



# MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY

SEMESTER-II

SOC-2.2: PERSPETIVES OF INDIAN  
SOCIETY-II

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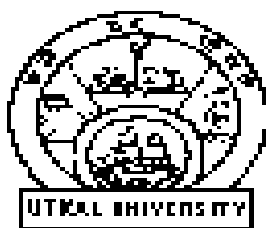
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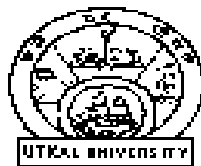
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We wish you happy reading.

**DIRECTOR**

## **SOC-2.2: PERSPECTIVES OF INDIAN SOCIETY-II**

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**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION, UTKAL UNIVERSITY,**  
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## **Block-01 Unity & Diversity**

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**Unit-01 Factors contributing to the Unity of India**

**Unit-02 Factors contributing to the Diversity of India**

**Unit-03 The Caste System**

**Unit-04 Functions of caste**

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## **Unit-01 Factors contributing to the Unity of India**

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### **Structure**

- 1.1 Learning Objectives**
- 1.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 1.3 Factors contributing to the unity of India**
- 1.4 Summary**
- 1.5 Self Assessment Questions**
- 1.6 Key Words**
- 1.7 Study Guide**



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## **1.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To understand the unity of Indian society.
2. To know the factors responsible for unity of Indian society.

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## **1.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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India is a vast country inhabited by people of diverse, religions, languages and customs. But, behind all this apparent diversity, there is a fundamental unity which often eludes the eye of an observer, who is more concerned with the external aspects only. It is these superficial observers, who often mistakenly take the view that India, in the past, did not have cultural unity and that whatever unity we find in India today is the product of the British rule. But, the fact is that the ideal of unity is not something new to India

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## **1.3 Factors contributing to the unity of India**

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There is a fundamental unity which often eludes the eye of an observer, who is more concerned with the external aspects only. It is these superficial observers, who often mistakenly take the view that India, in the past, did not have cultural unity and that whatever unity we find in India today is the product of the British rule. But, the fact is that the ideal of unity is not something new to India. The concept of one unified India has always been the fascinating idea of many a great thinker of this land. The idea is not imaginary either. Indian unity is the product of certain objective factors that are present in the various fields of Indian social life.

### **1. Geographical unity:**

India, though very large in size, possesses geographical unity with natural boundaries. It is surrounded on one side by the great Himalayas and on the other sides by the high seas. These natural boundaries give the land geographical unity. The term 'Bharat Varsha' i.e, India has always referred to this vast expanse of, the land expanding from the Himalayas in the North to the Cape Comorin in the south and from the Brahmaputra in the East to the Indus in the West. Religious thinkers, political philosophers, poets, statesmen and kings have always conceived Bharat Varsha in this sense. Even today, Mother India means this vast expanse of land.

### **2. Religious Unity:**

India is a land of many religions. Even Hinduism is not a monolithic religion. Even Hinduism is not a monolithic religion. There are a number of sects in it. But, in spite of all this religious diversity, as Prof. Srinivas puts it, "the concept of unity of India is essentially a religious one". Hinduism, being the religion of the majority of the people of India, provides a basis for unity.

It is true that there are a number of sects in Hinduism. But all of them have something in common when they preach, with slight variations, the same beliefs like immortality of the soul, transmigration of the soul, rebirth, the law of Karma, Dharma, Moksha etc. Even Buddhism and Jainism are not very much different from Hinduism in so far as these beliefs are concerned. Although Hinduism admits a number of possible conceptions of God and also a variety of ways to attain union with God, it, nevertheless, stresses the idea of unity when it declares, “there is one, they call by many names”.

The same myths, legends and deities are shared by all the Hindus in spite of their sectarian differences. Epics like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata are read as devotionally in the south as in the North. All the Hindus, despite their differences in language, caste and customs, show equal respect to the Hindu Scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads, the Gita and the Puranas.

Religious Unity of the country is expressed through the existence of pilgrimage centres spread all over the country. Pilgrimage centres of great religious value such as Badrinath in the north, Rameswaram in the south, Dwarika in the west and Puri in the east eloquently speak the religious unity of this vast land of Bharatvarsha.

There are mountains like the Himalayas and the rivers like the Ganges, Yamuna and Godavari which are sacred for every Hindu. These centres of religious merit, the temples, the mountains and rivers spread all over the country make every Hindu feel that every inch of the land is sacred. That is why, devout Hindus, even in Pre-British days, when means of transportation were little developed. To these pilgrims language barriers, political boundaries and differences in customs and usages were not great obstacles on their way to earn religious merit.

### **3. Cultural Unity:**

India possesses cultural unity which runs through every aspect of Indian Social life. The fundamental approaches to philosophy, art, literature and the traditions and customs are typically Indian in character. Social institutions like caste and the joint family which are found throughout the length and breadth of the country are typically Indian. Thus, for instance, the social institution of caste provides a common cultural idiom to all Indians. The institution is so pervasive that it cuts across even religious boundaries. Every Indian, whether he is a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh, a Jain, a Buddhist or a Christian finds himself in a universe of caste. Similar is the case with joint family. Then there are the same rituals, *samskaras* and festivals which are observed all over the country very much in a similar fashion.

### **4. Political Unity:**

Political unity, an offshoot of religious and cultural unity, is not something unknown to Indians. The

ideal of bringing the whole country under one central authority has always been a pre-occupation with great kings and statesmen in India. The concept of 'Chakravarti' clearly refers to this idea of political unification of India under one authority. Many kings in the past have been fired by the ambition of achieving the title of Universal Overlord or 'Chakravarti', waged wars and established hegemony over the entire land. In the ancient Indian literature we come across stories referring to kings like Dilip, Sagar, Yajati, Mandhata and Yudhisthira who actually achieved this much coveted position of being a Chakravarti. Later kings like Chandra Gupta Maurya, Ashoka, Samudra Gupta and others also achieved this distinction of being the universal overlord. In the past kings often declared wars on others with no other purpose than to achieve this title. The prevalence of religious practices like the Aswamedha Yajna only indicates the religious support extended to the idea of political unification of India under one central authority.

### **5. Emotional Unity:**

Finally there is an emotional bond in India that binds all the inhabitants of the land. The very name 'Bharatamata' brings all Indians emotionally closer to one another. The institution of national awards and titles for acts of bravery, social service, spirit of unity concerts cut across the communal, linguistic or regional bias and evokes the feeling of emotional unity. Emotional integration of the people as one nation is also provided through various media like Radio, TV and the Cinema.

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### **1.4 Summary**

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The above discussion clearly shows that in India there is an under-current of unity running through the apparent diversities of race, religion, language, custom etc. India is thus, a fine example of unity in diversity.

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### **1.5 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. What is unity of Indian society?
2. Discuss how geographical factors help to maintain the unity of Indian society.
3. Discuss how cultural factors help to maintain the unity of Indian society

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### **1.6 Key Words**

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**Unity-** is a sense of coexistence of different cultural identity.

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### **1.7 Study Guide**

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
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- M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII, March 1968, No.1.Pages:1-2

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## **Unit-02 Factors contributing to the Diversity of India**

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### **Structure**

- 2.1 Learning Objectives**
- 2.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 2.3 Sources of Diversity in India**
- 2.4 Summary**
- 2.5 Self Assessment Questions**
- 2.6 Key Words**
- 2.7 Study Guide**

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## **2.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To know the sources of diversity of India.

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## **2.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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India is a plural society. It is rightly characterized by its unity and diversity. A grand synthesis of cultures, religions and languages of the people belonging to different castes and communities has upheld its unity and cohesiveness. In spite of several foreign invasions, Mughal rule and the British rule, national unity and integrity have been maintained. It is this synthesis which has made India a unique mosaic of cultures. India fought against the British Raj as one unified entity. Foreign invasions, immigration from other parts of the world, and the existence of diverse languages, cultures and religions have made India's culture tolerant, on the one hand, and a unique continuing and living culture, with its specificity and historicity, on the other.

Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity are the major religions. There is diversity not only in regard to racial compositions, religious and linguistic distinction but also in patterns of living, life styles, land tenure systems, occupational pursuits, inheritance and succession law, and practices and rites related to birth, marriage death etc.

Post-Independent India is a nation united against several odds and obstacles. The idea of unity of India is inherent in all its historical and socio-cultural facts as well as in its cultural heritage. India is a secular state. It has one Constitution providing guarantees for people belonging to diverse regions, religions, cultures and languages. It covers people belonging to all socio-economic strata. The Five Year Plans and several other developmental schemes are geared to the upliftment of the poor and weaker sections of society.

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## **2.3 Sources of Diversity in India**

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The sources of diversity in India may be traced through a variety of ways, the most obvious being the ethnic origins, religious, castes, tribes, languages, social customs, cultural and sub-cultural beliefs, political philosophies and ideologies, geographical variations etc.

### **1. Racial Diversity:**

According to A.W.Green, "A race is a large biological human grouping with a number of distinctive, inherited characteristics which vary within a certain range."

### **Risley's Racial Classification:**

Sir Herbert Risley classified Indian population into seven racial types. These seven racial types can, however be reduced to three basic races namely (1) The Dravidian (2) The Mongolian and (3) Indo-Aryan. They are:

1. **The Turko Iranian:** People having this strain in their blood are mainly found in Beluchistan and Afghanistan, which are now outside the political borders of India.
2. **The Indo-Aryan:** This strain is mainly found in East Punjab, Rajasthan and Kashmir, especially among the people belonging to the castes of Rajput, Khatri and Jat.
3. **The Scytho-Dravidian:** It is a mixed racial type of Scythians and Dravidians. People having this racial ancestry are said to be found in Saurashtra, Coorg and hilly tracts of Madhya Pradesh.
4. **The Aryo-Dravidian:** It is an admixture of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian races. They are mainly found in U.P and Bihar. While the Aryan element is more pronounced among the Brahmins and other higher caste people, The Dravidian element is more prominent among the Harijans and other lower caste people of this region.
5. **The Mongolo Dravidian:** This racial type formed out of the intermixture of Dravidian and Mongolian Races, is believed to be Brahmins and the Kayasthas of Bengal and Odisha.
6. **The Mongoloid:** This racial element is mainly found among the tribal people of North-East Frontier and Assam.
7. **The Dravidian:** The people of South India and Madhya Pradesh are claimed to be of this stock.

Risley has not referred to the presence of Negrito element in Indian population.

### **Classification Haddon:**

A.C.Haddon, having disagreed with the classification of Risley, has given his own classification of races in India. According to him the principal races in India are (1) The Pre- Dravidian (2) The Dravidian (3) The Indo- Aryan (4) The Indo-Alpine and (5) The Mongolian. He believes that "the Dravidians may have been the original inhabitants of the valley of the Ganges in Western Bengal and later on they settled mainly in Nagpur."

### **Classification of J.H. Hutton:**

J.H. Hutton, describing the racial composition of Indian population, opines that the earliest occupants of India were probably the Negritos. However there have been little trace of them in India today. Next came the Australoid race, which often is referred to as the Proto- Australoid or to the Pre-Dravidian race. Hutton believes that this race though in a mixed form, is widely spread among the people of lower castes and lower sections of Indian society. The Australoids were followed by an earlier birth of Mediterranean race and later by another wave of immigration of the same race. The later immigrants were more advanced than the earlier hordes and it is believed that they were connected with the Indus Valley Civilization.

The Mediterranean immigration was followed by another immigration of the Armenoid branch of Alpine race. These people are credited to have developed a high standard of civilization was flooded by a Brachycephalic race from the west and by the Southern Mongoloids, from the East, later “the dolico-cephalic. Indo-Aryan race entered the Punjab about 1500 B.C.” who were subsequently followed by a number of other immigrations.

#### **Classification of Dr. B.S. Guha:**

Dr. B.S. Guha, after having revised the earlier classifications, has presented his own list of races that are believed to have composed the Indian population.

1. **The Negrito:** The presence of a Negrito substratum in Indian population is a controversial issue among the anthropologists. The protagonists are of the view that there is an element of Negrito race in Indian population. They claim that Negritos, even in a relatively pure form, are still found in the Andaman Island of the Bay of Bengal. As a further evidence, it is found from certain reports of traces of Negrito blood in the veins of some south Indian tribal people like the Kadar, some individuals in the Rajmahal hills in Bihar, the Nagas and also some people on North-Eastern Frontier between Assam and Burma. Keeping these facts in view, the protagonists of this view believe that the earliest occupants of India were Negritos, who were later displaced by the Proto-Australoids.

The opponents of this view on the other hand maintain that there is no weighty evidence to prove conclusively the existence of Negrito element in Indian population. Whatever evidence is there is in their view inadequate to establish the presence of Negrito element in Indian population beyond reasonable



doubt.

It may safely be said that this race even if it existed in the past, has left little trace in India today.

