from Sripuram could work as clerks or accountants in offices at Thiruvaiyur and Tanjore along with the Brahmins.

Within the village, land had come into the market since, due to several factors, some of the Brahmins had to sell their land. This enabled the non-Brahmins and even a few Adi-Dravidas to buy it. Thus, as land came into the market, the productive organisation of the village tended to become free from the structure of caste.

Beteille had come to the conclusion that in a way changes in the distribution of power was the most radical change in the traditional social structure. He said that the traditional elites of Sripuram, comprising the Brahmin landowners, had lost their grip over the village and the new leaders of the village depend for power on many factors in addition to caste. There had come into being new organizations and institutions, which provided new bases of power. These organizations and institutions were at least formally free of caste.

Beteille has also dwelt on the paradoxical weakening and strengthening of the caste system post independence in one of his public lectures.

(Following pages contain the transcript of a Lecture titled 'Caste Today' delivered by Prof. Andre Beteille)

Caste Today
By Andre Beteille

In the 1950s', 60s' and 70s', caste was the subject of academic interest, not necessarily a subject of very wide public interest. Today, it has become a subject of public interest and I would like to give some thought as to how this has happened. How a subject, whose study was confined to a specialized group of academics in the field of social anthropology and sociology, has now captured the public imagination? What does it indicate about the changes in our society?

As a student of the society, I have been struck very much about the change in perceptions that have come about since 1977. I think the year 1977 was a kind of watershed in the public attention that began to be paid increasingly to caste and its operations in public life. Today, it is a subject which receives an enormous amount of attention from the media, both print and electronic. As you go back to the newspapers of the 50s' and 60s' and even the 70s', you will not find caste receiving the kind of attention that it receives in the newspapers, in the popular magazines and particularly on television.

Today, people talk and debate endlessly about caste bias in education and employment – about how far does caste bias prevail in the admission of students or in the appointment of the faculties in our universities and centres of excellence? To what extent are the admissions and appointments in institutions like IITs and AIIMS, JNU and University of Delhi governed by the caste bias. To what extent are the actual operations of everyday activities in these institutes governed by caste considerations?

When I go back to my own experience of the Delhi School of Economics (DSE) in the University of Delhi, to which I came as a lecturer in 1959, the subject of caste was considered rather boring, particularly by my colleagues in DSE, who believed that caste belonged to India's past, not to India's future. These people felt that caste was a subject of highly specialized interest with which intelligent people, who were concerned with the transformation of Indian society, should not pre-occupy themselves too much.

I was derided by some of my progressive friends, particularly in the profession of economics for taking so much interest in what they considered to be a 'reactionary' subject. Their feeling was, in the 50s' and 60s', if you are interested in the roots of inequality and conflicts in Indian society, then you should look to 'class' and not to 'caste'.

But the same people who tended to dismiss caste as an epiphenomenon, as the matter of the superstructure, rather than as being at the heart of inequality and conflict in Indian society, have today turned with new interest and tend to put caste at the centre of attention.

Today, caste bias is very widely discussed in Delhi University. Today, if you go to Delhi University and ask about admissions; within five minutes you will come to the point where people will tell you that all of this is, in fact, done in terms of caste. They will tell you that caste is very important in the operation of our public institutions, whether in education or in employment. I don't know to what extent this is actually true. My sense is, that caste bias certainly exists even in our public institutions, though this tends to be somewhat exaggerated by the media.



It is impossible to follow caste rules governing distance maintenance from ritually lower castes in public transport in urban India

Then the media are full of reports about caste conflicts, including violent ones, in the villages, towns and sometimes even in the cities. Now, it might happen that caste conflicts prevailed even in the past but they were not reported as frequently in the press as they are done now.

When one is talking about electoral politics in most parts of India, the caste equation figures very much in electoral calculations. This is what which keeps the subject of caste alive in the media, in public debate and in public discussions. Certainly, the perception that caste is important has become much more widespread among the intelligentsia, academics and journalists.

Now, certainly if one goes by what one sees in the media, one will have to admit that caste is still very much here. And this perception of the Indian society is very different from the perception that the forward looking and progressive Indians had in the wake of independence. Certainly they believed in Nehru's India that caste was on its way out; rather than becoming progressively stronger with the passage of time.

It's not that everybody subscribed to the general optimism that caste was on its way out and that it would soon be a thing of the past. There were exceptions and I will draw attention to one or two of them, whose writings, even in the 50s, drew attention to the fact that caste was very much a part of the Indian reality in post independence era. And this point was made very forcefully by a person who dominated sociological studies in India in the second half of the 20th century- M.N. Srinivas.

Srinivas, in his presidential address to the Anthropology & Archaeology Section of the Indian Science Congress, in 1957 argued that we have not seen the last of the caste system and that it was still alive and kicking and we better take note of it. There was an editorial in the Times of India commenting on that Presidential Address that this is very greatly exaggerated, this is something which is dying out and the eminent social anthropologist was bringing it back to life. And I remember the response to Srinivas' views in the Indian Statistical Institute where I had my first job. People tended to deride this preoccupation with caste, in a similar vein, when I talked to economists in the Delhi School of Economics in 1959. The economists, with whom one discussed these issues, whether it was Shri K.N. Raj, P.N.Dhar or V.M. Dandekar, were inclined to argue that this was not something which we should worry too much about.

Now the question I would want to ask myself is that, were these distinguished economists, academics, journalists who believed that caste was in decline, completely deluded? Were they unable to see what was going on in the Indian society? Frankly, I don't think they were wholly deluded.

Because there are many areas of social life in this country in which there is a secular trend of decline in the significance of caste. I would pick out three areas and argue that there is substantial evidence that caste is in decline in all these three fields of social life or action. The evidence does corroborate that caste has been steadily in decline in three of the most significant areas of social life where it held forte until the end of the 19th century.

First, is the area of religion and ritual. Second, is the area of inter-marriage and third is the area of the association with the caste and occupation.

If you look at the literature on caste till the time of independence, much of it highlights the importance of ritual observation of purity and pollution as the basis of the divisions and hierarchies of caste. Particularly, the writings of civil servants like Edward Blunt, J.H. Hutton and missionaries drew attention to the great

strength of the opposition of purity and pollution as a basis for hierarchies of caste.

For instance, the rules for the interchange of food and water. What kind of food is acceptable from whom? From which caste, water is acceptable and on this issue, there are enormous ritual variations. There are detailed accounts, particularly in South India about the physical distances that different castes had to maintain from each other, depending on the ritual status in the hierarchy. I don't think that there is any doubt that this has been weakening steadily and there has been a secular trend of decline in the ritual basis of caste.

The practice of untouchability, however, continues. I won't say that it has disappeared. But I would say that the ritual aspects of the practice of untouchability are no longer as prominent. The practice of untouchability in the traditional ritual sense of the term is being replaced by the practice of atrocities against untouchability.

I have seen this change in my own eyes in a village in Tanjore district which is the citadel of Brahmanical orthodoxy; when I lived in the Brahmin dominated quarters of the village known as Agraharam. I found my way to the Agraharam. When I used to be there in 1961-62; there was a clear residential segregation in these villages during the time. In the Agraharam only the Brahmins lived. At the other extreme you had the Cherais where lived the Dalits, the Adi-Dravidas and the Harijans. In between, there was the area where the non-Brahmins lived. And then, you could identify a Brahmin by his appearance, by how he dressed etc. All this has changed and this, I believe is also an important and a secular trend of change.

I have no doubt whatsoever that what was once considered to be absolutely crucial to the functioning of caste system is now in complete or almost disarray; not so much in the rural areas, and in fact, there are orthodox persons at North and South India who would think five times before employing a Harijan woman as a cook or even before allowing him to use the kitchen. But I think this trend/direction of change is quite clear.

The rules and restrictions on marriage are considered the real heart of the caste system. Of course, they were very extensive and very elaborate. I won't say that the rules of caste endogamy have disappeared. I think that marriage is one area in which people look to match caste with caste. I have known quite a number of very liberal, highly educated, even left oriented intellectuals who said that caste does not exist in Indian society any more, but when they are looking for a bride or a groom, they are quite aware of the caste of the person. But while that is there, there are also changes.

I would draw attention to two or three kinds of changes. One is that the rules or restrictions on marriage or the rules of the marriage within the caste system were not simple. They were quite elaborate and complex. We tend to think of the rules of caste marriage only in terms of the rules of endogamy i.e.,

when one marries within one's own caste. But that was not the only rule that prevailed; there was also the rule of hypergamy which in Sanskrit, is known as Anuloma, i.e, a man of a superior caste may marry a woman of lower caste; but, never the other way round. Anuloma was allowed but never Protiloma. Anuloma is sanctioned; Anuloma is considered to be necessary, is socially deemed to be quite in order. But not Protiloma. And rules of hypergamy were very widely practised. We, the Brahmins, to which community my maternal ancestors belonged, were notorious for the practice of Anuloma. And that enabled the men to accumulate larger number of wives and along with that they could also accumulate large sums in dowry.

Now inter-caste marriages do take place and I would explain in what way, but the point is that the inter caste marriages did take place even in the past but according to certain very specific rules, viz., that the man had to be of superior caste and the woman of inferior caste. Today when inter caste marriages take place or when that is allowed, and tolerated, people do not want to find out, whether it is Anuloma or it is Protiloma. And inter caste marriage today is truly an 'inter caste' marriage. And I have tested this way with my own students, in Delhi University, students from this city of Calcutta. They are mainly upper-caste Brahmin girls, I would ask them from time to time, " *Tomader barite Anulom biye hoyeche*" ? *Protilom biye hoyeche*" ? And they don't know the meanings of these words. These words have lost their meaning and significance. I think that is not unimportant.