2. **The Proto-Australoid or the Pre-Dravidian:** Indian tribal population by and large is dominated by this racial element. The mundas, the sandals, the Juangs, the Korwas, the Saras, the Parjas, the Khonds, the Chenchus, the Irulas are only a few of the many tribes of this stock.
3. **The Mongoloid:** This race came into India from North-Western China via Tibet. People having this racial ancestry are mainly found in North-Eastern India. This race is found to consist two fundamental types namely
  - (a) **The Palaeo-Mongoloid:** there are two sub-types of the palaeo mongoloid branch of mongoloid race : one is the long headed type and the other is the broadheaded type.
  - (b) **The Tibeto-Mongoloid:** The people of Sikkim and Bhutan are said to be the Tibeto Mongoloid branch of mongoloid race.
4. **The Mediterranean:** This race is one of the dominant races in India. This race is divided into Three types. They are:
  - (a) **The Palaeo Mediterranean:** This racial type is represented by the Tamil and Telugu Brahmins of the South.
  - (b) **The Mediterranean:** people of this racial type are believed to be the builders of the Indus Valley Civilization.
  - (c) **Oriental:** This race groups are very much similar to the Mediterranean racial type.
5. **Western Brachycephals:** This race entered India from the West. The Alpinoid, the Dinaric and the Armenoid are three main types of this race
  - (a) **Alpinoid:** the people of Saurashtra, Gujarat and also Bengal are said to have this strain in their blood.
  - (b) **Dinaric:** This strain is claimed to be found among the peoples of Odisha, Bengal and Coorg.
  - (c) **Armenoid:** the Parsees of Bombay are believed to be the true representatives of this racial type.
6. **Nordic race:** people belonging to this race came to India from the North and spread all

over Northern India during the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. At present this race is mainly found in Northern India rather in a mixed form with the Mediterranean race. The people of this stock are believed to have enriched Indian culture by contributing new ideas to its philosophy and literature and also by introducing new items like horses, iron etc.

Of the 6 races, the first 3 namely the Negrito, the Proto-Australoid and the Mongoloid mainly constitute the Indian tribal population, while the other 3 races namely the Mediterranean, the Alpo Dinaric and the Nordic constitute the general population of India.

The above discussion makes it amply clear that the Indian population is composed of almost all the important race of the world. The inter-mixture of races is so thorough that even in the same family, we find one brother quite fair and the other quite dark. India is thus, a melting pot of races. It has rightly been called as a museum of races.

## **2. Religious Diversity:**

India is a land where almost all major religions of the world are found. Here we find Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Animism. All of these main religions have a number of sects of their own. In India, religious affiliations appear to be over-emphasised. As such, people in India some times, seem to be more loyal to their respective religions than to their nation. This religious diversity has been a factor and a source of disunity and disharmony in the country. As is well known, these religious differences were responsible for the development of the two nation theory and the consequent partition of the country in 1947. But, unfortunately the partition has neither solved the Muslim minority problem nor it has created a homogeneous population in India from a religious point of view.

1. **Hinduism:** It is an amalgamation of Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Pre-Dravidian religious elements. It is the religion of the majority of the people of India. The followers of Hinduism believe in the doctrine of 'Karma', 'Dharma', rebirth, immortality of soul, renunciation and salvation. Hinduism allows a number of possible conceptions of God. It also prescribes various alternative paths of attaining God. The Sakta, the Shaiva, the Satnami, the Lingayat, the Kabirpanthi, the Bramho Samaj, the Arya Samaj etc. are different sects of Hinduism. According to 1991 census, 697.4 million people (82.6%) in India practice Hinduism and provide a solid base for national unity through common beliefs, festivals, customs and traditions.

2. **Islam:** Islam the religion of the Muslims, originated in Arabia. It came to India towards the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D, with the Muslim invasions. The Muslim rulers in India patronized it. They established long dynasties over large chunks of the country and encouraged conversions from Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam does not believe in idol worship. It professes the fatalistic acceptance of Allah's will and considers Prophet Mohammed as the greatest prophet. The 'Quran', sacred book of Islam, ordains five primary duties of a true and devout Muslim, such as belief in God (Allah), prayers five times a day, the giving of alms, a month's fast every year and a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in the life time of a Muslim.
3. **Christianity:** Christians in India constitute more than 2% of its population. They are very widely scattered all over the country, but they are mainly concentrated in the south and especially in Kerala where they form nearly 25% of the state's population. In the North, Christianity has spread rather sporadically and its influence is mainly confined to certain sections of the tribal population and the depressed castes. There are mainly three sects in Christianity. They are (a) Roman-Syrians (b) Roman Catholics and (c) Protestants.
4. **Sikhism:** It was founded by Guru Nanak in the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The Sikhs were originally a part of the Vaishnava sect before they converted to it. Sikhism was later developed by a line of Sikh Gurus, who succeeded Guru Nanak. According to Rose "The Sikh creed involves belief in one God, condemning the worship of other deity; it prohibits idolatry, pilgrimage to the great shrines of Hinduism, faith in omens, charms or witchcraft; and does not recognize ceremonial impurity at birth and death. As a social system, it abolishes caste distinctions and as a necessary consequence, the Brahminical supremacy and usages in all ceremonies, at birth, marriage, death and so on." The Sikhs are ideologically nearer to the Hindus than to the Muslims. They as a group can easily be identified by anyone, because of the five "K"s they always wear. The 5 "K"s are Kesh (uncut long hair), Kanga (wooden comb) Kaccha (shorts), Kara (iron bangle in the hand and Kirpan (short sword). Sikh population in India is around 2% which is mainly concentrated in the Punjab and at the adjoining states.
5. **Buddhism:** It originated in India during the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Its founder was Gautama the Buddha. Buddhism enjoyed royal patronage for a long period beginning from the

Great emperor Ashoka in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. As a result, Buddhism spread not only in India but also in countries outside India. It has two sects, namely the Hinayana and the Mahayana. At present Buddhists are found in Sikkim and the adjoining hills, they are also found in Maharashtra as a result of the recent conversions under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. However the number of the Buddhists in India is very meager and it represents only less than 1% of the total population.

6. **Jainism:** Lord Mahavir established Jainism in India in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. It is very close to Hinduism. Many of the Hindu doctrines are retained in it. Jains like the Hindus, venerate and worship the cows, they often worship in the Hindu temples and also employ the services of the Brahmin priest in their domestic rites. They are even more scrupulous than the Hindus in maintaining caste distinctions. But it differs from Hinduism in its heretical views regarding the sanctity of the Vedas and in its strict insistence on the principle of Ahimsa. Jains represent only a small portion of the Indian population. They comprise about 0.45% of our population. Jains are divided into 3 sects: namely (a) The Digambaras, (b) The Svetambaras and (c) The Dhundias. Jains are mainly urban people and are found in the town and cities of Punjab, U.P, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
7. **Zoroastrianism or Parsi:** The Parsis or the followers of Zoroaster of Zorathushtra came to India in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. from Persia in order to escape the forcible conversions to Islam. They worship fire. They expose their dead on the so-called “towers of Silence” to be eaten up by vultures so that the elements- earth, fire and water-are not defiled by the contact of the dead matter. Their number in India is negligible. They are about one lakh in total half of which live in the city of Bombay alone. As such they are mainly urban. They are the most literate and are on the top of the economic ladder of India.
8. **Animism:** It is mainly a tribal faith. In India there are about 25 million people who believe in Animism. It is a primitive religion, according to which man is believed to be surrounded by a number of impersonal ghostly powers. These powers are said to reside in rocks, rivers, trees, stones etc.

The above discussion makes it amply clear that India is a land of numerous religions. It is in view of this religious diversity that independent India has declared secularism as one of the main principles of its

State Policy. Today India strives to integrate its people into a great nation on secular lines. But in spite of the secular policy followed by the state, there have been occasional communal riots in India causing much loss of life and property. It is to be seen how far we will be able to cultivate the ideal of secularism in the minds of our people who are mainly religious minded.

### **3. Linguistic Diversity:**

India is called a 'veritable tower of Babel' and according to A. R. Desai, "India presents a spectacle of Museum of tongues." The 1971 census reports the presence of 1652 languages in India. Most of the languages are spoken in the North India. This multiplicity of languages creates new social cleavages in the already divided population of India by caste and creed and renders the task of inter-communication in the country difficult, if not impossible. Indian languages can, however, be grouped into four different speech families such as: (1) the Indo-Aryan, (2) the Dravidian, (3) the Austric and (4) the Sino-Tibetan.

Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Assamese, Bengali, Odia, Gujarathi, Marathi and Kashmiri belong to the Indo-Aryan speech family. The Dravidian linguistic group includes four southern languages namely, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. The tribes of central India speak Austric languages and the tribes of the North Eastern India speak the Sino-Tibetan languages.

At the time of Independence from the British rule in 1947, there were many princely states. The Constitution of India was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1949 and came into effect on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950, which defined the Union of India comprising of different states and Union territories. In 1950, the states were recognized on linguistic basis. As a result, the domiciles of a particular state speak a particular language. Though the Constitution of India has recognized 22 major languages, as many as 1652 languages spoken in our country. Broadly these languages belong to three families of languages such as Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and European. Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Odia, Punjabi, Bihari, Rajasthani, Assamese, Sanskrit, Sindhi and Kashmiri are included in the Indo-Aryan family. The Dravidian language includes Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. English, Portuguese and French are included in the European language family. Portuguese and French are mostly spoken by people in Goa and Pondicherry respectively.

Hindi has been accepted as the official language in India, English remains an associate language. The 1991 census figure reveals that Hindi is spoken by 247.85 million people, followed by Telugu which is spoken by 72.08 million, Bengali 71.78 million, Marathi 67.26 million, Urdu and Gujarati by 46.11 million and 41.37 million people respectively. 35.32 million speaks Malayalam, Kannada by 34.78 million, Odia by 31.79 million, Bhojpuri by 23.11 million, Punjabi 22.41 million people and the rest of the languages are spoken by people within the range of one million to twenty million.

Thus Linguistic diversity has posed a major threat to the unity and existence of our country.

#### **4. Caste and Class Diversity:**

As a form of stratification, the caste is peculiar to the Indian society. It may be called as an extreme form of closed class system. The status of individuals in the social hierarchy is determined by birth. The caste system is also found in other parts of the world, but not in a complete form as it is evinced in India. The Indian caste system is divided into the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. It is not confined to Hindus alone. We also find castes among other communities like Muslims, Christians or Sikhs. It is believed that there are about 3,000 castes in India, out of this one can well imagine the extent of caste diversity in India.

Every society classifies its population into different segments on the basis of occupation, wealth or education, which are considered predominant characteristics of class. Persons belonging to particular segment of society are pronounced as a separate class. They formulate their own values and aspirations for the efficient functioning of their community. Stronger the class consciousness, greater are the chances of social conflicts. In India which is also a closed society, the class consciousness has been intensified by the pace of social and economic change and this has threatened the old social order.

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#### **2.4 Summary**

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However, every society classifies its population into different segments on the basis of occupation, wealth or education, which are considered predominant characteristics of class. Persons belonging to particular segment of society are pronounced as a separate class. They formulate their own values and aspirations for the efficient functioning of their community.

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#### **2.5 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Explain the various sources of diversity in Indian Society.

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#### **2.6 Key Words**

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**Diversity-** it explains about the existence of different identity within a larger whole those always may not ensure unity.

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#### **2.7 Study Guide**

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1. The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
2. Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
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## **Unit-03 The Caste System**

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### **Structure**

- 3.1 Learning Objectives**
- 3.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 3.3 Meaning and Definition**
- 3.4 Characteristics of the Caste System**
- 3.5 Origin of Castes**
- 3.6 Summary**
- 3.7 Self Assessment Questions**
- 3.8 Key Words**
- 3.9 Study Guide**



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### **3.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To know what is caste institution.
2. To understand the characteristics of caste institution.
3. To trace the origin of caste practice.

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### **3.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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Every society is stratified. It has rightly been said that an “unstratified society, with a real equality of its members is a myth, which has never been realised in the history of mankind. The form and proportions may vary but its essence is permanent.” The Indian social system rests on three pillars: the caste system, the joint family system, and the village community. Among these, the caste system appears to be the most significant feature of the Hindu Society due to its interdependence upon the social, economic and political systems. In fact, the Hindu Society has been described as the caste society par excellence. In India we find a unique system of social stratification based on birth, which is not found elsewhere in the world.

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### **3.3 Meaning and Definition**

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The term ‘Caste’ is derived from a Portuguese word ‘Casta’ meaning breed, race or group. As already mentioned, castes are ascriptive groups. Thus basically caste refers to people belonging to the same breed. An individual is born into a caste, and this status is usually permanent. Though the elements of castes are found outside India, it is only in India that numerous castes are found. The term ‘caste’ has been defined differently by different people.

According to G.S.Ghurye “Castes are small and complete social worlds in themselves marked off definitely from one another though subsisting within the larger society.”

According to MacIver “When status is wholly predetermined so that men are born to their lot without any hope of change in it, then the class takes the extreme form of caste.”

According to A.W.Green, “Caste is a system of stratification in which mobility, movement up and down in the status ladder, at least ideally, may not occur.”

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### **3.4 Characteristics of the Caste System**

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#### **Segmental Division of Society:**

Under caste system, society is divided into several small social groups called castes. Each of these castes is a well developed social group, the membership of which is based on birth. Since

membership is based on birth, mobility from one caste to another is impossible. Each caste has its own traditional social status, occupation, customs, rules and regulations. It has its own governing body called the caste council or 'jati panchayat', which enforces the caste rules. Above all, members of a caste are bound together by mutual obligations of help and co-operation in their day to day activities. Thus each caste is a social world by itself.

### **Hierarchy:**

The caste system is always characterized by a hierarchical arrangement. It implies that there are some castes which are considered superior to the others. Membership in the caste is based on birth and is more or less fixed. Traditionally it is the hierarchical arrangement of caste according to different degrees of dominance and subordination. The Brahmins in India are placed on the apex of the social ladder. A Brahmin is entitled to whatever exists in this world. In the caste hierarchy the Brahmins are followed by the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. At the bottom of the ladder are the Shudras.

### **Restrictions on Interaction**

In the caste system, there are several restrictions on interaction. The members of one caste cannot mix or move freely with the members of the other castes. This ban on interaction becomes still more rigid when the question of mixing of a superior caste with an inferior one comes to the front. Every caste abides by well-established customs and well-defined norms of interaction.

### **Social and religious disabilities:**

In caste system, the members of a higher caste impose certain disabilities and restrictions on other castes. In the Hindu caste system, the Brahmins are the most privileged caste and the Sudras are the oppressed ones. A Sudra cannot even touch an individual belonging to a higher caste. People belonging to the lowest caste in the hierarchy are not allowed to dwell in the cities and purchase property in the localities inhabited by the high caste people. They are not allowed even to go to the temples and worship there. They are not even permitted to study religious books etc. they are not also allowed to use village wells or ponds, used by the higher castes.

### **Imposition on restrictions on commensality:**

Each caste group has its own laws which govern the food habits of the members. Generally, there are no restrictions on fruit, milk, butter, dry fruits etc. But there are some restrictions regarding unfried food. Unfried food has been divided into two classes, 'pacca' and 'kachcha'. This division is based on the use of 'ghee' with or without water. The kachcha food can be accepted only from a person of one's own caste or of a higher caste.

**The Ideology of purity and pollution:**

The higher castes are believed to be pure and the lower caste people as impure. A central point in Hindu ritual is that it is necessary to make offering to the gods in order for human affairs to continue without undue disaster. The Brahmin or the priest acts as an intermediary between the general society and the gods. The lower castes are regarded as less pure and more polluted. This concept of dividing people in terms of pollution and purity was given by the famous Anthropologist Louis Dumont.

**Restrictions on Occupations:**

The different castes are usually associated with traditional occupations. Hindu religious texts determined the occupations of all 'Varnas'. One's birth into a particular caste determines his occupation during his life time. A Sudra cannot be engaged in the profession of a priest and a Brahmin is debarred to engage himself in impure occupations like making shoes which is the occupation of the lower castes.

**Marital restrictions:**

Caste endogamy is strictly enforced wherein the members of each caste marry only within their own caste. Inter-caste marriage is prohibited.

**Hereditary status:**

Caste system is based on the ascriptive pattern which implies that the birth of a person in a particular caste decided his caste and his status in society. It is usually difficult or rather impossible to change one's own caste despite the acquisition of qualifications or disqualifications, the membership of a particular caste continues and does not undergo any change.

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**3.5 Origin of Castes**

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Many western and non-Indian scholars have described the origin of castes in their own ways. Whereas Herbert Risley has attributed the racial differences to have been the cause, Nesfield and Ibbeston explained its origin through occupational factors. Abbe Dubois stressed on the role of the Brahmins in the creation of caste system. J.H.Hutton referred to the belief in 'Mana' as the origin of caste. In addition, various theories of the origin of caste system have been formulated. Some important theories are given below.

**Traditional Theory:**

This theory owes its origin to the ancient literature. It believes that caste has a divine origin. There are some references in the Vedic literature, wherein it is said that castes were created by Brahma, the supreme creator. He created different castes for the harmonious performance of various social

functions for the maintenance of society. According to the 'Purushasukta' hymn of the Rig Veda, the Brahman is supposed to have been born from the mouth of the Supreme Being, the Kshatriya from the arms, the Vaishyas from the thighs and the Sudra from the feet of the creator. The emergence of four castes from different parts of Brahma's body is only a symbolic description and is indicative of the work performed by each of them. It considers caste as a natural determined organization of social functions and explains one's birth in a particular caste in terms of the doctrine of karma as well as dharma. Since the Brahmin has come out of the mouth, the seat of speech, his duty is to serve society as a teacher and also to preserve his cultural heritage. Arms symbolize strength. Hence the duty of the Kshatriya is to defend the society from internal and external aggressions and rule the land. The duty of the Vaishya who comes out of the thighs is to provide food for the members of society and look after its economic well being. The feet serve the body. So, the prime duty of the Shudra who is born out of the feet of 'Brahma' is to serve the members of other castes without grumbling or grudging. Thus the purpose of creation of each caste is to perform specific functions according to the creation of God Brahma and as such castes cannot be changed by human will. The supporters of the traditional theory of caste cite instances from the Manusmriti, Puranas, Ramayana and Mahabharat in support of their argument of four-fold division of society. As regards the origin of a number of castes, it is believed that those have been formed as a result of the hypergamous or hypogamous marriages between the four original 'Varnas'. The 'Karma' and 'Dharma' doctrines also explain the origin of caste system. Whereas the karma doctrines hold the view that a man is born in a particular caste because of the result of his action in the previous incarnation, the doctrine of dharma explains that a man who accepts the caste system and the principles of the caste to which he belongs, is living according to dharma. It is believed that the person living according to his dharma is rewarded. On the contrary, the violation of one's own dharma yields punishment. Confirmation to one's own dharma also remits on one's birth in the rich high caste and violation gives a birth in a lower and poor caste.

Attempts have been made to explain the caste on the basis of qualities or 'gunas' which are interpreted in terms of two sets 'Gotrika' and 'Namika'. The 'Gotrika' quality is concerned with heredity. The individual on the basis of his birth, inherits from his lineage, which is commonly found among all other consanguineous kins. The 'namika' qualities are the individual's own specific qualities. Thus the 'gotrika' relates an individual with a particular group and determines his ascriptive status. This ascriptive status accords him membership in a particular jati or caste.

This traditional theory has been criticized on three counts. First it attributes the origin of human beings as four Varnas to a divine being and thus considers it as supernatural phenomena which are biologically wrong.

Secondly, it treats four Varnas as four castes, which implies that caste system and Varna system are all

the same. This conception is wrong. In this regard M.N.Srinivas holds that the idea of caste as the four-fold division of society represents a gross oversimplification of facts. The real unit of caste system is jati denoting an endogamous community with more or less defined ritual status and occupations traditionally linked to it.

Thirdly, the tracing of the origin of caste to miscegenation or Varna Shankar is also misleading. It is possible that some castes have been formed as miscegenation, but it is not correct to say that all the castes have been formed due to miscegenation.

### **Occupational Theory:**

Nesfield regarded caste system as the natural product of the occupational division of Hindu Society. In his own words "Function and function alone is responsible for the origin of caste system". He holds the view that in the beginning when there was no rigidity, each individual was free to have occupation of his choice. But gradually with therigidity in the system, occupational changes came to a halt. Castes were identified on the basis of fixed occupation. Persons in noble occupations, such as educating the people, fighting in the battle field, trade etc. were considered as members of superior castes. The others were traced as persons belonging to inferior castes, such as Sudras. In support of his theory, Nesfield cited the example that the occupation of artisans working in metals isranked higher than basket makers or some other primitive occupations which do not involve the use of metals.

However, this theory is not free from criticism. The line of attack is that occupation is notthe sole basis of causing caste differences. Wide variations are also marked in respect of the position of agricultural castes which are rated lower, they are regarded as relatively higher and respectable in North India.

### **Political Theory:**

Some thinkers are of the opinion that not race but political convenience and manipulation by those wanting to retain authority resulted in the origin of caste system. The Brahmins were solely responsible for creating and maintaining this system so as to retain authority. In the words of Dr. Ghurye, "caste is the Brahminic child of Indo-Aryans culture cradled in the land of Ganges and hence transferred to other parts of India by Brahminic prospectors."

Abbe Dubois argues that caste system is an ingenious device made by the Brahmins for Brahmins. Brahmins imposed restrictions on food and social intercourse to preserve their purity necessary for the sacerdotal functions. They also accorded high status to themselves and declared all others inferior to them. The salvation of individuals or society lied in the performance of religious rites by the Brahmin only. The Brahmins even added the concept of spiritual merit of the king, through the priest or purohit in order to get the support of the ruler of the land.

However, Hutton has made scathing attack on the Brahminical theory of the origin of caste on two counts. First, it is not possible to accept this theory unless it is confirmed that Brahmins must have got

the political power to implement such a scheme. Second, such a deep rooted social institution, like caste, could hardly be imposed by an administrative measure. Of course, both the arguments of Hutton appear to be illogical because Kshatriyas have ruled over the land through the entire period of history and furthermore imposition of superiority over others by the Brahmins may not be possible through administrative measure.

### **The Theory of Mana:**

J.H. Hutton has propounded the theory of 'Mana' in the formation of castes. This has been supported by Roy, Rice and Swart also. 'Mana' is a supernatural power which possesses the capacity to do good or bad to people. The tribals believe that 'Mana' is attached to objects, places and even to individuals. The tribals also believed that this mysterious impersonal power can be transmitted through contact and social intercourse.

Tribal belief in "Mana" is always accompanied by the belief in value of taboo. Each 'Mana' has its corresponding taboos. Taboos are required to provide protective measures. Taboos are imposed on commensality, inter-marriage, interaction etc. to save the members of one tribe from the 'Mana' of the other tribe. Tribals consider the food of the other tribe perilous due to the belief that food and contacts may be infected with the dangerous soul matter of others. Hutton's argument is that caste elements were existent in India before the Aryan invasion. In his study of certain tribes east of the Naga Hills, Hutton found that in this area each village was an independent political unit and occupations were distributed by villages. Some villagers were adepts in pot-making. People belonging to other villages were weaving cloth. Some villages were having blacksmiths. The villages had interdependence on each other through barter system of their products. Hutton suggested that this has probably been the state of affairs throughout pre-Aryan India. The exogamous clans started migrating from one village to another due to political, social and natural disturbances. The villages also welcomed such migration because it was beneficial for them in respect of the non-availability of particular trade. The migrants were not allowed to practice the profession of the village, where they got settled, because the professions were tabooed.

The tribals believed that if the strangers were allowed to practice the ancestral occupation of the villagers that would displease the ancestors. Since the ancestors were believed to have possessed the 'Mana', they would destroy the crops and fruits of the earth. Hutton has also cited the Mana principles in other religions like Buddhism, where it appears as 'iddhi'. In Islam such beliefs are known as 'Kudrat'. In Hinduism, it is analogous to 'Shakti'.

### **Criticism:**

The theory of 'Mana' has been criticized on two counts. First, India is not only country where the belief in 'Mana' existed. But in no other parts of the world it created the caste system. Hence, the belief that

the theory that 'Mana' produced caste system appears to be misleading. Secondly, there is no evidence supporting the existence of caste system in India alone.

### **Racial Theory of Caste:**

Herbert Risley is one of the ardent advocates of racial theory of the origin of caste system. Other supporters of this theory are the scholars like Ghurye, Majumdar, Westermarck and others. According to this theory, caste system came into existence due to clash of cultures and the contact of races. The Aryans came to India as conquerors, because of their better complexion, physical appearance and built up of the body. In comparison with the non-Aryans, the Aryans placed themselves as a superior race over the non-Aryans. Thus the Aryans considered the natives as inferior to them and maintained their own ideas and ceremonial purity. The Aryans got married to the non-Aryan women, but refused to give their own daughters in marriage to the non-Aryans. The Chandals had the lowest position in society. Thus the irregular union between races and racial superiority were held responsible for the origin of caste system in India.

Risley has mentioned six processes of development of caste system.

- (a) Changes in traditional occupation: when a caste or a sub-caste changes its traditional occupation and adopts a different one, it ultimately develops into a distinct caste.
- (b) Migration: In the past the transport and communication system was not developed. Therefore whenever a section of caste migrated from one region to the other, it faced difficulties in maintaining contacts with the earlier place.
- (c) Customary changes: From the earliest times, the formation of new castes was based on the rejection of old custom and usages and acceptance of the new practices and habits.
- (d) Preservation of old practices: Some caste groups are interested in maintaining their old traditions and on those bases they separate themselves from the rest of society who follow relatively new customs and traditions. The caste groups preserving old patterns may take up new names.
- (e) Getting into the folds of Hinduism: Certain tribes or the section of the tribes enter into the rank on Hinduism by changing their lineage, by accepting the tenets of any school of Hindu religion, by joining Hindu religion and by establishing relations with the Hindus without changing its name. Thus, the tribes transform themselves into castes. The examples of the Rajbanshis of Bengal and Muria Gonds of MP

may be taken in this regard.

- (f) Role of religious enthusiasts: Separate sects are created by the religious enthusiasts. They preach their doctrines and attract people towards them. Gradually, their followers develop into a new group. Kabir may be taken as an example in this regard.

### **Ghurye's View:**

G.S. Ghurye also traces the origin of caste system to race. He has associated caste system with Brahmanic system. The system originated in the Gangetic plains due to the conquest of the Aryans. According to him, the conquered race began to be considered as Sudra. The Sudras were excluded from all religious and social activities of the Aryans. The Aryans did not allow them to participate in Indo-Aryans social activities. According to him "the Brahminic variety of this Indo-Aryan civilization was developed in the Gangetic plain". Ghurye believed that it is this multiplicity which has resulted in the formation of castes and sub-castes. In this regard, he adds, "the various factors that characterize caste society were the result in the first instance of the attempts on the part of the upholders of Brahminic civilization to exclude the aboriginals and the Sudras from religious and social communication with themselves."