Are inter-caste marriages taking place ? Yes, but how widespread are they, I don't really know. We don't have reliable or adequate statistics to tell us how widespread inter caste marriages are. But inter caste marriages are taking place. However, even when inter caste marriages do take place, one has to recognize the fact that these marriages were usually between adjacent sub-castes of the same caste.

Let's say the marriage between a Radi bride and a Barendra groom which would be considered improper and unacceptable in my grandmother's generation, is today, merely a marriage within the Brahmin community. Inter caste marriages are also acceptable, provided the distance between the two castes is not very great; let's say that, between Brahmin - Baidya or between Baidya and Kayastha. Inter-caste marriages between them are much more widespread now than that was before. The trend is quite clear that the rules restricting inter-caste marriages are not becoming more stringent, but are becoming more lax.

But one must not ignore the fact that if an inter-caste marriage is between an upper-caste man and a dalit woman, then the sanctions are likely to be very swift and not, if it is the other way round; because there is a strong bias for Anuloma in the caste system and strong bias against Protiloma in the caste system. I think that runs very deep in the structure of Indian society. It is not just a matter of caste. The idea that the status of the groom should be superior to the status of the bride is very strong and ingrained in the society. So inter caste marriages are taking place but not necessarily across great structural distances.

But the other important thing which deserves our notice is not simply the frequency of inter caste marriages. One might say that to be one in one thousand, but even that would be quite significant compared to the past. It's not the frequency, but one has to take into account the sanctions against inter caste marriages; because one must ask, even if there are three inter caste marriages, what is the consensus, what is the sanction against inter caste marriages? There were very powerful sanctions of the community against inter caste marriages in the past. These community sanctions have ceased to exist and whatever sanctions are there, are those imposed within the family or the joint family at the most. So, that again, is an important change.

The third area where the caste seems to be weakening and again where there is a secular trend, is in the association between caste and occupation. Earlier, many argued that the real foundation of the caste system lay in the association between caste and occupation. I would say that there is still some association between caste and occupation but it is weakening. If one wants to understand, what is the association between caste and occupation, then I think one has to examine it at two different levels.

First of all, there was a very specific association between caste and occupation of the kind which was studied in very great detail by my own teacher, Prof. N.K. Bose. For instance, he pointed out that among oil pressers, the Telis, there were two or three different sub-castes of Telis and each of these sub-castes practised oil pressing using their respective techniques. There are oil pressers who use one bullock for running the oil mill and there are those who use two bullocks for running the same. Similarly for potters and those engaged in other occupations. It is a kind of monopoly that goes down right to the details of the craft or the service. Now that kind of specific association between caste and occupation is very definitely in retreat because many of those old occupations, crafts and techniques are now dying out.

But apart from the specific association between caste and occupation, i.e., a sub-caste pursuing a particular craft in a particular manner, there is also a general association between caste and occupation, i.e, caste belonging to the higher levels, usually practice superior non-manual occupation and castes of lower levels were usually relegated to the inferior, manual and menial occupations and that association is still quite noticeable. It has not yet disappeared, although it has been curbed quite a bit.

Now the factor behind loosening up of the association between caste and occupation is the emergence of a very large number of new caste-free occupations. There are new occupations to which there is no appropriate caste or sub-caste. There are no particular castes or sub-castes which match the new occupations that are emerging before our eyes at a very rapid rate.

So, I have been arguing that in three very important areas, caste does seem to be in retreat so that my friends in the Delhi School of Economics like Shri K.N. Raj,

Amartya Sen or Sukhomoy Chakraborty, when they were saying that the caste is in decline, it was not altogether an illusion. It was in decline in that sense but why is it that people have acquired a renewed interest in caste?

I would say if caste has been given a new lease of life in Indian society, it is the political system which has given it. Srinivas' paper 'Caste in Modern India' is a strong pointer to the continuing existence of the caste system and even to its strengthening. There is no doubt at all that democratic politics has given a new lease of life to caste by allowing caste to be used as a basis for mobilizing electoral support. This is what is described as identity politics.



So Srinivas was right and so also K.N. Raj was right. When K.N. Raj was arguing that caste is weakening, he had in mind the association between caste and occupation, the very stringent rules restricting inter-caste marriages and the rules regarding ritual inclusion and exclusion; so he was right. But when Srinivas was arguing that caste had been given a new lease of life, he was also right.

I came to appreciate the significance of caste in politics in 1961 and 1962 because that was when I was doing my field work in Tanjore district in Tamil Nadu. In 1962 the third General Election was held and I saw that caste was entering as a factor in villagers' calculations -- about who will win and why is a party setting a particular person as one of its candidates. And I came to Delhi and talked about this phenomenon with politicians. When you asked the politicians that caste after all was useful in mobilizing support in elections, they would say, at first, "we don't do it, the other parties do it". And then when you show evidences and point out that their party also does it, they would say "Well Mr. Bêteille! This is politics. I am not a professor like you, we have to be realistic. If other parties are using caste, what do you expect of us?" So the use of caste for

mobilizing political support was always justified on pragmatic grounds-- "We have to do it because everyone was doing it".

It is here that a change came about in 1977 and in 1990. The use of caste in politics today is no longer justified only on pragmatic grounds; it is also justified on ideological grounds- by an appeal to social justice. You look at the distribution of resources, whether in education or employment, there is no alternative but to use the loyalties of caste for mobilizing political support. Even the left parties are no different from the other parties in justifying the use of caste in identity politics.

Of course, people may point out to me that caste was given a new lease of life only by the political process for mobilizing electoral support but I would argue that if there were nothing to it, how could one have used caste for mobilizing political support? It is not that the people were not conscious of their caste identity; of course they were and this comes up when one talks about marriage. But this consciousness was weakening and it has been given a new lease of life and strengthened as a result of identity politics which has been in vogue since 1977, but particularly since the Mandal agitations of early 1990s.

So, this is where we stand now, and I don't know what the future of caste is.

In finality, one must always be very sensitive to regional variations in India. I find it extremely difficult to generalize for the whole of India when I am talking about the power played by caste in politics or in ritual or in inter- marriages in certain parts of the country. There are enormous regional variations, those between rural India and urban India, etc.

FEATURES OF CASTE SYSTEM

The salient features of the traditional caste system in India include:

1. **Segmental division of Society:** Society is divided into general social groups called castes. Each of these castes is a well developed social group, the membership of which is based on birth. The segmental division of society refers to its division into a number of groups, each of which has got a life of its own and stood in a relationship of higher or lower status to other castes. Mobility from one caste to another is severely restricted. The behavioural pattern, food habits, manners of dialogue and interaction differ from caste to caste. Every member of the caste identifies herself/himself with her/his caste. Each caste has its own organisation known as Jati Panchayat or caste council. Mutual obligation, help and cooperation of the members of a caste in their day to day activities make each caste a social world by itself.
2. **Hierarchy:** According to G.S. Ghurye in each linguistic area there are about 300 castes which can be graded and arranged into a hierarchy on the basis of their social precedence. At the top of this hierarchy is the Brahmin caste and at the bottom is the untouchable caste, In between there are the intermediate caste. Thus, castes are supposed to be based on the basis of superiority and inferiority and involve gradation on the accepted scale of value and prestige of the caste hierarchy.
3. **Restrictions on Commensality and Social Intercourse:** There are certain rules regarding eating, drinking and social interaction which are to be followed by all castes in order to avoid defilement or pollution and to uphold rules of purity. These rules are powerfully reinforced by the caste Panchayats. The notions of karma, dharma and ritual pollution have figured prominently in both religious and legal thought relating to the caste system. There are many taboos regarding the acceptance of kachcha (boiled) and pucca (fried) food by one-caste from another.
4. **Lack of Unrestricted Choice of Occupation:** Membership in a caste is hereditary and choice of occupation is not supposed to be free. Traditionally a caste is usually associated with an occupation. It has made the system closed. Different castes depend on each other for fulfilment of various social and economic needs. Thus, the system has an organic character.
5. **Restrictions on Marriage:** Endogamous marriages are an essential feature of the caste system. A person has to marry within one's own caste.
6. **Interdependence:** Each caste is dependent on other castes within the jajmani system at the village level. Their dependence is not only economic but also social, cultural and religious.

UNTOUCHABILITY: FORMS AND PERSPECTIVES

The evil practice of untouchability has been a universal phenomenon throughout Indian society. There has been no period after Aryan arrival which has not experienced this evil. Social rules and regulations concerning this practice also vary from one region to another which prohibits the formulation of a comprehensive and logical definition. Untouchability and perpetual segregation has been the product of the traditional Hindu organisation of our society. The traditional Hindu social order was divided into four Varnas. Each Varna was divided into several castes and sub castes or jatis. The composition of the Hindu population into Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras was based on valuational and existential inequality. Thus, the Brahmins were not only ritually superior to the Shudras but also in the spheres of existential conditions such as distribution of power and property relations. They enjoyed much more power and economic security than the Shudras.

In this hierarchical arrangement however, the untouchables or the scheduled castes were the most degraded bottom layer. They were considered as out-castes insofar as they were out of the traditional fourfold Varna system. It was so despite the fact that the untouchables have always been an inseparable part of our society both in terms of ritualistic (value based) and existential functioning of the system itself. It is a matter of fact that almost all ritual functions of a Hindu family require service of the untouchable castes. Services of the untouchables are essential at the time of the birth of a child, in marriages and in the rites de passage. Similarly, in the organization of agricultural production the scheduled castes still constitute the largest section of the working population in rural India. That is why M.N. Srinivas considers them as constituting the fifth order in the traditional Hindu social organization. This contradiction has resulted in the perpetual segregation of the scheduled castes from the rest of the Hindu population both in the spheres of value and existential conditions of life. But before embarking upon a discussion of such types of segregation, a broad outline about the untouchables must be given.

The untouchables had because of their low social and ritual status, been subject to a variety of disabilities under the traditional system. Many terms have been used for this category in the earlier literature such as antyaja, panchama and chandala. The word Harijan (children of God) was given currency by Mahatma Gandhi. The expressions, depressed classes and exterior castes were commonly used before 1930. But since the passage of the Government of India Act of 1935, they have been referred to as scheduled castes. The many untouchable castes in different parts of the country were listed in a separate schedule in the Act and this practice was continued in the Constitution of India, 1950. The list of scheduled castes can be altered only by the President of India.

The untouchables comprise an aggregate of many castes which differ widely, from each other. A few of these, such as Chamars, are greater in terms of population than the others. In all, the untouchables constitute almost fifteen per cent of the total Indian population. They are not concentrated in any particular geographical region, but are found in every state and almost all districts. However, each region has its characteristics component of Harijan castes which are generally different from those of other regions. The better known untouchable castes include Palla, Paraiya (Tamil Nadu), Mala, Madiga (Andhra Pradesh), Mahar (Maharashtra),

Chamar, Bhangi (Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), Cheruman, Pulayan (Kerala), Holiya (Mysore) and Bagdi (West Bengal). The untouchables reside more in the rural areas. Only 10.7 per cent of the population resides in the urban centres.

Untouchability and Cultural Segregation

At one point of time, it was believed that the cleavages between the untouchables and the rest-of-the Hindu population had a clear racial basis. But anthropometric investigations have shown that there is very little substance in this belief. The fact of the matter is that such differences existed largely owing to cultural, religious or valuational matters along with material disparities.

As emphasized in the beginning the caste system provided the organizational basis of traditional Hindu society. Despite many recent changes the caste system still plays an important role in contemporary India. Each caste or sub caste has been associated with one or more traditional occupations and related to the others by means of an elaborate division of labour. Each caste pursues within limits its own style of life with distinct customs in the matter of dress, diet, rituals etc. In traditional Hindu society there were legal and ritual sanctions which prevented lower castes from imitating the styles of life of the upper castes.



Upper caste children refused to eat midday meal cooked by a Dalit in 2017

Differences in styles of life were most sharply drawn between Brahmins and the untouchables. Similarly, sanctions against the imitation of the style of life of the upper castes have been applied most forcefully to the untouchables. According to Beteille, in South India until recently, Harijans were prevented from living in brick and tile houses and wearing upper garment or garments made of silk. Such rules appear to have been less elaborate in nature and less strictly enforced in North India.

The social identity of the untouchables is marked further by the fact that they generally reside at a distance from the main village settlement. In the opinion of Beteille, this segregation also is more marked in the case of South instead of North India. In Tamil Nadu, Harijan settlement is known as cheri. It is generally found among paddy fields and situated at a distance of around half a mile or a mile away from the main village settlement. The cheri is considered as being ritually polluting.

Therefore, no orthodox Brahmin would enter it. Residential segregation, however, is less strictly enforced in the urban areas. But in the case of urban centres too, the untouchables tend to reside together.

The untouchables have traditionally been engaged in manual work-in the rural areas they still constitute the larger section of working force. Many sections of these Harijan workers are associated with different types of specialized traditional works. These are scavenging leather-work (flaying and tanning), making shoes, etc. In the popular mind, much of the stigma attached to the untouchables (and untouchability) is associated with the very nature of the work they perform. Sometimes even serious scholarly investigations related the polluting ritual status of the untouchables with the so called polluting work they have traditionally been engaged in. The French sociologist Louis Dumont (1970) has emphatically highlighted this relationship in his well known work *Homo Hierarchicus*.

Apart from occupation, there are some other elements in the life style of the untouchables which are considered polluting in the traditional Hindu cultural value system. Foremost among these are the ones which are related to their diet. In Sanskritic Hinduism, various items of food and drink are graded in terms of pollution and purity. The status of a caste is closely related to the food habits of its members. Generally, meat eating is ranked rather low. The untouchables not only consume meat but particular kinds of meat which are considered unclean. Among untouchables, those who eat beef are assigned the lowest social rank. It is primarily because of the fact that cow slaughter is tabooed in the Hindu religion. Eating beef really amounts to eating carrion and even if an untouchable caste abandons beef eating, it rarely succeeds in freeing itself completely from its traditional stigma.

Lastly, the religious practices of the untouchables are markedly different from those of the upper caste Hindus. In the religious system of the untouchables, Sanskritic elements occupy a minor position. This is largely because of the fact that the untouchables have traditionally not been admitted to the Hindu temples and have been denied the services of the Brahmin priests. That is why their worship centres largely around local deities, and demons are propitiated by sacrifice and non-Sanskritic rites. Having briefly gone over the innings of untouchability, it is now time to consider the various measures to eradicate this practice.

Despite all governmental efforts and various programmes started by government-to bring the untouchables in the mainstream of society, the Harijans continue to be economically and educationally backward. A large proportion of them are agricultural labourers. And as for those among them who own land, it is well known that the bulk of them have such small holdings that their condition is hardly better than that of agricultural labour. Policy makers, planners and social

workers in India are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that substantial improvements in the living conditions of the scheduled castes can hardly be brought by legislative and executive action alone. Constitutional and other guarantees will have very little meaning so long as these untouchables remain segregated and poor, illiterate and unorganized. In spite of the protective policies of the government, the advance of the untouchables is often blocked by stubborn social forces, which are firmly entrenched in the economic and political systems of the country. Also a long tradition of oppression and servitude makes it difficult for untouchables to develop in a short time the confidence which they require to respond positively to governmental programmes.

Social Reform Movements against Untouchability

Social reform movements to eradicate untouchability can be classified into two kinds:

Reformative Movements

Alternative Movements

Reformative Movements try to reform the caste system to solve the problem of untouchability. The alternative movements attempt to create an alternative socio cultural structure by conversion to some other religion or by acquiring education, improving economic status and political power. Both types of movement use political means to attain their objectives.

The reformative movements can be further divided into:

- (i) Sanskritisation
- (ii) Bhakti movement
- (iii) Neo-Vedantic movement.

(i) Sanskritisation is an integral part of the reformative movements. This process involves the adoption of norms and values of the upper level of the hierarchical caste structure. The underlying rationale of these imitative movements was that if untouchables accepted the norms and values of upper castes, their status, would improve. The motivation for change was status mobility. Such movements often appealed to the scheduled castes and tribes to abstain from consumption of meat and liquor, to abolish idol worship, etc. Some of these movements aimed to create new myths and symbols to establish their superior origin.

This channel of social mobility had two constraints. Firstly, the upper strata had to permit or at least tolerate these groups imitating their names and values, and secondly, the untouchables had to be psychologically prepared to attempt the transformation as well as to suffer penalties for their behaviour change. In short, the Sanskritisation process tried to justify low caste claim to a higher social status in the caste hierarchy by inventing suitable mythologies.

All untouchable jatis, however, have not succeeded in removing civic disabilities traditionally imposed upon them. Thus, given the hierarchical nature of the

system, the clean castes invariably resisted the attempt by scheduled castes to Sanskritise. Sanskritisation led to group mobility; fission and fusions based on new identities leading to formation of new castes and sects occurred simultaneously. Admittedly the change which took place was reformist rather than structural in character.

The other reformist movement like Bhakti and neo-Vedantic movement were also not confined to scheduled castes. They were initiated by Hindu religious and social reformers. These movements attempted to remove untouchability by taking the untouchables into the fold of the caste system. According to the pioneers of these movements, untouchability was not an essential part of Hinduism and for that matter, of the caste system. What must be noted is that none of these reformist movements actually challenged the caste system; rather they tried to make it more humane. Untouchability was considered an evil, but no questions were posed regarding the validity of the caste system itself.

ii) Alternative movements: These can be further divided into:

i) Conversion movement, and ii) Secular movement.

i) Conversion Movements aim to create a counter-culture to dominant Hinduism and to improve the social and economic conditions of the converts. As in the case of Sanskritisation, conversion was also often a group phenomenon and the converts came to assume the attributes of a Jati. The proportion of the scheduled castes converted to other faiths, seems to be negligible except in some parts of the country. Given the policy of protective discrimination, the statutory status of the scheduled castes is a significant factor in their socio-economic development and political representation.

This situation dissuades this category from embracing non Hindu faiths. But this is not to deny that occasional instances of conversion have taken place especially in the case of conversion to Buddhism. In the early fifties, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who felt that Buddhism was appropriate as an alternative religion for the untouchables encouraged thousands of Mahars (an untouchable community of Maharashtra) to undergo mass conversion.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar preferred Buddhism primarily because it is an indigenous Indian religion of equality, a religion which was anti-caste and anti-Brahmin. Ambedkar had earlier tried to improve the lot of the untouchables within the Hindu fold itself. The resistance to his attempts made him so disgusted, that he preferred to reject the Hindu religion altogether and embrace a more humane alternative.

(ii) Secular Movement refers to attempts made by untouchables to claim a better status for themselves by acquiring education, improving their standard of living and trying to carve a niche for themselves in the political structure.

The work of Dr. Ambedkar must once again be cited in this connection. As you probably know, Ambedkar was one of the first untouchables who acquired a higher education. He did his M.A. and Ph.D in America and England and became a Barrister in law. He made sure fellow untouchables could also avail of education and improve their life chances. He urged them to give up practices like eating

carrion which branded them as unclean. With the passage of time, a number of untouchables were to improve their status in the secular aspects of life. They also became politically awakened and demanded their rights as citizens.