### **Risely's view:**

Herbert Risley held the view that the caste system originated due to the emigration of Indo-Aryans from Persia. In Persia, the Indo-Aryans were divided into four classes and the migrants in India wanted to retain the same class structure. At the same time they wanted to maintain distance from the non-Aryans because they considered the non-Aryans inferior to them, both in cultural and racial features. They practiced hypergamy with the non-Aryans, but did not allow hypogamy with them. Even then more stray cases occurred. Thus three distinct classes emerged in society: (a) Endogamous marriage of the Aryans (b) Hypergamy and (c) stray cases of exogamy. Such marriage practices resulted in the origin of castes.

### **Majumdar's view:**

According to D.N. Majumdar, the origin of caste system may be traced to the 'Varna' or complexion. Initially, there were only three classes on the basis of complexion. These three classes were formed out of the inter-mixing of Pro-Dravidian and Proto-Mediterranean races. The intermixing of different races arose out of the acquisition of Dravidian wives and the desire for a settled life, D.N. Majumdar writes in his book, "Races and Culture in India". The actual mention of the caste system in Avestan literature as comprising of the priest, the charioteer, agriculturists and the artisans and an identical division of society



in ancient India may point to common origin of the caste system, especially because the Indo-Aryans are only branch of the same race which moved towards Persia.” In course of time, the higher castes took to certain professions and the lower caste abstained from practicing those professions of the higher castes. Restrictions were also imposed on marriage. Gradually, the superior castes maintained social distance from inferior castes. The inferior castes got themselves organized to stake their claim in the caste hierarchy. The formation of hierarchy became the basis of origin of caste system.

### **Criticism:**

Racial theory cannot be accepted as the exclusive theory of the origin of caste system in India. Caste system should not be confined to India. It should be found in all such societies which have experienced the conquest by other racial groups. Secondly, it is quite natural that whenever two or more distinct races come into contact, some sort of segregation results. But this may not always lead to untouchability. Thirdly, the practice of hypergamy may be a reasonable factor contributing to the formation of caste system. But this is not the sole reason. If we relate the origin of caste exclusively to the race, it will neglect many other possible factors.

### **Evolutionary Theory:**

Denzil Ibbeston has presented this evolutionary theory of the origin of caste system. The theory implies that the caste system did not come into existence all of a sudden. It is the consequence of a long process of social evolution. The caste system emerged slowly and gradually. The factors which contributed to it, included desire for purity of blood, devotion to a particular profession, theory of karma, conquests of one army by the other, geographical location and isolation.

However, this theory has failed to provide a correct explanation for the origin of the castesystem, for, though the same condition existed in other parts of the world, caste system did not evolve there.

A multiplicity of theories has been advanced from time to time, explaining the origin of caste system. But no theory has been completely convincing. This is due to the complexity and fluidity in the caste system. Hence, it is safe to conclude that the Indian caste system cannot be explained through mono-causal theories. It is the natural result of the interaction of geographical, social, political, economic and religious factors.

### **Views of the Scientists:**

Led by Dr. Michael Bamshad of Utah University, scientists have discovered a pattern of genetic differences that underpins the caste system in India. On the basis of their study of the genetic material from 250 people from 12 castes in Andhra Pradesh, it is revealed that each caste has developed a

distinctive genetic profile because of little inter-caste marriage and the variation in the social pecking order are also mirrored in the DNA. The conclusions of their study are particularly true for men; women's genes suggest that have some social mobility. The Hindu society is stratified into around 2000 castes and sub- castes that dictate a person's access to education, occupation and status. To study how deeply these divisions had affected them, the scientists examined their mitochondrial DNA, which is inherited only from mothers, and Y chromosomes, inherited only from fathers. The findings of these scientists were:

- (i) Man's DNA is highly specific to his caste, but with women this phenomenon was less pronounced. With them, DNA typical of one caste was sometimes found in other adjoining castes.
- (ii) Women occasionally marry men from higher castes, producing children who inherit the husband's caste.

The stratification of the Hindu caste system is driven by women

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### **3.6 Summary**

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The conclusions of their study are particularly true for men; women's genes suggest that have some social mobility. The Hindu society is stratified into around 2000 castes and sub- castes that dictate a person's access to education, occupation and status. To study how deeply these divisions had affected them, the scientists examined their mitochondrial DNA, which is inherited only from mothers, and Y chromosomes, inherited only from fathers.

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### **3.7 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Describe the origin of caste institution.
2. Describe the characteristics of caste institution.

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### **3.8 Key Words**

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**Mana-** is a supernatural power which possesses the capacity to do good or bad to people.

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### **3.9 Study Guide**

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
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## **Unit-04 Functions of caste**

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### **Structure**

- 4.1 Learning Objectives**
- 4.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 4.3 Functions of caste**
- 4.4 Dysfunctions of the caste system**
- 4.5 Summary**
- 4.6 Self Assessment Questions**
- 4.7 Key Words**
- 4.8 Study Guide**

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#### 4.1 Learning Objectives

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To explain the function of caste.
2. To understand the dysfunction of caste.

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#### 4.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge

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Every society is stratified. It has rightly been said that an “unstratified society, with a real equality of its members is a myth, which has never been realised in the history of mankind. The form and proportions may vary but its essence is permanent.” The Indian social system rests on three pillars: the caste system, the joint family system, and the village community. Among these, the caste system appears to be the most significant feature of the Hindu Society due to its interdependence upon the social, economic and political systems. In fact, the Hindu Society has been described as the caste society par excellence. In India we find a unique system of social stratification based on birth, which is not found elsewhere in the world.

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#### 4.3 Functions of caste

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**It helped in maintaining purity of blood:** Members of each caste follow endogamic restrictions in marriage and as such purity of blood is maintained. This is perhaps the reason that even today pure Aryan race is found in India.

**Determines social status:** As caste is based on the principle of birth, an individual, by virtue of his birth in a particular caste, automatically becomes a member of it and gets, by ascription, the traditional status of that caste in society. This ascriptive status of the individual is fixed. Thus caste gives the individual psychological security as far as his position in society is concerned.

**Provides social security:** Besides the psychological security in the form of a fixed social status, caste offers social security to the individual from his birth to death. It provides him with an occupation, acts as a trade union, a benefit society, health insurance and also provides for his funeral, if it is needed.

**Guides the individual's behavior:** caste, like any other social institution, guides the behavior of the individual by providing readymade behavior patterns in matters like diet, ceremonial observances, rituals at birth, initiation, marriage, death etc.

**Preserves culture:** Every society must be able to pass on its patterns of skill, knowledge, and behavior- in short its culture- from one generation to another generation, if it is to survive as a

distinct social system. Caste system is specially fit for such a task of handing over cultural patterns from one proceeding generation to the other succeeding generation with little change, because craft secrets and caste customs are zealously safeguarded and perpetuated by the occupational castes.

**Integrates society:** caste system has acted as an effective means of integrating the diverse racial, religious, national and ethnic groups into a vast variegated community. But for their integration into a community by the system they would have either been completely absorbed by Hindu society or been remained as un-adjusted and possibly subversive elements in society. Caste system is capable of incorporating groups - be it racial, religious, national or occupational - in such a way that it becomes a part of the social whole and yet retains its own distinctive character and identity. It is for this reason that thinker like Furnival has described India as “an outstanding instance of a country,” where “a plural society has proved stable’.

**Establishes stability in society:** Caste system has also been responsible for the stability in the society. It saved Hindu society from being disrupted under the pressure of alien invasions, famines and upheavals of all kinds in her long and chequered history. Hindu society has proved stable because it is firmly based on caste system, which survives even conversion to Islam or Christianity. For example, we have Muslim castes like the Momin, Jolaha, Lakhani, Gaddi etc.

**Brings political stability in society:** the caste system acted as the political stabilizer in the sense that despite several changes and political upheavals, no significant influence could be exerted on the Hindus. The cultural pattern was preserved irrespective of the changing political set up and S.C. Hill has said in this regard that the caste system prescribed and determined a form of social order which was entirely independent of the form of political government. Another reason for political stability was the fact that there was no motive on the part of the ruled to seek an alternation.

**Serves as a device for division of labour:** caste system has acted as a unique system of division of labour in Hindu society. It has made provision for all functions ranging from education to scavenging. But what is unique about the system is that the provision is made under a religious dogma namely the belief in karma, which makes the apparently in-equitable division of labour acceptable to people. It is said that the present position and occupation of a person in the society are the consequences of his actions in his previous lives and that if he performs his caste duties faithfully in this present life, he will have a better position in his next

life.

**It developed the spirit of cooperation:** The members of each caste develop a sense of unity for their own caste group. The feeling that any invasion by other castes on their superiority or any attempt at degrading their customs, rituals and traditions etc. will be disastrous for the caste urged them to work in close cooperation with one another. In this manner, the caste system developed a sense and spirit of cooperation and this provided the infrastructure for the advancement and betterment of the society.

**Raised the standard of living:** Due to the caste system members belonging to different castes made great efforts to maintain their superiority and position and thereby the caste system raised the standard of living of the people belonging to a particular caste. This, in turn, raised the standard of living of each caste which was of great help to the society.

**Generated the panchayat system:** Under the caste system, each caste had its own panchayat and disputes arising among the members of a particular caste were decided by caste panchayat. In course of time this system became very stable and contributed to the evolution of the panchayat system. Even today, this panchayat system has been accepted as the ideal system in India due to its agrarian and rural structure.

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#### 4.4 Dysfunctions of the caste system

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**Hinders social progress:** caste system is a hindrance to social progress because it does not allow changes to be easily introduced in society. Under caste system, the individual is not free; he is to conform to the age-old customs of his caste. Slightest deviation from them is severely dealt with. This rigidity of the system has almost paralyzed Hindu society. Innovation has no place in it. Sherring is right when he says, “caste makes no compromises, the most ignorant Hindu is able to compel the obedience of the most intelligent.”

**Stifles economic progress:** caste system acts as a stumbling block on the path of economic development. As occupations are determined by status rather than contract in caste system, the worker is denied of his freedom to choose an occupation of his liking. This leads to immobility and inefficiency of labour and thereby to economic backwardness.

**Leads to political disunity:** under caste system an individual is required to be more loyal to his caste than to any other group. As such, it fosters casteism rather than nationalism among the people. It is for this reason that the Indians could not develop nationalism and combine against foreign invasions. In fact, disunity and lack of patriotism among the Indians encouraged many

foreigners to invade India.

**Perpetuates social inequalities:** caste system has served as an instrument in the hands of the upper castes to maintain their own privileged position in society. It has led to the despotism of the upper castes and created permanent feelings of inferiority and insecurity in the minds of lower caste people.

**Imposes hardships on women:** Another drawback of the system is that it imposes hardships on women. Under caste system, a caste wishing to raise its status in the caste hierarchy should follow certain customs like child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriages and seclusion of women, which entail hardships for women.

**Creates untouchability:** The system keeps a large number of people in a state of virtual slavery. They are the unfortunate untouchables, who suffer from all kinds of disabilities. Untouchability is the ugliest expression of caste system.

**It stood against democracy:** The caste system ran contrary to the democratic spirit. Democracy presupposes human equality, but the caste system believed in inequality and there was a hierarchical arrangement wherein the Brahmins were at the top, whereas the Sudras were at the lowest rung of the ladder.

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#### 4.5 Summary

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The caste practice in Indian society is more often functional and sometimes it also seems as dysfunctional to Indian society. The impact of social processes like modernization, globalization, sanskritisation and liberalization on caste institution is very prominent and has also brought many changes in the function of caste practice.

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#### 4.6 Self Assessment Questions

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1. Discuss the function of caste practice.
2. Describe the dysfunction of caste practice.

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#### 4.7 Key Words

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**Function-** something acts positively.

**Dysfunction-** something acts negatively.

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#### 4.8 Study Guide

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11



- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
- S.C.Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
- P.K.Kar Indian Society(2003).Page-366
- M.N.Srinivas Social change in Modern India(1966) Page47
- M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII, March 1968, No.1.Pages:1-2

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## **Unit-05 Changes in the Caste System**

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### **Structure**

- 5.1 Learning Objectives**
- 5.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 5.3 Changes in the caste system**
- 5.4 Factors affecting caste system**
- 5.5 Summary**
- 5.6 Self Assessment Questions**
- 5.7 Key Words**
- 5.8 Study Guide**

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### 5.1 Learning Objectives

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To understand the factors affecting caste structure.

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### 5.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge

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The term 'Caste' is derived from a Portuguese word 'Casta' meaning breed, race or group. As already mentioned, castes are ascriptive groups. Thus basically caste refers to people belonging to the same breed. An individual is born into a caste, and this status is usually permanent. Though the elements of castes are found outside India, it is only in India that numerous castes are found. The term 'caste' has been defined differently by different people.

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### 5.3 Changes in the caste system

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**Decline in the supremacy of Brahmins:** In the traditional caste system, the Brahmins were at the apex of the social and religious sphere and thus they enjoyed supremacy over others. But due to the processes of secularization and westernization, the authority of the Brahmins gradually declined and they ceased to enjoy the traditional respect and honour in the society.

**Changes in the caste hierarchy:** Traditionally, each caste was maintaining its own style of life and the higher castes maintained a better life than the rest. But in course of time the process of Sanskritization started. Sanskritization is a process in which a status group aspiring for upward mobility in the system of social stratification tends to emulate the lifestyle of the higher castes. The lower castes followed Sanskritization to bring about a change in their social status.

**Changes in status:** The status-indicating function of castes has undergone changes due to the process of secularization, westernization and materialistic attitude of individuals.