“Our is a battle; Not for wealth, nor for power, Ours is battle; for freedom; For reclamation of human personality.”

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

State Action

This refers to legislative and administrative measures undertaken for the betterment of these categories. The Constitution of India provides for a number of protective measures for the welfare of the scheduled castes. Prominent aspects of state measures are:

(i) representation in the parliament and state legislatures, (ii) representation in the central and state services, (iii) special provisions for social, educational and economic development, (iv) banning of traffic in human beings and forced labour, (v) abolition of the practice of untouchability, (vi) the development of the scheduled castes and tribal areas, and (vii) appointment of a special officer to investigate all matters relating the safeguards provided for the scheduled castes and so forth.

Reservation in legislative bodies: one major aspect of state action was reservation in legislative bodies. Given the uneven development of the different categories of the population and given the competitive nature of politics, it is necessary to make special provisions for the representation of the weaker sections. This is articulated in the form of reservations of seats in the parliament for the weaker sections.

With the introduction of Panchayati Raj (local self government institutions), systematic efforts have been made to give representation to the scheduled castes and tribes in all statutory bodies at the local level: village panchayats, Panchayat samitis etc. It is difficult to say, however, how effective these inductions are in the light of whether they really enable these groups to participate in the decision making process, particularly at the local level. In systems characterized by considerable disparity in wealth and status, dispersal of power through constitutional provisions is not likely to make the expected dent. However, it is an important beginning.

Political Action

Another important source of change among the scheduled castes is political action, initiated by political parties through the process of mobilization. India has a multiparty system and it is legitimate to expect some amount of dispersal of

politicians belonging to Scheduled Castes into the different parties. There are several parties which are exclusively concerned with scheduled castes etc. only.



BSP's Mayawati has used evocative slogans to connect with the Dalit masses. Such as 'Chamari hu, Kunwari hu, Tumhari hu !' and 'Tilak, Tarazu aur Talwar; Inko maro jute char !'

Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour Party and Scheduled Castes Federation, and there are a number of scheduled castes' organizations at regional level. Republican Party of India emanated from Ambedkar's All India Scheduled Castes Federation in 1957. It accepts the basic tenets of the India Constitution, and aims to pursue these objectives through parliamentary democracy only. The other party which is more militant than RPI is Dalit Panthers. It grew out of a literary movement led by radical and young scheduled caste writers, depicting the life and conditions of these groups which developed in Maharashtra. The Dalit Panthers recognized that conversion to another religion and voluntary disengagement from Hinduism will not assure them a higher status in a caste ridden society. They continue to draw inspiration from Ambedkar, though part of their ideology is drawn from Marxism, which give them a broader orientation.

The most successful political experiment of the scheduled castes since independence has been the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). BSP was founded on the birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (i.e. 14 April 1984) by Kanshi Ram. The party is inspired by the philosophy of Gautama Buddha, B. R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Narayana Guru, Periyar E. V. Ramasamy and Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj.

The BSP's primary focus is on the uplifting of the nation's underprivileged groups. Its ideology is "Social Transformation and Economic Emancipation" of the Bahujan Samaj. The Bahujan Samaj includes the downtrodden groups in India like the SCs, the STs and the OBCs. It also includes religious minorities like Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Buddhists. BSP sees these groups as having been victims of

the Manuwadi system for millennia, a system which benefited upper-caste Hindus only. BSP believes in egalitarianism and lays a strong emphasis on social justice.

Lesser known figures from the Indian Rebellion of 1857, such as Chetram Jatav (a Dalit), have been used as Dalit icons by the BSP. The social scientist Badri Narayan Tiwari has noted that “Dalit intellectuals supported by BSP, which is trying to mobilise grassroots Dalits using local heroes, histories, myths and legends found a wealth of resources in the oral history of the regions of Uttar Pradesh centering around the 1857 rebellion.

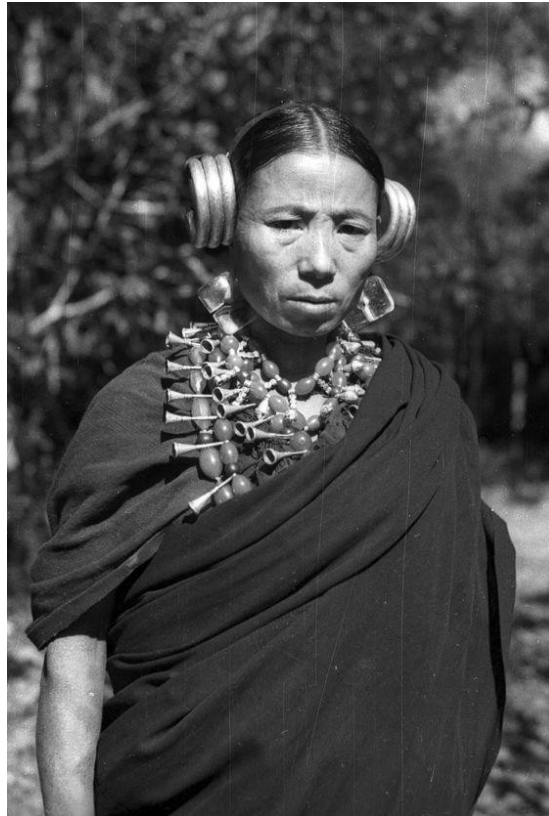
The political strategy of the party is to tell and retell the stories of these heroes, build memorials and organize celebrations around their stories repeatedly to build a collective memory in the psyche of the people. The stories are narrated in such a manner that the Dalits imagine the story of the making of this nation in which they played a significant role.”

BSP leader Mayawati became Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh four times, including based on absolute majority of her party from 2007 to 2012. BSP was the third most voted-for party in the 2014 general elections but still failed to win any seats in the 16th Lok Sabha. In 2017 Uttar Pradesh elections, BSP was second largest party in terms of vote share with over 22% votes.

IAS GURUKUL

TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN INDIADEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS

What is a tribe? What exactly are the criteria for considering a human group, a tribe? What are the indices of the tribal life?



A woman belonging to the Ao tribe in Nagaland

Interestingly but sadly the anthropologists, sociologists, social workers, administrators and such people who have been involved with the tribes and their problems either on theoretical plane or on practical grounds are still not on the same wavelength regarding the concept and the definition of their subject matter. Arthur Wilkes, et al (1979) puts the problem in proper perspective by stating that for years ambiguity has stalked India's official portrait of tribal people. From 1917 through the 1931 Census, for instance, the nomenclature referring to tribes underwent successive modifications, involving primarily changes in descriptive adjectives such as "aboriginal" or "depressed classes". By the 1941 Census, these qualifying adjectives were dropped, a practice continued after independence with the adoption of the notion of scheduled tribes or as they are commonly called, Adivasi. Such standardization did not however remove all ambiguity.

No doubt with the passage of time, the differences on the concept and definition of a tribe have certainly narrowed down to an appreciable extent, but a theoretical discussion seems imperative to understand this problem in its proper perspective.

Here are a few definitions of tribe being used as the basis of discussion in the present chapter:

A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so. -Imperial Gazetteer of India

A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor. - Oxford Dictionary

A tribe is a collection or group of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well assigned system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligation. - D.N. Majumdar

In its simplest form the tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in culture, frequent contacts, and a certain community of interest. - Ralph Linton

A tribe is an independent political division of a population with a common culture. - Lucy Mair

A tribe is a group united by a common name in which the members take pride, by a common language, by a common territory, and by a feeling that all who do not share this name are outsiders, enemies in fact. - G.W.B. Huntingford

A tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous, with no specialization of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes, without any social obloquy attaching to them (as it does in the caste structure), following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, not receptive to ideas from alien sources, above all conscious of homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration.

Ideally, tribal societies are small in scale, are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal, and political relations, and possess a morality, a religion and world view of corresponding dimensions. Characteristically too, tribal languages are unwritten, and hence the extent of communication both in time and space is remarkable economy of design and have a compactness and self sufficiency lacking in modern society.

Majumdar and Madan (1967) rightly comment that where one looks into the definitions given by various anthropologists, one is bound to be impressed by the dissimilarity of their views as regards what constitutes a tribe. Kinship ties, common territory, one language, joint ownership, one political organization, absence of internecine strife have all been referred to as the main characteristics of a tribe. Some anthropologists have not only accepted some of the characteristics, but have also stoutly denied some of them to be characteristics of a tribe. Thus, Rivers did not mention habitation in a common territory as a vital feature of tribal organization, although others like Perry have insisted on it, saying that even nomadic tribes roam about within a definite region. Radcliffe - Brown has given

instances of one section of a tribe fighting another from his Australian data. The only conclusion one can draw from such diversity of learned opinion is that the views of each anthropologist arise from the type of data with which he is most familiar. One may, therefore, make a list of universal characteristics, some of which would define a tribe anywhere. Thus, Majumdar claims universal applicability of his definition given earlier.

A major hurdle of defining a tribe is that related with the problem of distinguishing the tribe from peasantry. It is not possible to use the labels 'tribal' and 'peasant' for this type of social organisation and to characterize one by contrasting it with the other. But in spite of all the effort invested by anthropologists in the study of primitive societies, there really is no satisfactory way of defining a tribal society. What this amounts to in the Indian context is that anthropologists have tried to characterise a somewhat nebulous sociological type, by contrasting it with another, which is almost equally nebulous. Earlier anthropologists had not paid sufficient attention to define tribal society, but tacitly assumed that what they were studying in Australia, Malaysia and Africa were various forms of tribal society. The tribe was somewhat vaguely assumed to be a more or less homogeneous society having a common dialect and a common culture (Andre Beteille, 1973). Though not everybody will agree with the assumption of Beteille but his statement may be cited as one of the many schools of thought grappling with the problem.

The above discussion shows that it is not easy to define a tribe or a tribal society conclusively and any standardisation in this regard is very difficult to obtain. Hence, it will be better to shy away from international or universal plane keeping in view the regional connotation of the concept of tribe. Instead, we should focus attention on gaining standardization within the Indian universe to solve our own problems. This seems to be quite sensible in the situation when definitions of universal applicability are either very broad and loose or very narrow and restricted. In this context Andre Beteille aptly remarks that Bailey is perhaps the only anthropologist working in the Indian field who has tried to characterize tribes in terms of segmentary principles, but the contrast in which he is interested is not between tribe and peasant but between tribe and caste. Further, unlike Bailey, the majority of Indian anthropologists have not given much serious thought to the problem of creating a definition of tribal society which will be appropriate to the Indian context.

Now let us examine the problem specifically in the Indian context. T.B. Naik (1960) raises the problem in proper perspective by talking of the criteria and indices of the tribal life in specifically Indian setting. What should be the criteria and indices of tribal life? Living in forest? The Dublas of Surat and a host of others do not live in forests. They live in fertile plains; nevertheless they are included in the Scheduled Tribes. Primitive religion? But you do not know what primitive religion is in India, there being a continuance from the most abstract philosophy to the tribal gods and superstitious beliefs in the religion of most of the advanced communities of India. This index being very fluid and not exact will not do. Geographical isolation? There are hundreds of tribal groups who are not living an isolated life. Primitive economic system? There are many peasant groups who are

living by an equally primitive economic system. Thus, Naik goes on to present his own criteria for a tribe which are as follows:

1. A tribe to be a tribe should have the least functional inter dependence within the community (the Hindu caste system is an example of high interdependence)
2. It should be economically backward which means:
 - (i) the full import of monetary economics should not be understood by its members
 - (ii) primitive means of exploiting natural resources should be used.
 - (iv) the tribe's economy should be at an underdeveloped stage; and
 - (v) it should have multifarious economic pursuits.
3. There should be a comparative geographic isolation of its people from others.
4. Culturally, members of a tribe should have a common dialect, which may be subject to regional variations.
5. A tribe should be politically organized and its community Panchayat should be an influential institution.
6. The tribe's members should have the least desire to change. They should have a sort of psychological conservatism making them stick to their old customs.
7. A tribe should have customary laws and its members might have to suffer in a law court because of these laws.

Naik further elaborates that a community to be a tribe must have all these attributes. It might be undergoing acculturation; but the degree of acculturation will have to be determined in the context of its customs, gods, language, etc. A very high degree of acculturation will automatically debar it from being a tribe.

Prof. Ehrenfels elaborates the points already discussed above by saying that:

1. A tribe is a community, however small it may be, remaining in isolation from the other communities within a geographical region. This applies to a caste as well as to a tribe. The members of a true tribe, however, are generally not included into the traditional Hindu caste hierarchy and frequently speak also a common dialect, entertain common beliefs, follow common occupational practices and (most important) consider themselves as members of a small but semi national unit.
2. I would delete in the above (Naik's) definition the words "economically backward", "primitive means" and "underdeveloped stage" and substitute them by the words "self sufficient" (for example Khasi, Gond, Bhil, Agaria and others who are in part more specialized economically, even much more than their non tribal neighbours). Yet each individual of a tribe may work for his family group and thus may remain functionally dependent of solidarity with the tribe as a whole, rather than as a partner in the caste hierarchy of non-tribal Hindus

3. I agree with the definition of geographical isolation though not every tribe is an isolated unit of people (e.g., Bhil, Santhals, Irula, etc.). But if a tribe has its own system of economy, its isolation will no doubt be more stable.

4. Common dialects or languages are typical for tribes in Assam and the Central areas, but not in the southern and western states of India. Community of language helps greatly, but is not imperative for building up tribal consciousness. The original religious concepts of most tribes in pre-acculturation days were different from their Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim or Christian neighbours but are not always so now.

5. A tribe need not always be politically organized nor have a community Panchayat. It may or may not have a single chief or a few elders who may wield more or less power within the community.

6. I would delete the relevant para of the above and substitute it with the words, "The members of a tribe have a feeling of belonging to a group the existence of which is valuable".

7. Almost all tribes have customary laws and practices, more or less different from their non-tribal neighbours. Very often they are indeed made to suffer on this account in law courts and in other contact situations with non tribals.

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences in its report on the Indian tribes has also joined those who have been criticizing the anthropologist's approach of the problem. It says that (anthropological) criteria apply to ideal typical tribal communities as conceived by the anthropologists for theoretical purpose. These do not appear to be empirically related to communities that have been included in the list of the scheduled tribes. The logical implication seems to be that communities which do not satisfy the above criteria should not be considered as tribes even though they are included in the list of the scheduled tribes. Arthur Wilke et al (1979) too, like some others, opine that some measure, if not a substantial measure, of the difficulty is inherent in the intellectual legacy of the discipline of anthropology. Aiyappan, provoked by such statements remarks rather sceptically, reminding us of the well-known definition given by Tate Regan of 'species'. Adopting the definition, Aiyappan said that "a tribe is a group which a competent anthropologist considers to be a tribe." If the Administrator wants a clear cut definition which he can apply blindly and get along with, he says, we should tell him that we don't have it, just as the zoologist is not in a position to give a clear cut all-purpose definition of species.

Despite such rhetoric and academic polemics on the problem of definition of tribe quite a substantial measure of standardization has been accomplished in designating which people are or are not entitled to particular protection and privilege. This could become possible only due to vigorous academic efforts of the much maligned and misunderstood anthropologists who, with the help of rigorous and painstaking empirical research, ultimately came out with definite and empirically verifiable ethnographic data to clear the cobwebs of misgivings regarding Indian tribes.

Majumdar and Madan (1967) demonstrate this new mood by emphatically stating the following facts:

1. In India, a tribe is definitely a territorial group, a tribe has a traditional territory, and emigrants always refer to it as their home. The Santhals working in the Assam tea gardens refer to particular regions of Bihar or Bengal as their 'home'.
2. All members of a tribe are not kin of each other, but within every Indian tribe kinship operates as a strong associative, regulative and integrating principle. The consequence is tribal endogamy and the division of a tribe into clans and sub-clans and so on. These clans, etc, being kin groups, are exogamous.
3. Members of an Indian tribe speak one common language- their own or that of their neighbours. Intra tribal conflict on a group scale is not a feature of Indian tribes. Joint ownership of property, wherever present as for instance among the Hos, is not exclusive. Politically, Indian tribes are under the control of the state governments, but within a tribe there may be a number of Panchayats (tribal councils) corresponding to the heterogeneity, racial and cultural, of the constituent population in a village or in adjacent villages.
4. There are other distinguishing features of Indian tribes. Thus, there are their dormitory institutions, the absence of institutional schooling for boys and girls, distinctive customs regarding birth, marriage, and death, a moral code different from that of Hindus and Muslims, peculiarities of religious beliefs and rituals which may distinguish tribesmen even from the low caste Hindus.

To wind up this discussion it seems to be quite apt to refer to Arthur Wilke et al (1979) who opine that when the constraints of bureaucratic decision-making and administration reign supreme, there is a tendency to gloss over the rich and at times puzzling mosaic of human affairs. What accounts for indeterminateness in the concept of tribe is likely that the dictates of bureaucratic procedures and the unceasing acculturation going on throughout India and particularly among many identified tribal people make it difficult to apply an idea which is in many respects, an ideal type formulation.

Due to multiplicity of factors and complexity of problems involved, it is not very easy to classify the Indian tribes into different groups. However, the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes took up the task and investigated the possibility of adopting classification criteria. Keeping this aim in view the state governments were asked to suggest the characteristics which seemed to them most suitable in distinguishing the so called aboriginal groups from the rest of the population.

The Assam government suggested descent from Mongoloid stock, affiliation with Tibeto-Burman linguistic groups and the existence of a social organization of the village clan type as the major characteristics. The erstwhile Bombay government considered residence in forest areas as the basic criterion while for the Madhya Pradesh government tribal origin, speaking tribal language and residence in forest areas were important criteria. Similarly, the governments of Madras, Orissa, Andhra, Mysore, Travancore, etc., suggested various linguistic, geographical, economic and social factors as indicators:-

Taking the above mentioned characteristics into consideration the tribes basis of India may be classified on the basis of their (a) territorial distribution, (b) linguistic affiliation, (c) physical and racial characteristics, (d) occupation or economy, (e) cultural contact and (f) religious beliefs.

GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

Looking at the physical map of India and the distribution of tribal population, we find that both geography as well as tribal demography permits a regional grouping and a zonal classification. B.S. Guha has classified Indian tribes into three zones.

- (i) The North and north eastern zone (ii) The central or the middle zone
(iii) The southern zone

(i) The northern and north-eastern zone:

The northern and north-eastern zone consists of Sub Himalyan region and the mountain valleys of the eastern frontiers of India. The tribal people of Assam, Manipur and Tripura may be included in the eastern part of this geographical zone while in the northern part are included the tribal of eastern Kashmir; eastern Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and northern Uttar Pradesh. Some of the important tribes living between Assam and Tibet are Aka, Dafla, Miri, Gurung and the Apatani on the west of the Subansiri river. The Mishmi tribes live in the high ranges between the Dehong and Lohit river. Further east are found the Khamti and the Singpho and beyond them are the different Naga tribes. South of the Naga Hills running through the states of Manipur, Tripura and the Chittagong hill tracts live the Kuki, the Lushai, the Khasi and the Garo (now the habitants of the Meghalaya state). The Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh also contains some important tribes like Tharu, Bhoks, Jounsari (Khasa), Bhotia, Raji, etc.