**Occupational changes:** In a caste-ridden society, occupations were hereditary and an individual's birth into a particular caste determined his occupation forever. But when the rigidity of the caste system broke down, occupational changes were also marked.

**Changes in the sphere of culture:** It has changed the life style of different caste groups, their modes of living, patterns of worship and performance of rites and rituals, customs and traditional practices.

**Changes in commensality:** People are no more confined to their places of origin. They have migrated to different places and so it becomes very difficult to stick to the restrictions relating to the food habits. Particularly in the urban places where the strangers dine in hotels, it is impossible to maintain restrictions. In various offices and work- organizations, the same

relaxation is evident. The employees assemble together for inter- dining.

**Attitudinal changes:** Changes in the attitude towards castes have been noticed within the system. This relates to loss of faith in the ascriptive pattern and jurisdiction of the system itself.

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#### 5.4 Factors affecting caste system

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**Modern Education:** Modern education being secular in nature is indifferent to, if not against, religion. It is, on the one hand, based on such democratic values like equality, liberty and fraternity and on the other hand, grounded on such scientific values like reason and observation. Therefore, with the spread of modern education, the beliefs like divine origin of caste, karma and 'karmaphala', which provided ethical justification for caste system, are growing weaker and weaker in the minds of people. As modern education is usually imparted in co-educational institutions, it encourages inter-caste marriages, based on love, among the educated young men and women. Thus, modern education acts as a very powerful force against caste system in India.

**Industrialization:** Caste, like the joint family, is based on rural economy. As such, industrial economy cuts across the roots of both caste and joint family. Occupational castes cannot survive in the face of large scale industrialization. For example, the members of the weaving castes are finding it extremely difficult to follow their traditional caste occupations as it is not possible for them to compete with the textile mills in the open markets. As a result, of industrialization, the tradition of following caste occupations has come in to disuse. Today, members of all castes have sought and got employment in the modern factories. A Brahmin, who works by side of an untouchable in a factory, cannot avoid his touch or shadow. Urbanization: Under urban conditions of life, the ideas of pollution by touch of a shadow cannot be translated into action.

**Modern means of transportation:** Modern means of transportation have increased spatial mobility of the people and thereby put an end to the geographical isolation, which was a favourable condition for the creation and continuation of caste system in India. Moreover, while travelling by the modern means of transportation like buses, trains, it is impossible to observe caste rules regarding food, drink and social inter-course. Increase in the importance of wealth: In our present age, wealth is replacing birth as the basis of social prestige. Consequently, caste, which is based on birth, is no longer the basis of social status. As a rich Sudra is more respected than a poor Brahmin in our modern society, people while choosing their occupations, give more

consideration to income rather than anything else.

**New social movements:** In the past, a number of movements were launched against caste system, but none of them succeeded, as they were mainly reformist in their mission. They never questioned orthodoxy. But the social movements started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswati and others were unlike the earlier movements, for they were based on the authority of reason rather than the orthodox texts. As such, their ideas could influence the intelligentsia of the country against caste and other evils of Hindu society. Under the impact of all these powerful forces, wide cracks have already appeared in the walls of the citadel of caste in India. But it would be a gross mistake to think that it has completely collapsed.

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## 5.5 Summary

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Today, members of all castes have sought and got employment in the modern factories. A Brahmin, who works by side of an untouchable in a factory, cannot avoid his touch or shadow. Urbanization: Under urban conditions of life, the ideas of pollution by touch of a shadow cannot be translated into action.

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## 5.6 Self Assessment Questions

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1. Discuss the factors affecting caste institution briefly.

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## 5.7 Key Words

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**Industrialization-** large scale set up of industries.

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## 5.8 Study Guide

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
- S.C.Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
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**Block-02: Family & Kinship**

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**Unit-06 The family**

**Unit-07 Kinship**

**Unit-08 Marriage**

**Unit-09 The Muslim Marriage**

**Unit-10 The Christian Marriage**

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## **Unit-06 The family**

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### **Structure**

- 6.1 Learning Objectives**
- 6.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 6.3 Definitions of Family**
- 6.4 Characteristics of joint Family**
- 6.5 Functions of joint family system**
- 6.6 Dysfunctions of joint family**
- 6.7 Disintegration of joint family**
- 6.8 Illom**
- 6.9 Tarwad**
- 6.10 Summary**
- 6.11 Self Assessment Questions**
- 6.12 Key Words**
- 6.13 Study Guide**

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## 6.1 Learning Objectives

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To understand the joint family.
2. To understand the types of joint family.
3. To know what is illom.

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## 6.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge

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Family is one of the most important primary groups in society. It is a small social group consisting ordinarily of a father, mother, and one or more children. Family in India has remained a vital institution. It is sheet-anchor of the patriarchal authority on the one hand, and a protector and defender of individual member's right to property on the other. Despite several wide-ranging changes in Indian society, because of synthesis between collectivism and individualism, the Hindu family continues to be joint, partly structurally and mainly functionally. It has not disintegrated into individual families like the western countries. Several studies on family have revealed that industrialization, urbanization, education and migration have not necessarily resulted into nuclearisation of family in India. The Indian family system is thus like a socialistic community in which everyone earns according to his capacity and receives according to his needs.

At the outset, it is important to explain the sense in which the term "family" is used. The word "family" has been taken over from the Roman word, "famulus", meaning a servant. In Roman law, the word denoted the group of producers and slaves and other servants as well as members connected by common descent or marriage. The word 'family' is used in several different ways. A.M. Shah outlines at least four interrelated social situations of family life in India. These are as follows:

1. The body of persons who live in one house or under one head, including parents, children, servants etc.
2. The group consisting of parents and their children whether living together or not.
3. In wide sense, all those who are nearly related by blood and affinity.

Those descended or claiming descent from a common ancestor; a house, kindred, lineage

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## 6.3 Definitions of Family

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According to Iravati Karve, "A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred."



In the words of C.B. Memoria, “The fundamental principle of the Hindu joint family is the tie of sapindaship without which it is impossible to form a joint family.”

According to Henry Maine, “The Hindu joint family is a group constituted of known ancestors and adopted sons and relatives related to these sons through marriage.”

According to I.P. Desai, “We call that household a joint family which has greater generation depth than individual family and the members of which are related to one another by property, income and mutual rights and obligations.”

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#### **6.4 Characteristics of joint Family**

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**Large Size:** A single family consists of only the husband, wife and their children. But a joint family consists of parents, children, grand children and other near relatives along with their women. It is a group of which several basic families live together at one and the same time.

**Joint Property:** In a joint family, the ownership, production and consumption of wealth takes place on a joint basis. It is a cooperative institution, similar to a joint stock company, in which there is joint property. The head of the family is like a trustee who manages the property of the family for the material and spiritual welfare of the family members. The total earnings of all the family members are pooled together.

**Common Residence:** The members of joint family usually live under the same roof. They may also live in separate houses in close proximity to one another. They eat the same food and wear the same type of clothes.

**Cooperative Organization:** The basis of joint family system is cooperation. A joint family consists of a large number of members and if they do not cooperate with one another it is not possible to maintain the organization and structure of the joint family.

**Common Religion:** Generally the members of a joint family believe in the same religion and worship similar deities. They perform jointly the religious rites and duties. They celebrate all the festivals and social functions jointly. They also hold themselves jointly accountable for participating in social ceremonies like marriage, death and other occasions of family sorrows and rejoicing. They all share the family burden together.

**A Productive Unit:** This feature of joint family is found among agricultural families. All the members work at one and the same field. They do the sowing and harvesting of the crops together. Even in the case of artisan classes, all the members of a joint family do one and the same function.

Mutual Rights and Obligations: The rights and obligations of the members of joint family are the same. None except the head of the family has special privileges. Every member of the family has equal obligations if one female member works in the kitchen, the other does the laundry work, and the third one looks after the children. There is rotation of duties as well.

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## **6.5 Functions of joint family system**

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Ensures Economic Progress: It enables economic progress of the country since everyone in the family is guaranteed bare subsistence, a first condition of economic progress. Unless people are assured of food and shelter, they would not devote themselves sincerely to the work of country's progress. It is an essential condition of national progress that the citizens must at least get two meals a day. Joint family provides this to its members and thus enables them to devote themselves to nation's progress.

Division of Labour: It secures the advantages of the division of labour. Every member in the family is given work according to his abilities without being taxed unduly. Every phase of family's life is managed by all members including women and children. Thus, during the harvest season every member of the family helps in harvesting the crops. No outside labour is required.

Economy: It secures economy of expenditure. Since things are consumed in large quantities they are secured at economic prices. Within small means a large family can be maintained if it lives jointly.

Opportunity for Leisure: It provides opportunities for leisure to the members. The female members divide the household work and finish it within a little time spending the rest of it in leisure.

Social Insurance: In the joint family the orphans find a comfortable asylum instead of being thrown out. Similarly, widows are assured of their proper living for whom remarriage in India is unthinkable. The joint family acts as a social insurance company for the old, sick and incapacitated.

Social Virtues: It fosters great virtues like sacrifice, affection, cooperation, spirit of selfishness, broadmindedness among its members and makes the family a cradle of social virtues. Under the care of elders the undesirable and anti-social tendencies of the young are checked and they are prevented from going astray. They learn to exercise self-control. All members learn to obey family rules and respect their elders.

**Avoids Fragmentation of Holdings:** It avoids fragmentation of holdings and the evils inherent therein. It prevents property from being divided.

**Socialism:** According to Sir Henry Maine, the joint family is like a corporation where trustee is the father. Everyone in the joint family works according to his capabilities but obtains according to his needs. Thus, it realizes the socialistic ideal-from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.

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## 6.6 Dysfunctions of joint family

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**Home for Idlers:** Joint family is the home for idlers and drones as the non-earning members do not want to earn their livelihood. When a person can eat comfortably without exerting himself, he is unlikely to indulge in any strenuous activity. Mostly, in the joint family it happens that some people have to exhaust themselves while the others lead a life of utter lethargy.

**Hindrance in the Development of Personality:** In joint family, there is very little opportunity for the fostering of individual autonomy or self-dependence. The whole environment of the family is not congenial for the growth of the individual because he is bound down by the minutest rules and regulations framed by the head of the family who looks upon men and women as children even when they attain adulthood.

**Encourages Litigation:** The joint family system encourages litigation, for at the time of partition of common property generally disputes crop up which are not settled without a recourse being taken to law. In case of agricultural families partition leads to fragmentation of holdings which is harmful from the viewpoint of agricultural progress.

**Hotbed of quarrels:** It is a hotbed of quarrels especially among the female members. Generally, there is hatred and jealousy between the wives of brothers. There is continuous strife and fighting over the doings of children. There is also the clash of ideas and temperaments on account of which there are constant quarrels between the elder and young members of the family.

**Privacy Denied:** In a joint family, privacy is not possible to the newlywed. The bride does not get an opportunity to develop their personality. They serve the entire family like slaves. They hardly meet their husbands during the day. The invariable presence of other family members suffocates the bride and she cannot freely talk to her husband.

**Unfavourable to savings:** It is not favourable to large savings. When one has to share one's income with large family, it is not possible to save much. The property of the family being

jointly owned is sometimes allowed to go waste.

**Uncontrolled Procreation:** In the joint family the responsibility for bringing up and educating the children is shared. No individual feels responsibility to control procreation because of the limited income of the family. The offspring of one member will be treated on the same footing as others. No distinction is made between the statuses of the family members. In this way, no direct benefits occur to an individual in the joint family by practicing family planning or earning more.

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## 6.7 Disintegration of joint family

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**Industrialization:** The joint family system is most suited to agricultural families. India today is on the way to industrialization. With the establishment of new factories in urban areas workers from the villages move to the cities which breaks the joint family.

Extension of communications and transport: Because of the improvements in the means of communication and transport, family members have become mobile in search of jobs etc.; it is no longer necessary for men to stay with the family. Now they move out to cities and take up any other occupation.

**Decline of agriculture and village trades:** The joint family system in India flourished in ancient times when agriculture and trade in the villages were in a sound position.

With the migration of people from the villages to the cities, the Hindu joint family system breaks down. Besides, the decline of agriculture and cottage industry, there are other causes as well which induce people to move to the city. In the villages, there are fewer facilities for entertainment and recreation, less opportunities for employment for the educated and inadequate opportunities for the education of children. A gentleman so called finds little attraction to stay on in the village.

**Impact of the west:** India has been greatly influenced in her social outlook by western thought and ideology. The modern laws relating to marriage and divorce have been enacted on western pattern. The impact of West is felt in the domain of education, polity, legislature, bureaucracy and judiciary.

**New social legislations:** The joint family system in India has been influenced by a series of new social legislations like Civil Marriage Act (1872), Hindu Marriage Act (1955), and Hindu Succession Act (1956). The Civil Marriage Act enabled the adult boys and girls to marry against the wishes of their parents. The Hindu Marriage Act enabled the women to seek divorce under certain conditions. The Hindu Succession Act gave the right of equal inheritance to

women. All these acts have influenced the solidarity of the joint family and relationships between brothers and sisters, parents and children and husbands and wives.

**Enlightenment of women:** The increasing enlightenment due to education and employment has made women empowered. They are not ready to accept things uncritically. They refuse to accept inequality, exploitation and subordination in the family on irrational grounds. Conflicts in the family are endemic.