The entire geographical zone, though quite large in area, does not contain dense tribal population. As a result of geographical conditions most of the tribes of this zone are engaged in either terrace cultivation or Jhum (shifting) cultivation and are steeped in poverty and economic backwardness.

(ii) The Central or the Middle Zone

This zone consists of plateaus and mountainous belt between the Indo-Gangetic plain to the north and roughly the Krishna river to the south and this is separated from the north eastern zone by the gap between the Garo hills and the Rajmahal hills. In this zone we have another massing of tribal peoples in Madhya Pradesh with extensions in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, southern Rajasthan, northern Maharashtra, Bihar and Orissa. Northern Rajasthan, southern Maharashtra and Bastar form the peripheral areas of the zone. The important tribes inhabiting this zone are the Savara, Gadaba and Borido of the Ganjam district; the Juang, Kharia, Khond Bhumij and the Bhuiya. On the plateau of Chotanagpur live Munda, Santhal, Oraon, Ho and Birhor. Further west along Vindhya ranges live the

Katkari, Kol and Bhil. The Gonds form a large group and occupy what is known as the Gondwanaland. On both sides of the Satpuras and around the Maikal hills are found similar tribes like Koraku, Agaria, Pardhan and Baiga. In the hills of Bastar live some of the most colourful of these tribes like Muria, the Hill Muriya of the Abhujmar hills and Bison horn Maria of the Indravati valley. Most of the tribes of this zone practice shifting cultivation as means of their livelihood but the Oraon, Santhal, Munda and Gond have learnt plough cultivation as a result of their cultural contact with neighbouring rural populations.

(iii) The Southern Zone

This zone consists of that part of southern India, which falls south of the river Krishna stretching from Waynaad to Cape Camorin. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Coorg, Travancore, Cochin, Tamil Nadu, etc., are included in this zone. Beginning from the north east of this zone, the Chenchu occupy the area of the Nallaimallais hills across the Krishna and into the erstwhile Hyderabad state. Along the Western Ghats from the Loranga of South Kanara, the Yeruva and the Toda live on the lower slopes of Coorg hills while the Irula, Paniyan and the Kurumba inhabit Wynaad area. The most primitive of Indian aboriginals such as Kadar, Kanikkar, Malvadan, Malakuravan, etc., inhabit the dense forests along the ranges of Cochin and Travancore. They are also included among some of the most economically backward communities of the world. Except Toda, Badaga and Kota who live in Nilgiri hills most of the tribal groups of this zone depend upon hunting and fishing for food.

Although Guha has not included the inhabitants of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in any of these zones and has skipped their description, yet these tribal people may be said to constitute a fourth zone. The main tribes living in this zone are the Jarwa, Onge, North Sentinelese, Andamanese and Nicobari. Thus separated from the main body of India's primitive tribes, they are ethnically close to the south Indian tribes.

COLONIAL POLICIES AND TRIBES

The Britishers came into contact with the tribes during their efforts for the consolidation of the Indian Empire. Quite early they had to control the turbulent Hill Paharia of the Rajmahal Hills (Bengal) who had risen in revolt against the Hindu Zamindars. They were at first subdued in a clash of arms, but soon after a policy of pacification was decided upon. Bribes were paid, under the name of pensions and totalling Rs. 15,000 per year, to tribal leaders. Ex servicemen were encouraged to settle down around the Paharia habitation. In 1782, on the suggestion of Augustus Cleaveland, administrator of the area Rajmahal Hills were withdrawn from normal administration. Local courts, consisting of local leaders, were given civil and penal jurisdiction over the Hills tract. Contacts with Zamindars were severed and the Paharia held rent free land direct from the government. Thus were laid the foundations of the British policy towards the tribes which in the course of the next 125 years developed into a policy of laissez faire and of segregation of tribal areas combined with a harsh application of the laws of the land, entirely unsuited to the tribes. British policy was, in short, a hotch potch of segregation, often unnecessary and harmful and lack of discrimination or unfair discrimination in administration, both of which hit the tribes hard. The Criminal Tribes Act which enhanced ordinary punishments provided in the Penal Code was one such example of unfair discrimination against the tribes. It has fortunately been repealed by the national government.

Resuming our account of Paharia administration, under the guidance of Cleaveland and his successors a Hill Assembly was formed not only to administer justice but also frame rules for its own procedure for conducting the affairs of the tribe. In 1796 these rules were made Regulation I of that year by the government. But the experiment did not succeed over time. Inefficiency and corruption crept in, and in 1827 Regulation I of 1796 was abolished. Instead a new Regulation I of 1827 brought the Paharia and other adjacent tribes under the partial jurisdiction of ordinary courts, providing special exemptions from the application of the law in their favour.

Such remained the pattern for the administration of the tribes till 1855 when the Santhal rose in revolt. In non-regulation areas Regulation was reintroduced giving civil and penal powers to executive officers in the affected areas which thus came under a special administration. The British Parliament sanctioned the establishment of specially administered non-regulation areas by the Indian Councils Act of 1861. In 1870, the Parliament gave the Governor General in Council the power to legalize the regulations under which various areas were being specially administered. The Scheduled Districts Act, XIV of 1874, passed by the Indian legislature, gave special powers to local government. A local government could now specify the enactments that were to be locally in force in a specially administered area; and the modifications which were to be made in enactments, elsewhere in force, before their application to a specially administered area.

With various local modifications, the pattern of British policy remained as outlined in the foregoing paragraphs till Parliament passed the Government of India Act, 1919. Under section 52- A (2) of this Act special modified administration of various areas, regarded as backward, could be ordered by the Governor-General in Council,

thus wholly exempting the people of the said areas from administration under provisions of the Act. It was felt by the Government of India that whereas in certain backward areas modification of national laws was enough, in certain other such areas complete special administration alone would meet the demands of the situation. Thus came into existence partially and wholly excluded areas. Further, some excluded areas were not given the right of representation in the Indian and provincial legislature, others could have members nominated on their behalf; and still others could elect some of their representatives, while the rest would have to be nominated to represent them.

The application of the Government of India Act, 1935, brought about some minor changes. The Council of Ministers could not advise a governor on how to administer a wholly excluded area. But the application of the provisions of the Act by popular ministries with regard to partially excluded areas resulted in the appointment of tribal inquiry committees in several states like Bihar, Orissa, Bombay, and Madras. Till then British policy had been a negative one. Its sole aim was to let the tribes live (and that meant also, be exploited) so long as they did not cause trouble. The appointment of inquiry committees was the first step towards a positive policy of reconstruction. Problems can be solved only after they are assessed, and here was assessment being ordered to shape its future policies. But the War brought with it the resignation of popular ministries and a national emergency, preventing any new policy for tribal rehabilitation from taking shape.

IAS GURUKUL

ISSUE OF INTEGRATION AND AUTONOMY

For thousands of years primitive tribes persisted in forests and hills without having more than casual contact with the populations of the open plains and the centres of civilization. Now and then, a military campaign extending for a short spell into the vastness of tribal country would bring the inhabitants temporarily to the notice of princes and chroniclers, but for long periods there was frictionless co-existence between the tribal folks and Hindu caste society in the truest sense of the word (Haimendorf, 1960). But the physical isolation of most of the aboriginal tribes drew to an end when the modern means of communication like railways and roads were introduced in the nineteenth and early twentieth century coupled with the sudden growth of India's population. This caused land hungry peasants of the plains to invade the sparsely populated tribal regions of middle and south India. Moreover, the extension of law and order to the areas which in earlier days had been virtually unadministered - enabled traders, moneylenders and a host of administrators, social workers, etc. - to establish themselves in tribal villages.

The onslaught of moneylenders and traders from the plains played havoc with the tribals who, as many examples show, lost their economic independence and lot of land within a span of twenty to thirty years of their contact with the cunning and professional people of the plains. The plight of the poor and vulnerable Indian tribals has been surfacing from time to time for about hundred years or so. But after independence they have been considered a 'problem' for government and their more advanced fellow citizens. The administrators, anthropologists, sociologists, Christian missionaries and social workers have viewed this 'problem' from different perspectives. For the matter of convenience these views and policy approaches may be divided into three categories: (i) Isolationism (ii) Assimilationism (iii) Integrationism. The discussion that follows this categorization rotates round the three views.

Many of the so-called aboriginal people or tribals have been pronounced by all those who came into close contact with them as rather simple, truthful, honest, usually jovial, colourful and happy-go-lucky. They had their own peculiar social organization and some of them had retained it till their contact with the British. Even after the British contact, which rendered their contact with the Hindus more rapid and intensive, some of them retained it, especially those who have been governed through their old tribal organization. In the case of others, whether Hinduized or not, the organization itself has not completely disappeared but has been lacking in that vitality and vigour which are characteristic of true tribal life (Ghurye, 1963). Let us take a brief view of their social and economic organisation and then the resultant problems.

(1) Lots of these tribes have been practising a crude type of cultivation called shifting cultivation known by respective vernacular names. It required little labour, care and vital input. Under this scheme of cultivation trees and shrubs are felled with axe before the start of monsoon, fired and allowed to burn down into ashes. Now the desired seed is thrown and the nature is left to take care of the yield. To supplement their dietary requirement they collect all kinds of edible roots and fruits and hunt their favourable animals.

(2) Further, most of the tribal people are habituated to drink, formerly to their home brewed liquor of rice, mahua flower and other varieties and later to all kinds of distilled liquor. As a group, Jounsari, Bhil, Gond and numerous other tribes drink and even their children drink liberally. This is clue to their local environmental and ecological conditions. Liquor has also been a part of their ritual and religious practices.

(3) Contacts with Christian missionaries especially in Bihar and north eastern region played havoc with their spiritual world. The faith in their old gods was shaken and everything tribal was called blasphemous.

(4) Different tribes have different customs in regard to marriage and inheritance. The tribal customs were not properly understood and they were punished by the regular courts. If hurt the tribal sentiments.

(5) Tribal people have been illiterate. When various schemes were taken up for their educational upliftment, very little care was taken to impart primary education in their respective mother tongues even in case of informal education.



Thakkar Bapa, also known as "Tribal Gandhi" with Mahatma Gandhi

Commenting on the life and death struggle of many primitive tribes in India and elsewhere in consequence of adverse economic conditions, D.N. Majumdar enumerated eleven causes: (1) The excise laws have hit them hard, (2) The displacement of tribal officers by those of the administration has disorganized tribal life in all aspects (3) Tribal land used for shifting cultivation has been taken away from them (4) Quarrying in the land owned is not allowed except with the payment of heavy licence fee (5) Shifting cultivation is prohibited in most areas. The people, thus have been forced to take to the kind of agriculture unsuited to them or for which they do not know adequate offering and sacrifices which will "please the gods presiding over agriculture" (6) Marriage by capture has been treated as an offence under the Indian Penal Code. It was generally resorted to in order to avoid payment of heavy bride price, and the substitute had worked smoothly. The recognition of this custom as offence punishable by law will seriously undermine social solidarity and lead to social disharmony. We know that late marriage is customary among the tribal people and there are large numbers of men and women in every tribe who cannot afford to marry under normal conditions. (7) The fairs and weekly markets which have begun to attract tribal people are ruining them financially (8)

Education, which has been and is being imparted, has been more harmful than otherwise. (9) The judicial officers have not been able to give them satisfactory justice. (10) Missionary effort has resulted in creating in their minds a loathing for their own culture and a longing for things which they have no means to obtain. (11) Contact has introduced diseases in tribal peoples for which they possess no efficient indigenous pharmacopoeia. Medical health rendered by the state is meagre.

A.V. Thakkar, popularly known as "Thakkar Bapa", one of the most vociferous champions of tribal cause has analysed the situation in the straight manner of a social worker. According to him the problems of the aborigines may be analysed into (1) poverty; (2) illiteracy; (3) health (4) inaccessibility of the areas inhabited by tribals; (5) defects in administration and (6) lack of leadership.

After viewing an anthropologist's and a social worker's reactions, let us take up Hutton's view, a defender of British policy of tribal affairs. According to Hutton, most cruel tribal customs were put down and warfare was stopped. Modern medicine was applied and infant mortality curtailed. The arts of reading and writing were introduced and easier intercourse and communication placed at their disposal through roads and post offices. However, the ills to which primitives were exposed to came from two slightly different aspects of British rule:

(1) Introduction of an administrative system which failed to take into account any special needs. (2) Deliberate measures intended to ameliorate the condition of these tribes.

Three major evils proceeded from these sources (1) loss of land and supplanting of the tribal village headman by foreigners; particularly by the Hindus from the plains, whether cultivators, moneylenders, traders, or mere land grabbers; (b) loss of means of subsistence and (c) disintegration of tribal solidarity.

After analysing the plight of the tribal people let us go back to the three major approaches to the tribal problems to assess the impact of these approaches.

ISOLATION Protagonists of the first approach hold the view that all the alien links, responsible for the unregulated and unrestricted contacts with the-modern world and the resultant miserable condition of the tribes, should be snapped and the primitive people should be allowed and encouraged to flourish in their own primitive environment,

This approach also includes what is now widely known as 'National Park Theory' credited to Verrier Elwin. He suggested that "the first necessity is the establishment of National Park, in which not only the Baiga but thousands of simple Gonds in their neighbourhood might take refuge. A fairly large area was to be marked out for this purpose. The areas should be under the direct control of a tribe's commissioner who should be an expert standing between them as was resorted to in the case of the Ho and Santhals, viz., through the leaders or headmen of the tribe. The usual other steps like licensing all non-aboriginals, were to be taken to safeguard the aboriginal from being exploited by unscrupulous adventurers. In short, the administration was to be so adjusted as to allow the tribesmen to live

their lives with utmost possible happiness and freedom. No missionaries of any religion were to be allowed to breakup tribal life."

This approach has been severely criticized on the ground that in the name of protecting the culture of the tribals, they cannot be kept aloof from the rest of India. They are not domestic cattle or zoo exhibits but equal citizens of free India. Thus they should be allowed to contribute towards the advancement of their country and enjoy the resultant fruits of development.

ASSIMILATION The second approach viz. assimilation has got considerable acceptance when lobbied by social workers. The protagonists of assimilation advance the view that tribes should be assimilated with their neighbouring non-tribal cultures.

The policy of total assimilation has also not been in conformity with the trend of Indian history. Despite thousands of years of cultural contact and inter-cultural exchanges, Indian society could not become totally homogeneous. Some cultural characteristics did take shape that are truly national in character as the by product of historical development of Indian society. But it cannot be denied that Indian society has been formed with Santhal, Gond, Orya, Telegu, Kashmiri and numerous other cultural currents. Under such conditions the policy of total assimilation of tribal culture as the solution of their problems is unfair and futile. Even the thought of forced assimilation or putting it as fiat accompli smacks of cultural authoritarianism.

Jawaharlal Nehru has been very outspoken in condemning the imposition of the Hindu way of living on tribal populations reared in another tradition. Due to his deep sympathy for the tribal people and keen appreciation of their problems, the approach of the state towards the tribal people is based on the theme of integration.

INTEGRATION The approach of integration of the tribal population with the rest of the Indian population on the basis of equality and mutual respect is propagated by the anthropologists. The principle of cultural autonomy has been an article of faith with the anthropologists. Integration should be differentiated from forced assimilation. We have got so many linguistic and religious groups who are being integrated to form one Indian nation without anybody being forced to give up their cultural identity and identify themselves with the majority community. Perhaps, there will be more meaningful and durable integration when every minority group feels secure; when, in this pluralistic society that India is, people can exist as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs etc. When one can exist here as Tamil, Oriya, Gujarati, Bengali, Punjabi etc. then why not a person can exist here with respect and dignity as a Santhal, a Gond, a Tharu, a Meena and a Yenadi? Integration can never be achieved under the shadow of threat and no plural society can afford to keep disgruntled, distressed, restless and frustrated minorities in its fold and still aspire for the harmonious development of the country. To ensure integration in this way the non-tribals need education as much as the tribals.

SOCIAL CLASSES IN INDIA

AGRARIAN CLASS STRUCTURE

The concept of agrarian class structure refers to the type of the class structure that prevails in an agricultural society or set up. Scholars such as S. Bhargava, D.R. Gadgil and others have stated in their studies that the agrarian classes did exist in pre-independent India. The agrarian social structure consists of agrarian classes which represent different social groups in rural India.

An analysis of the post independent Indian rural set up reveals the existence of four classes. They are - (i) landowners, (ii) tenants (iii) labourers, and (iv) non-agriculturists.

A.R. Desai has stated that landowners constitute about 22%, tenants about 27%, agricultural labourers about 31%, and non agriculturists about 20%.

It is found that a large majority of the cultivators [about 60%] are marginal cultivators with less than 2 hectares of land, followed by small cultivators [about 16%] with 2 to 5 hectares of land, medium cultivators [about 6%] with 5 to 10 hectares of land and big cultivators [about 18%] with more than 10 hectares of land.

Daniel Thorner's Classification of Rural Classes into Three Social Categories

Daniel Thorner classified rural classes into three social categories namely;

(a) maliks, (b) kisans and (c) mazdoors, on the basis of three criteria which are as follows:

- (i) Income obtained from the land- i.e. through rent, one's own cultivation or wages.
- (ii) The nature of rights- i.e. ownership rights, tenancy rights, sharecropping rights, or no rights at all.
- (iv) The extent of field work actually performed- i.e. doing no work at all, doing partial work, doing total work, and doing work for others to earn wages.

The three agrarian classes which Daniel Thorner spoke of are (a) Malik, (b) Kisan, and (c) Mazdoor. According to Thorner, the prevalent agrarian relations can also be analyzed in terms of these three specific terms.

(a) Maliks or Landlords

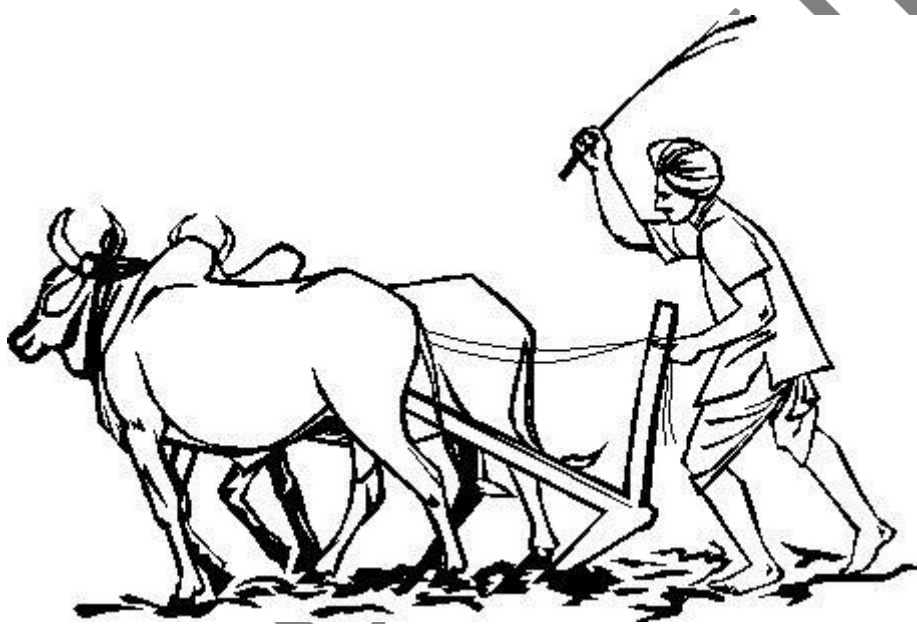
The term Maliks refers to the big landlords and considerably rich land owners who constitute the relative affluent class in the village set up. The Malik obtains his agricultural income mostly, but not solely, from property rights in the land. It means a share of the produce of land [i.e. the land over which he has ownership rights] is realized by him either in cash or in kind, or sometimes both. The Maliks sometimes cultivate lands personally by making use of hired labourers. They many employ managers to supervise the cultivation of land.