**Over population:** India has witnessed a phenomenal growth of population, which has led to a tremendous pressure on land. As a result of this pressure, the land holdings of many families have become un-economical and many farmers have joined the ranks of landless labourers. The situation in the villages has come to such a pass that agriculture no longer provides employment to the ever-increasing number of people depending on it. This has resulted in the disintegration of joint family in two ways. Firstly, the small and un-economic land holdings cannot support large families, like the joint family. Secondly, the poor and the un-employed leave their homes and farms in search of employment elsewhere. When they get employment in distant places, they naturally setup their separate families there and gradually sever the links with their joint families.

**Problem of accommodation:** Another factor adversely affecting joint family structure in India is the problem of accommodation. This problem is so acute in the large cities that members of a joint family find it difficult to live together in spite of their desire to do so.

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## 6.8 Illom

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Illom is a kind of Hindu joint family. It is found among the Nambudri Brahmins of Kerala. Its most distinguishing feature is that its property is indivisible. All the members of an Illom have ownership in the family property, which is generally not divided. Division of property in an Illom is not easy, because it requires the consent of all the members of the family. Property is held by the Illom as a whole. The continuation of the Illom is facilitated by a custom, according to which the eldest brother alone marries a girl from his own caste, while all other brothers consort with Nayar women, who, along with their children, stay in their respective matrilineal families. Only when the eldest brother fails to have children, the next senior brother marries a girl of his own caste to perpetuate the family. Since the younger brothers do not have their families in the Illom, division of property becomes unnecessary.

The eldest brother is the head of the family. He controls the property of the Illom, but has no absolute control over it. He is not entitled to alienate the property either by sale or gift without the consent of

all the members of the Illom. Though the younger brothers have no rights to demand a partition, they, nevertheless, have right to maintenance in the family property.

Another characteristic of the Illom is that the female members of the family have equal rights with men in property. As such, sale or mortgage can be valid only when it is consented by all the female members of the family.

Thus, the outstanding features of an Illom that differentiate it from the Hindu joint family are: (1) indivisibility of family property and (2) rights of female members in the family property.

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## **6.9 Tarwad**

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The matrilineal family of the Nayars of Kerala is known as the “Tarwad”. It is composed of women, her sons and daughters, daughters and sons and so on. It does not include the children of sons, as they belong to the Tarwards of their mothers.

All the male and female members of the Tarwad own its property. The property of a Tarwad is practically indivisible, though partition is theoretically allowed. Partition of a Tarwad usually does not take place because of the condition that all its members should agree to it. Any single member of the family can render partition impossible by simply refusing his consent.

The eldest male member of the Tarwad is its manager and is known as the “Karnavan”. In case the eldest male is found to be incapable of managing the property due to either mental or physical incapacity, the next senior male member steps into his shoes. All the junior members of the Tarwad have rights to maintenance in the family property.

The Karnavan has more or less absolute authority over the family property, but he is not empowered to make any sale or mortgage etc of it. The Karnavana may be removed from his position, if he is found to have acted with bad faith or wrecklessness or is proved to be utterly incompetent to manage the affairs of the family.

When the Tarwad grows too big and becomes unmanageable, it may be divided into smaller units called “tavazhies” with the consent of all the members of the Tarwad. The property of the Tarwad is equally divided among the tavazhies. Each tavazhi, like a Tarwad, consists of a woman, her daughters and sons, the daughters and sons of her daughters and so on. A tavazhi, though ceases to have economic connections with its parent Tarwad, it nevertheless, continues to maintain all its kinship ties with it.

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## **6.10 Summary**

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It is, however, to be remembered that joint family system in India has not completely died out. The

causes of its disintegration are mainly social. The Indian people still keep intact the family attachment and live their traditional morality. Hindu sentiments are even today in favour of joint family. Even in cases where family property, has got divided and income of the family members is not pooled, the constituent householders consider themselves duty bound to participate in ceremonial celebrations like marriage, birthday and religious functions. Such participation keeps the joint family feelings alive. The thinkers who criticize the system have not been able to appreciate it properly. Compromise and mutual adjustment are the keynotes of the Indian Joint Family System.

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### 6.11 Self Assessment Questions

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1. Discuss joint family system in India.
2. Describe the types of joint family system.
3. What is illom?
4. What is tarawad?

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### 6.12 Key Words

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**Illom-** is a kind of Hindu joint family found among the Nambudri Brahmins of Kerala.

**Tarawad-** The matrilineal family of the Nayars of Kerala.

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### 6.13 Study Guide

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1. The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
2. Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
3. D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
4. S.C.Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
5. P.K.Kar Indian Society(2003).Page-366
6. M.N.Srinivas Social change in Modern India(1966) Page47
7. M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII, March 1968, No.1. Pages:1-2

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## **Unit-07 Kinship**

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### **Structure**

**7.1 Learning Objectives**

**7.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

**7.3 Types of Kinship**

**7.4 Degree of Kinship**

**7.5 Kinship terms**

**7.6 Kinship usages**

**7.7 Functions of Kinship**

**7.8 Summary**

**7.9 Self Assessment Questions**

**7.10 Key Words**

**7.11 Study Guide**



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## 7.1 Learning Objectives

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To explain the term kinship.
2. To understand kinship types.
3. To know the functions of kinship.

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## 7.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge

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Man does not live alone in society. From birth till death he is surrounded by a number of people. Some of these people are his relatives, some are friends, and some are neighbors' while all others are strangers and unknown to him. He is bound to all those people who are related to him either on the basis of blood or marriage. The relations based on blood or marriage may be close or distant. The bond of blood or marriage which binds people together in group is called kinship. According to the Dictionary of Anthropology, kinship system includes socially recognized relationships based on supposed as well as actual genealogical ties. These relationships are the result of social interaction and recognized by society.

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## 7.3 Types of Kinship

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**Kinship is of two types:**

**Affinal Kinship:** The bond of marriage is called affinal kinship. When a person marries, he establishes relationship not only with the girl whom he marries but also with a number of other people in the girl's family. Moreover, it is not only the person marrying who gets bound to the family members of the girl but his family members also get bound to the family members of the girl. Thus, a host of relations are created as soon as a marriage takes place. For example, after marriage a person becomes not only a husband, but he also becomes brother-in-law and son-in-law. Here it may be noted that in English language a number of relations created by marriage are referred by the same term. Thus, the same term 'brother-in-law' is used for *sala*, *jija* etc. On marriage, a person also becomes *foofa*, *nandoi* and *mausa*. Likewise, a girl on marriage becomes not only a wife but also becomes daughter-in-law; she also becomes *chichi*, *bhabhi*, *devrani*, *jethani*, *mami* etc. Thus, marriage creates a host of relationships which are called affinal kin.

**Consanguineous Kinship:** The bond of blood is called consanguineous kinship. The consanguineous kin are related through blood whereas the affinal kin are related through marriage. The bond between parents and their children and that between siblings is consanguineous kinship. Siblings are consanguineous kinship. Siblings are the children of the

same parents. Thus, son, brother, sister, uncle, elder uncle, nephew and cousin are consanguineous kin. i.e., related through blood. In this connection, it may be pointed out that blood relationship may be actual as well as supposed. Among polyandrous tribes the actual father of a child is unknown. An adopted child is treated as if it were one's own biologically produced child. Thus, blood relationship may be established not only on biological basis but also on the basis of social recognition.

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#### 7.4 Degree of Kinship

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On the basis of nearness or distance, relatives can be classified in several categories. Some relatives are very close, direct and near, for example, father-son, sister-brother, husband- wife. They are called primary kin. According to Dubey, there are eight such primary kins. They are husband-wife, father-son, mother-daughter, father-daughter, mother-son, younger- elder brothers, younger-elder sisters and sister-brother.

Secondly, there are secondary kins. They are primary kin of primary kin. In other words, they are related through primary kin. They are not our primary kin but are the primary kin of our primary kin, hence our secondary kin. For example, father's brother, sister's husband is secondary kin. The father is my primary kin and his brother is the primary kin of father. Therefore, father's brother is my secondary kin, the primary kin of primary kin. Similarly, sister is primary kin but her husband is one's secondary kin.

Thirdly, there are tertiary kins. They are the secondary kin of one's primary kin or primary kin of one's secondary kin. Thus, the wife of brother-in-law called *sarhaj* in Hindi is tertiary kin because brother-in-law is one's secondary kin and his wife is the primary kin of brother- in-law. Similarly, the brother-in-law of one's brother is one's tertiary kin because the brother is one's primary kin and his brother-in-law is the secondary kin of one's brother.

According to Murdock, there are thirty-three secondary and 151 tertiary kins of a person.

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#### 7.5 Kinship terms

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Kinship terms are those terms which are used in designating kin of various types. Morgan made an important study of kinship terms. He classified these terms into two types:

**Classificatory system:** Under the classificatory system, the various kins are included in one category and all referred to by the same term. Thus, the term 'uncle' is a classificatory term. It is used for chacha, mama, mausa, foofa, taoos etc. Similarly, the Sema Naga of Assam use *aja* for mother, father's brother's wife, mother's sister. Among Kuki clans, *hepu* is used for father's

father, mother's father, mother's brother, wife's father, mother's brother's son, wife's brother, wife's brother's son. Thus, people of various age groups are designated by the same term. Among Angami Naga, the same term is used for members of opposite sexes. The word shi stands for elder brother's wife, mother's brother's wife, father's brother's wife. In Hindi the word "samadhin" is a classificatory term as it refers to father and mother of daughter-in-law and of son-in-law.

**Descriptive system:** Under descriptive system, one term refers to only one relation. It describes the exact relation of a person towards another. For example, father is a descriptive term. Similarly, mother is a descriptive term. In Hindi we have mostly, descriptive terms. Thus, the terms chacha, mama, mausa, taoo, sala, bahnoi, nandoi, bhatija, bhabhi, devar etc. are descriptive terms and designate the speaker's exact relation.

It may be remarked that there is no place in the world where either the pure descriptive or the pure classificatory system is used. Both the systems are found prevalent.

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## 7.6 Kinship usages

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The study of kinship system does not end with the description of various kinds of kin and the basis of their classification but it also includes the study of behavior patterns of different kins. Every relationship involves a particular type of behavior. The behaviour of a son towards his father is one of respect while the behaviour of husband towards wife is one of love. The behaviour of a brother towards his sister is one of affection. There are some usages which regulate the behaviour of different kin. These usages are called kinship usages. Some of these usages are the following:

**Avoidance:** In all societies the usage of avoidance is observed in one form or another. It means that the two kins should remain away from each other. In other words, they should avoid each other. They should not only avoid sexual relationship but in some cases avoid seeing the face of each other. Thus, a father-in-law should avoid daughter-in-law. The purdah system in Hindu family illustrates the usage of avoidance. Different explanations have been given for the usage of avoidance. Two of them are functionalist explanations given by Radcliff Brown and G.P. Murdock. According to them, avoidance serves to forestall further and more serious trouble between relatives. The third is the Freudian explanation according to which avoidances represent a sort of institutionalized neurotic symptom.

**Joking Relationship:** It is the reverse of avoidance relationship. Under it a relation is permitted

to tease or make fun of the other. The relationship between devar-bhabhi, jija- Sali is joking relationship. The joking may amount to exchange of abuse and vulgar references to sex.

**Teknonymy:** The word ‘teknonymy’ has been taken from the Greek word and was used in anthropology for the first time by Taylor. According to this usage, a kin is not referred to directly but he is referred to through another kin. A kin becomes the medium of reference between two kins. Thus, in traditional Hindu family a wife does not utter the name of her husband. She calls him through her son or daughter. He is referred to by her as the father of Guddu or Tunnu.

**Avunculate:** This kinship usage is a peculiar feature of matriarchal system. It gives to the maternal uncle a prominent place in the life of his nephews and nieces. He has special obligations towards them which exceed those of father. He has a prior right over their loyalties. He comes first among all male relatives.

**Amitate:** When a special role is given to the father’s sister, it is known as amitate. The father’s sister gets more respect than the mother.

**Couvade:** This is a queer usage which is found among many primitive tribes like the Khasi and the Toda. Under this usage the husband is made to lead the life of an invalid along with his wife whenever she gives birth to a child. He refrains from active work and takes sick diet. He observes the same taboos which are observed by his wife. This kinship usage thus involves the husband and wife.

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## 7.7 Functions of Kinship

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Kinship usages accomplish two major tasks. First, they create groups: special groupings of kin. Thus marriage assigns each mother a husband, and makes her children his children, thereby creating a special group of father, mother and children, which we call “family”.

The second major function of kinship usage is to govern the role relationships between kin; that is how one kinsman should behave in a particular kinsman’s presence, or what one kinsman owes to another. Kinship assigns guidelines for interactions between persons. It defines proper, acceptable role relationship between father and daughter, between brother and sister, between son-in-law and mother-in-law and between fellow lineage members and clansmen. Kinship thus acts as a regularizer of social life and maintains the solidarity of social system.

It may, however, be noted that rules governing the relationship between a pair of kinsmen are integrative in nature and are group-oriented.

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## 7.8 Summary

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Every relationship involves a particular type of behavior. The behaviour of a son towards his father is one of respect while the behaviour of husband towards wife is one of love. The behaviour of a brother towards his sister is one of affection. There are some usages which regulate the behaviour of different kin. These usages are called kinship usages. Some of these usages are the following.

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## 7.9 Self Assessment Questions

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1. Discuss the meaning of kinship.
2. Explain how the degree of kinship is seen.
3. What do you understand by amitate.