The Maliks can be grouped into two groups, namely, the big absentee landlords, and the rich resident land owners.

(i) Absentee Landlords i.e. those who do not stay in the village but in a far away town or city and get the cultivation done through the managers or supervisors. These Maliks are normally big landlords who have their rights over lands spread over several villages. They are absentee landlords for they do not have any personal interest in the land, and get it managed by supervisors.

(ii) The rich resident land owners i.e. those Maliks who reside in the village in which they own land. These people also do not work in the land personally but get the cultivation work done by others.

(b) Kisans or Working Peasants



The Kisan has come to symbolize Indian agriculture

The term kisan refers to the working peasants. They, occupy the intermediary position in the three-tier agrarian class structure. This class consists of small landowners or tenants. In comparison with the Malik, the Kisan owns land which is smaller in size and unlike the Malik, the Kisan and his family members actually take part in the cultivation work that goes on in the field. Some of these Kisans secure relatively poor income and hence in order to compensate it they, along with their family members, often work as agricultural labourers. They very rarely employ outside labourers, but often invite others to work in their fields on exchange basis. It is also probable that most of the Kisans belong to what are known as intermediary castes.

(b) Mazdoors or Labourers

The term Mazdoors refers in the rural context to the landless villagers who work as labourers on wage basis. They obtain their livelihood primarily from working on other people's land. The class of Mazdoors may consist of poor tenants, share croppers and landless labourers. The mazdoors receives wages in cash and sometimes in kind also. These Mazdoors are often forced to migrate to the

neighbouring villages, to other districts or states, particularly when they fail to find enough work in their own villages. Some of them even turn out as construction or industrial workers.

Dhanagare's Model of Agrarian Classes

Prof. D.N. Dhanagare has commented that Thorner's classification of agrarian classes suffers from its own limitations for it is not based on any theoretical assumptions. Dhanagare himself has suggested yet another model of agrarian classes. Dhanagare's model consists of five categories or classes which are as follows: (i) landlords (ii) rich peasants (iii) middle peasants (iv) landless labour (v) poor peasants.

Agrarian classes based on the size of the cultivated land

On the basis of the size of the land possessed by the peasants and the other sources of income which they obtain, one can speak of a fivefold classification of agrarian classes. It is as follows:

- (i) Big farmers who hold more than four hectares of land.
- (ii) Medium farmers owning 2-4 hectares of cultivable land
- (iii) Small famers possessing 1-2 hectares of land
- (iv) Marginal farmers having land whose size is less than one hectare.
- (v) Agricultural labourers who may [or may not] possess a small piece of land and who mainly relies on wage labour as their source of income.

Conclusion: The above mentioned classifications of agrarian classes signify that a few more classifications are possible. It is very difficult to make a clear identification and analysis of agrarian classes in the Indian rural set up for it is highly varied and complex.

INDUSTRIAL CLASS STRUCTURE

INDUSTRIAL WORKING CLASS

The effects of industrialization have been: (1) The percentage of workers engaged in agriculture has come down while that of workers engaged in industrial activities has gone up (2) The process of social mobility has accelerated. (3) Trade unions have organized industrial workers to fight for their rights. (4) Since industrial workers maintain continued and close relationship with their kin groups and castes, caste stratification has not affected class character. (5) The traditional and charismatic elite have been replaced by the professional elite.

Morris D. Morris has referred to two viewpoints regarding the behaviour pattern of the industrial labour. One view is that labour being short in industry, employers had to scramble for their workforce and make all sorts of concessions which weakened their hold on the workers. The workers frequently returned to their villages to which they were very much attached. The other view talks of surplus of labour available in villages for urban employment. Because of easy availability, the employers abused workers unmercifully. Since working conditions in the factories were intolerable, the labour was forced to go back their villages. Thus, in both views, it was held that workers retained their rural links which limited the supply of labour for industrial development. As a consequence, proletarian type of behaviour did not develop. It also resulted in high rates of absenteeism and labour turnover and the slow growth of trade unions.

Besides the above features, four other features were also visible: First employment of women and children in industries was very limited. About 20 to 25 percent of labour force consisted of women and about 5 percent of children. This was because employment of women in night shifts was prohibited and children below 14 years could not be legally employed. Secondly, though it is argued that industry is caste-blind because no single caste can provide an adequate supply of labour and because employees are uninterested in caste affiliation, yet workers did not permit the employers to employ workers of untouchable castes. Thirdly, large number of workers in the industries were those who had no significant claim to land. Fourthly, workers employed were not necessarily from the same district in which the industry was located but were recruited from different districts as well as neighbouring states. There were, thus, no geographical barriers inhibiting the flow of labour into the industry. The rural social structure (joint family system etc.) was also not a barrier to the flow of population needed for urban economic expansion. According to one estimate, of the total workers in any industry, about 25 percent are local, 10 percent come from within 100 kms of industry's location, 50 percent from 10 to 750 kms and 15 per cent from more than 750 kms. This shows a tendency for industry hands to be drawn from increasingly distant areas. All these features explain the class aspect of industrial labour force in India.

Analyzing the working class, Holmstrom has said that all workers do not share all interests; rather they share a few interests only. He has also said that it is necessary to draw a class line between the organized and the unorganized sector industrial workers. Joshi (1976) also has said that organized and unorganized sector industrial workers are two classes with different and conflicting interests.

This can be explained on the basis of difference in four factors: wages, working conditions, security and social worlds.

The wages depend upon whether the industry is big (more than 1,000 workers), small (250-1,000 workers) or very small (less than 50 workers). In 1973, West Bengal laid down different minimum wages for above three types of industries. The big industries pay much more than the small industries because of the economics of scale, unions and workers' strong bargaining position. Naturally, the interests of workers depends upon the type of industry they work in.

The working conditions also affect the interests of workers. Workers in industries with more pleasant conditions, having safety measures and fewer accidents and less noise and monotony and fatigue, shorter hours, more space, freedom from close control or harassment, a chance of learning something more, canteens and creches and washing rooms, have different interests from those which do not provide all these amenities. As such, they work as two different classes of workers.

Security and career chances also demarcate the two classes of workers. A permanent worker has not only a job but also a career while the temporary worker is bothered more about the security of the job. The permanent worker's career extends into the future but the temporary one remains bogged down into the present. The former may plan to improve his job by learning a skill and getting promotion; the latter is terrified of losing his job if he joins a union.

Lastly, the social world also divides workers in two different classes. The social world refers to differences in economic conditions, life chances, mutual aid and dependence etc. The factory workers in the organized sector have more solidarity, fewer hostilities and lesser tensions. Their interests and ideology keep them separate from the outsiders. Thus, the organized sector workers form a privileged class within the working class.

MIDDLE CLASSES IN INDIA

The emergence of the new middle class is an interesting development in the era of economic liberalization in India. Academic studies had, no doubt, focused earlier on the character of the Indian middle class in general, but it is only recently that the rise of the new middle class has attracted the attention of social scientists.



Economic reforms initiated by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh greatly contributed to the expansion of the Indian Middle Class

In a celebrated study of the Indian middle classes, B.B Mishra has suggested that the members of the educated and professionals, such as government servants, lawyers, college teachers and doctors, primarily constituted the bulk of the Indian middle classes. He also included the body of merchants, agents of modern trading firms, salaried executives in banking and trading, and the middle grades of peasant proprietors and rentiers under this category. This notion of the middle class has continued for years for the purpose of examining the role of the middle class in contemporary India.

It has been argued that in the early years of the Independence, material pursuits of middle class were subsumed in a broader ethical and moral responsibility to the nation as a whole. A restraint on materialistic exhibitionism in a poor country was the ideal reflector of the character of the middle class. Changes have, however, occurred in the basic character of this class. Pavan Varma, for example, in his book 'The Great Indian Middle Class' has initiated a significant debate on the declining social responsibility of the Indian middle class. It is in this context that the idea of a new middle class has been made popular in India.

The current culture of consumerism has given rise to the new middle class. The economic liberalization initiated in India in the 1990s portrays the middle class as a sizeable market which has attracted the Multi National Corporations (MNC). Images of the urban middle class in the print media and television contribute to prevalence of images of an affluent consumer. The spread of the consumer items such as cellphones, cars, washing machines and colour televisions has also consolidated the image of a new middle class culture. Advertising images has further contributed to that perception.

The new middle class has left behind its dependence on austerity and state protection. The newness of the middle class rests on its embrace of social practices of taste and consumption and a new cultural standard. Thus, the newness of middle class involves adoption of a new ideology rather than a shift in the social basis of India's middle class.

Critics of this new middle class have pointed out the negative effects that middle class consumerism holds in terms of environment degradation and a growing indifference towards socioeconomic problems of the country. However, proponents of liberalization have projected this new middle class as an idealized standard for a globalizing India.

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