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## 7.10 Key Words

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**Teknonymy:** The word ‘teknonymy’ has been taken from the Greek word and was used in anthropology for the first time by Taylor. According to this usage, a kin is not referred to directly but he is referred to through another kin.

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## 7.11 Study Guide

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K. Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page: 11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
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## **Unit-08 Marriage**

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### **Structure**

- 8.1 Learning Objectives**
- 8.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 8.3 Hindu marriage as a religious sacrament**
- 8.4 Forms of Hindu marriage**
- 8.5 Rules of mate selection in marriage**
- 8.6 Recent changes in the institution of Hindu Marriage**
- 8.7 Types of marriage among the Hindus**
- 8.8 Summary**
- 8.9 Self Assessment Questions**
- 8.10 Key Words**
- 8.11 Study Guide**

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## 8.1 Learning Objectives

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To discuss what is Hindu marriage.
2. To examine various forms of Hindu marriage.
3. To delineate the types of marriage among the Hindus.

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## 8.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge

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Every society regulates the sexual behaviour of its members. Some sort of regulation is necessary, if the children born of such sexual unions are to be well cared for and properly trained. Therefore, in every society we come across norms governing “what persons, under what conditions and in what manner, may establish a marriage relationship; what they will be expected to do once they are married and how they may dissolve this relationship and under what conditions.” This complex of norms constitutes the institution of marriage. Westermarck defines marriage as “A relation of one or more men to one or more women, which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of children born of it.” Therefore, marriage, as is clear from the above definition, implies much more than a mere regulation of sexual behaviour of the members of a society. It involves rights and duties of various kinds of the parties to the union and of the offspring born of it. As such, marriage has a reference to the structure and function of the family.

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## 8.3 Hindu marriage as a religious sacrament

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Hindu marriage, ‘Vivah’ (vi + vah), literally means the ceremony of ‘carrying away’ the bride to the house of the groom. But, since long it has come to refer to the whole ceremony or wedlock. R.N.Sharma defines Hindu marriage as “A religious sacrament in which a man and a woman are bound in permanent relationship for physical, social and spiritual purpose of dharma, procreation and sexual pleasure.”

The aims of Hindu marriage are said to be dharma, praja (progeny) and rati (sexual pleasure). Sex is given third place in regard to the functions of marriage. Dharma is the first aim of marriage. Procreation is given the second place. Marriage also aims at begetting a son to save the father from going to hell. On the marriage the sacred fire is enkindled to offer panchamahayagyas. A man with his wife is supposed to offer puja throughout his life. Thus, marriage is primarily for the fulfillment of duties, his dharma.

Kapadia points out performance of homa, of offering in the sacred fire, panigrahana, or taking the hand of the bride, and saptapadi, the bride and the bridegroom going seven steps together are important rites for completion of a marriage. All these rites are performed with vedic mantras in the presence of the sacred fire. Thus, Hindu marriage is a sacrament because it is said to be complete only on the

performance of the sacred rites and the sacred formulae. Hindu marriage is a sacrament in another sense because marriage is considered essential for woman and she is required to perform rites with her husband throughout her life. Hindu marriage is sacred because it is irrevocable; the parties to the marriage cannot dissolve it at will. Since marriage is considered indissoluble, the husband and wife try to adjust their tastes and temperament, ideals and interests by making sacrifices for each other. Hindu marriage is not an ordinary event; it is an institution of life-long compromise and adjustment.

Marriage is a social duty toward the family and the community, and as such there is little individual interest. Husband-wife are not individual persons, but they are part of extended family and caste (community). However, the husband and wife have never been equal in regard to their obligations and privileges. The wife is required to follow the ideal of *pativrata*, devoted to her husband alone. The institution of *sati* (self-immolation after husband's death) has received encouragement, and widow remarriage gets discouraged. Today the situation has undergone sea- change. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, socio-cultural awakening, education and urban employment etc. have weakened the sacred ethos of Hindu marriage. Divorce is becoming quite acceptable. The incidence of widow-remarriage has also increased. Women are claiming status equal to men. Despite these changes, religiosity remains attached to marriage to a large extent.

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#### **8.4 Forms of Hindu marriage**

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Hindu scriptures mention eight forms of marriage on the basis of the method of consecrating a marriage union. They are: Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paisacha forms of marriage.

**Brahma vivah:** In this form of marriage, the father of the bride invites a person, who is well versed in the Vedas and of good character, and offers his daughter, adorned with ornaments, to him in marriage as a gift.

**Daiva vivah:** In the Daiva form of marriage, the father of the girl offers his daughter, along with ornaments, to a worthy person as a gift through a priest who duly officiates at the sacrifice during the course of its performance.

**Arsha vivah:** the word 'Arsha', according to P.K. Acharya, is derived from 'rishi' and as such, this form of marriage is believed to have been practiced mainly by the 'rishies'. According to this method, the father gives his daughter in marriage to a person and in return receives a bull or a cow or two pairs of them from the groom. This, however, should not mean bride price, it should only be regarded as a token of gratitude presented by a groom to a person who enables



him to perform his 'grihastha dharma' by giving his daughter.

**Prajapatya vivah:** In this form of marriage also, the father makes a gift of his daughter to a worthy person with due honour and addresses the couple with a 'mantram', 'May both of you perform together your dharma'.

**Asura vivah:** In this form of marriage, the father does not make a gift of his daughter as in the case of the four forms of marriage discussed above, but offers his daughter for a bride price. As such, in Asura vivah, the groom actually purchases his wife by paying a fixed bride-price either to the father or to the kinsmen of the bride.

**Gandharva vivah:** It is brought about by the mutual love and consent of the bride and the groom. It is similar to the modern love marriage. In this form of marriage, neither the father nor any of the relations of the bride have any role to play. As such, Gandharva vivah differs from the other forms of marriage in so far as the consent of the father of the bride is concerned.

**Rakshasa vivah:** Rakshasa vivah or marriage by capture is the forcible abduction of the girl from her parents' house after slaying or wounding her kinsmen.

**Paisacha vivah:** Paisacha form of marriage is one in which a man seduces a woman by stealth, while she is either asleep or intoxicated or intellectually disordered and then forces her to marry him.

Of these eight forms of marriage, some are regarded as lawful and others unlawful. According to the Manu smriti, Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Gandharva and Rakshasa are lawful and the other two, Asura and Paisacha, are unlawful. Even among the six lawful marriages, the most favoured forms are those in which the father offers his daughter as a gift to a worthy person. Accordingly, the first four forms namely the Brahma, Daiva, Arsha and Prajapatya are the most favoured.

### **Types of marriage among the Hindus:**

Basically, there can only be two types of marriage, namely monogamy and polygamy. In Hindu society both the types of marriage were found to exist.

**Polygamy:** It is a type of marriage in which a man or a woman is allowed to marry more than one wife or husband at the same time. Polygamy is of two types, such as, polygyny and polyandry.

**Polygyny:** It is a type of marriage in which a man is allowed to marry more than one wife at a time. This pattern of marriage persisted in Hindu society since Vedic times. In fact, it was regarded as one of the natural forms of marriage. Polygyny was mainly practiced by kings and other well-to-do members of the

society. As such, it was a socially approved form of marriage, though largely confined to the upper strata of the society. But, it was never regarded as an ideal form of marriage. All the Hindu law givers discouraged its practice. For example, Apastambha remarks that a man should not marry a second wife, if his wife is willing and able to perform religious rites and bears a son for him. Manus says that 'a barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year'.

**Polyandry:** K. M. Kapadia describes "polyandry as a form of union in which a woman has more than one husband at a time in which brothers share a wife or wives in common". A classic example of this type of marriage in Hindu society is that of Draupadi marrying the five Pandava brothers. It appears that polyandry was once an approved form of marriage for Yudhishtira, while justifying the marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandava brothers, says, "we follow the path which has been trodden by our ancestors in succession". However, polyandry has later come to be a despised and discredited practice in the entire Hindu society with the exception of the Nayar community in which the practice was universal until recent times.

**Monogamy:** The ideal form of marriage among the Hindus is monogamy i.e., the union of one man and one woman. The Vedas proclaim monogamy as the highest form of marriage. In the Manusmriti, it is stated, "Let mutual fidelity continue until death. This may be considered as summary of the highest law for husband and wife." According to Kautilya, a second marriage, unless it is intended for securing a male child, is punishable by a fine of 23 panas. Apastambha says, "A man forsaking his wife should put on the skin of an ass with hair turned outside and beg alms from seven houses saying 'give alms to him who forsook his wife.' This disgraceful punishment is said to last for six months.

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## 8.5 Rules of mate selection in marriage

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In Hindu society, there are two kinds of rules regulating the selection of mates in marriage. They are endogamy and exogamy.

**Endogamy:** Endogamy is the rule that forbids the members of a group to marry from outside it.

The most general forms of endogamy in Hindu society are: (1) Varna endogamy (2) Caste endogamy and (3) sub caste endogamy.

**Varna Endogamy:** Varna endogamy prescribes marriages between members of the same varna. Marriages between members of the same varna were regarded as proper and ideal. Although marriages between varnas in the form of hypergamy and hypogamy were allowed in the past, they were never considered desirable. Therefore, as per this rule, a Hindu must select

his partner in life from his own varna.

**Caste Endogamy:** Caste endogamy is the rule that prohibits the members of a caste to marry outside their own caste. Each of the varnas consists a number of castes or jatis. As a result of this rule, even the members of the same varna are not eligible to marry one another, if they do not, at the same time, belong to the same caste. Until recently, violation of this rule was viewed with a grave concern and the usual punishment for it was not less than ex-communication from the caste. Even now, the rule, though legally abolished, is effective in Hindu society.

**Sub-caste Endogamy:** This rule further restricts the individual's choice of mate selection to a still smaller group i.e. his sub-caste, which is but one of the many sub-castes of a caste.

Even sub-castes are divided into sections and sub-sections which are also endogamous. Thus the choice of an individual in selecting a partner in life is confined to a few families ranging from 50 to 300.

**Exogamy:** While the endogamous rules prescribe marriages within the group, exogamic rules prescribe such marriages.

Some of the generally followed exogamic rules in Hindu society are (1) Gotra Exogamy (2) Pravara Exogamy and (3) Sapinda Exogamy.

**Gotra Exogamy:** Gotra exogamy forbids marriages between members of the same gotra. Gotra which originally meant an enclosure made to protect cows, has later come to mean family or clan. The members of a gotra believe that they have descended from a common ancestor and are, therefore, related by blood. As such, members of the same gotra are forbidden to enter into marital relations. However, this rule has been made ineffective by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955.

**Pravara Exogamy:** Pravara exogamy is the rule that forbids marriages between members belonging to the same pravara. Pravara refers to a series of 'rishis' ancestors whom a Brahmin invokes at the sacrifice to Agni. This rule, therefore, is applicable only to Brahmins. According to this rule; members having the same 'rishis' ancestors are not eligible to marry one another. Pravara exogamy is also abolished by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955.

**Sapinda Exogamy:** This rule prohibits marriages between 'sapindas'. Sapindas are those who are related to one another, in ascending or descending order, by four generations through mother's side and by six generations through father's side. Sapinda Exogamy has never been uniformly followed by Hindus all over India. Cross-cousin marriages, for example, are not only

universal but also preferential forms of marriage in the south and also in Maharashtra with a few exceptions. Even in the North, the rule was not strictly followed. We come across instances of cross-cousin marriages in very prestigious families like the Yadvas and the Pandavas. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 though forbids sapinda marriages in general, allows it in the form of cross-cousin marriages as a peculiar custom of the South.

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## **8.6 Recent changes in the institution of Hindu Marriage**

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The institution of Hindu marriage in modern times is undergoing wide ranging changes due to several factors. To begin with, there have been changes in the rules regarding mate selection. Exogamy and endogamy are the traditional rules regulating mate selection in Hindu society.

Exogamic rules forbid marriages between members of the same 'gotra', 'pravara' and 'pinda', as they are supposed to be closely related to one another. Today, these rules, though not totally rejected, are increasingly being violated by the Hindus. It is in line with this modern trend that the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 has completely abolished the rules regarding 'sagotra' and 'sapravara', marriages. Even 'sapinda' marriages, in the form of cross-cousin marriages, are allowed by this Act, wherever such marriages are customary. Thus, the exogamic rules have socially as well as legally been relaxed.

Endogamic rules, on the other hand, require the Hindu to select his life-partner from within his other varna, caste and sub-caste. Till recently, the rule was so strictly observed that any violation of it usually entailed punishment not less than excommunication from the caste. Even now, people, by and large, conform to this rule. But, what is novel today is the fact that inter-caste marriages, which were, not long ago, un-thinkable, are now not only permitted but also encouraged. A number of Acts have been passed to facilitate and give legal sanction to inter-caste marriages. In fact, the sub-caste endogamic barriers have already been broken.

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## **8.7 Types of marriage among the Hindus**

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Secondly, there are changes relating to rites and rituals performed at the time of marriage. Traditionally, Hindu marriage is a sacrament involving a number of religious rites and rituals. In fact, Hindu marriage was regarded valid only when certain rites and rituals like “homa”, “panigrahan”, “saptapadi”, “kanyadana” etc. were duly performed with the accompaniment of vedic ‘mantras’. Today, most of these rites and rituals are not strictly adhered to. Marriages can be performed even in the civil courts according to the Special Marriage Act of 1954. As such, Hindu marriage has, to great extent, lost its sacramental character and instead, acquired secular nature.

Thirdly, there is an increase in the age of marriage for both boys and girls. But, at present, owing to certain changed social conditions, child marriages are almost non-existent. There is an appreciable increase in the average age of boys and girls in this respect. Recently, the Indian Parliament has raised the age of marriage for boys and girls to 21 and 18 years respectively. In the fourth place, there is a considerable decrease in the control of parents over the selection of mates in marriage. Traditionally, it was responsibility as well as the prerogative of the parents or guardians to arrange marriages for their children. As such, the decision of the parents was final in the selection of mates and the wishes of the groom and the bride had no place in it. But, due to the influence of western ideas like liberalism and individualism and also as a result of the economic independence, young boys and girls are now increasingly asserting themselves in the choice of mates for them. There are increasing cases of marriages based on mutual love in recent times.

The fifth change in the institution of Hindu marriage is related to the problem of widow remarriage. Widow Remarriages were generally forbidden by the Hindu Dharma Sastras. A Hindu widow had, either to give up all her joys in life and lead a chaste life or to accompany her dead husband by immolating herself on his funeral pyre. Today, there is a marked change in this respect. Widows are no longer prevented from marrying again, nor are they compelled to immolate themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands. The Hindu Widows Remarriage Act of 1856 allows widows to remarry. Besides, a

number of movements were launched by great social reformers to mould public opinion in favour of widow remarriages.

Sixth, there are changes in the stability of marriage. Earlier, dissolution of marital tie or divorce was generally not allowed in Hindu society. Divorce was permitted only in some rare cases. As such, Hindu marriage was a more or less permanent bond. But, as a result of the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, getting divorce has become relatively easy and therefore, there is a considerable increase in the number of divorces in Hindu society. Today, Hindu marriage is not as stable as it was a few decades ago.

In the seventh place, there is a change in the order of the aims of Hindu marriage. Traditionally, dharma, praja and rati constituted the three aims of Hindu marriage. 'Dharma' was given the highest place and infact, marriage was meant for the performance of 'dharma'. The next place was given to 'praja', as procreation is essential for the continuity of the community. Rati or sexual pleasure was given the lowest place. But, at present, the order appears to have been reversed, with 'rati' at the top followed by 'praja' and 'dharma'.

The emergence of the dowry system may be viewed as the eighth change in the institution of Hindu marriage. In the past, parents of a girl used to bedeck their daughter with ornaments and jewels and give her in marriage to a worthy person as a gift. The ornaments and jewels given to their daughter at the time of marriage were never given as dowry as we understand it today. But, this custom seems to have gradually degenerated into the present form of dowry, without which the marriage of a girl becomes well-nigh impossible. This evil is spreading like a wild fire in Hindu society in spite of the legal provisions against it.

In the ninth place, there is a decline in the importance of morality in marriage. Hitherto, pre-marital chastity of boys and particularly of girls was strictly insisted upon. Virginity of the maiden was the highest value in marriage. But, today, there seems to be less emphasis on this value.

In the tenth place, marriage has ceased to be universal and compulsory in Hindu society. Universality of marriage was a special feature of Hindu society. Marriage was absolutely necessary for a Hindu since; in the first place, a son was essential for attaining heaven and in the second place, a wife was necessary for performing his dharma. Today as the educated young men and women do not give credence to these religious beliefs, marriage has ceased to be compulsory for them.

The last important change in the institution of Hindu marriage is the abolition of polygyny. Formerly, a Hindu husband was allowed to have more than one wife for one reason or the other. But, this privilege of Hindu husband has been abolished by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955.

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## 8.8 Summary

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The Hindu marriage institution in modern times is undergoing wide ranging transformations because of several factors. To begin with, there have been changes in the rules regarding mate selection. Exogamy and endogamy are the traditional rules regulating mate selection in Hindu society.

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## 8.9 Self Assessment Questions

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1. Write different forms of Hindu marriage.
2. Explain the recent changes in Hindu marriage system.

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## 8.10 Key Words

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**Praja-** as procreation is essential for the continuity of the community.

**Sapindas-** are those who are related to one another, in ascending or descending order.

**Gotra-** is originally meant an enclosure made to protect cows, has later come to mean family or clan.

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## 8.11 Study Guide

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1. The cultural Heritage of India-Vol. I Page:349
2. Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K. Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
3. D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
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## **Unit-09 The Muslim Marriage**

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### **Structure**

- 9.1 Learning Objectives**
- 9.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 9.3 Meaning of Muslim marriage**
- 9.4 Essential conditions of Muslim marriage**
- 9.5 Kinds of Muslim marriage**
- 9.6 Muta marriage**
- 9.7 Muta and Nikah marriages**
- 9.8 Mehr(Dower)**
- 9.9 Kind of Dower**
- 9.10 Divorce under Muslim system**
- 9.11 Classification of Divorce**
- 9.12 Summary**
- 9.13 Self Assessment Questions**
- 9.14 Key Words**
- 9.15 Study Guide**



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## 9.1 Learning Objectives

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To define Muslim marriage.
2. To understand types of muslim marriage.
3. To know muta marriage.

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## 9.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge

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In the Muslim social system, marriage is governed basically by ‘Shariat’, the Muslim personal law. The norms and injunctions of Shariat are widely followed, despite regional differences in subsidiary customs in respect of Muslim marriage. The Muslim marriage is considered as a very happy occasion of pomp and joy. It is performed in accordance with the socio-economic status of the family. In Islam, marriage is an established system and as pointed out by Kapadia. In pre-Islam society, the prevalent form of marriage was polygamy.

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## 9.3 Meaning of Muslim marriage

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Marriage among the Muslims is considered more a social rather than religious institution known as ‘Nikah’ in Muslim law; marriage is purely a civil contract.

According to Mohammad, “marriage is civil contract upon the completion of which by proposal and acceptance all the rights and obligations which it creates arise immediately and simultaneously.”

D.F. Mulla says, “marriage (Nikah) is defined to be a contract which as for its objects the procreation and legislation of children.”

K. M. Kapadia says, in Islam, “Marriage is said to be a contract signed by two parties, one for each side.”

According to Mohammedan law, marriage is an unconditional contract made between two persons of opposite sexes for mutual enjoyment, procreation and legislation of children.

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## 9.4 Essential conditions of Muslim marriage

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Before a marriage takes place among the Muslim there are prerequisites or essential conditions which must be fulfilled. These conditions are essential to make the marriage legally valid.

**Capacity:** Both the boy and the girl must have marital capacity. The first essential condition is that parties to the marriage should be healthy and mentally sound. They must have attained the age of 15. Consent of the parents will be necessary to make the marriage valid, if parties to it are

below the prescribed age of 15. Similarly marriage cannot be performed when one of them is minor and also when there are no witnesses.

**Forms of Marriage:** Free consent of the parties is necessary. There must be proposal and acceptance of one meeting in the presence of two male witnesses or one male and two female witnesses. The consent must be stated in express words. An agent may be appointed to make the contract. Fraud or force vitiates a marriage. Witnesses to the marriage are considered essential among the Sunnis but not among the Shias.

**Relative Capacity (Prohibitions and Disabilities):** There are certain limitations or prohibitions among the Muslims. Marriage among Muslims can be declared null and void due to the following prohibitions:

**Prohibition arising out of relationships:** Marriage among very near relations such as real sisters, brothers, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother etc. is invalid. A person is prohibited to marry another who is related to him by consanguinity, affinity or fosterage.

**Unlawful Conjugation:** A man is forbidden to marry two persons at a time, who are related to each other by consanguinity, affinity or fosterage.

**Plurality of Marriage:** Marriage is invalid in the event of a woman marrying another person, especially when her first husband is alive. The husband is also not allowed to have his fifth wife.

**Marriage during Iddat:** Remarriage of woman is considered invalid, if contracted during the period of iddat. The period of Iddat lasts for three months after the dissolution of a former marriage either by death or by divorce. If the woman is already pregnant, the period of iddat lasts till the delivery. Marriage with pregnant women and while on pilgrimage is also not considered valid.

**Interreligious Marriage:** A woman cannot marry any person who is not a Mohammedan. The male may, however, marry any Kitabi, i.e. a person who believes in religion revealed through a Book (but not in idolatry or fire-worship), for example a Christian or a Jewess. Defects such as absence of witness, marriage with a person of different religion, marrying a fifth wife, or violating the rule of unlawful conjugation, etc., render a marriage irregular.

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## 9.5 Kinds of Muslim marriage

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Sunni law recognizes three kinds of marriages, namely valid, void and irregular.

**Valid Marriage:** When the marriage has taken place after observing all the religious and legal requirements, it is called valid marriage. All the offsprings of such marriage are legitimate.

**Void Marriage (batil):** A marriage may be invalid, if it is performed by not taking into consideration such prohibitions as affinity, fosterage, consanguinity etc. the children of this marriage may not be treated as legitimate. A void marriage is one which is basically unlawful.

**Irregular Marriage (fasid):** An irregular marriage violates some temporary prohibitions. In such a marriage the bases are sound and the formalities are unsound. Thus, this type of marriage is neither all legal nor completely illegal. Once the irregularity is removed the marriage becomes regular and valid. For example, the irregularity of marrying a fifth wife can be removed by divorcing one of the former four wives.

According to Shia law, there is no such marriage as an irregular marriage. It recognizes two categories of marriages such as void and valid. Hence, all marriages which are regarded as irregular by Sunni law are void under Shia law.

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## 9.6 Muta marriage

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Muta is purely a temporary marriage found among the Shias. This type of marriage is contracted only for the sake of pleasure and it is also for a specified period only. Muta marriage depends upon the fulfillment of two conditions. First, the period of marriage should be specified and second, the quantity of the dower or Mehr to be paid by the husband should be settled and specified. Muta marriage is invalid when the period has not been settled in advance. Both men and women are permitted to enter into such contracts. But, females are required to contract Muta marriage only with Muslim males. Muslim men, on the other hand, are free to enter into Muta marriage with Christian Jewees or even with the Parsees. The wife in Muta marriage is called Singha. Muta marriage is quite unpopular and it has been called as an anachronism in marriage.

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## 9.7 Muta and Nikah marriages

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Whereas in a regular marriage after separation wife can claim maintenance from her husband, in Muta marriage she cannot put forth such a claim.

A Muta wife does not inherit anything from her husband's property whereas in a permanent marriage she inherits the property of her husband and after her the children born out of this marriage can inherit the property of the father.

The Muta marriage is for a specific period. As soon as that period is over, marriage comes to an end and it becomes illegal. On the other hand Nikah is a permanent marriage. Such a marriage

can come to an end when either party to the marriage as ed or has been divorced.

Nikah is a common and popular form of marriage where as Muta marriage is uncommon and unpopular form of marriage.

Nikah marriage is acceptable respected both by Shias and Sunnis of the Muslim community. But Muta marriage is recognized only by the Shias and not by the Sunnis.

Since Muta marriage is only for a specified period, therefore, there is no question of divorce in it. It comes to an end after the expiry of the specified period. On the other hand, there is specified provision for divorce in Nikah.

In Nikah, a woman is authorized to get full dower whereas in a Muta marriage she is authorized to receive only a specified dower.

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### **9.8 Mehr (Dower)**

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The wife is entitled to get a payment from her husband which is called Mehr or Dower. In the case of Muta marriage, there is provision for partial mehr, whereas in Nikah marriage there is provision for full mehr. A Muslim woman has a right to get dower from her husband. It can be both in the form of cash and kind and is the indication of respect for the wife in the eyes of her husband. It is not bride price. It may be mentioned that no amount of dower has been fixed and it depends only on the social status of contracting parties. This amount is considerably higher when the woman is virgin and not divorced. When the amount of dower should be paid depends on customs but it is always associated with the consumption of marriage.

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### **9.9 Kind of Dower**

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Dower can be of four kinds. It can be specified as definite dower. In such cases the amount is settled well in advance prior to the marriage and both the parties to the marriage agree to it. If the amount is not paid immediately, it can be claimed by the wife at any time. When the amount of dower is not fixed in advance it is called unspecified dower. Usually, while settling the amount at some subsequent date, the amount paid to the female member in the family is taken as the basis. When the amount is neither specified or unspecified, it is called deferred dower. Such an amount is paid when the marriage has terminated. If a wife does not get dower throughout her life, the amount can be claimed by her heirs as well when some money is paid to the wife by her husband soon after her marriage, it is called Muwojjal Mehr.

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### **9.10 Divorce under Muslim system**

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Muta is a system of temporary marriage, whereas marriage through Nikah is a permanent one. In a permanent marriage there is also the provision. Under the Muslim law it is easy for a man to get

divorced whereas a woman finds it difficult to divorce her husband. Under the dissolution of the Muslim Marriage Act, 1939, a Muslim woman can seek divorce on the following grounds:

1. When the whereabouts of husband are unknown for a period of at least 4 years.
2. When the husband has failed to provide maintenance for a period of 2 years.
3. If the husband has been awarded a sentence of 7 years or more.
4. When the husband is not performing his marital obligations for the last 3 years.
5. If the husband is impotent.
6. If the husband has become insane.
7. If the husband is suffering from leprosy or venereal disease.
8. If the husband is cruel.

On the other hand a husband can divorce his wife at any time he likes. In this way according to K.M.Kapadia, the law of divorce, therefore, asserted man's domination over his wife.

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### 9.11 Classification of Divorce

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According to Islamic law, after the death of the wife, the husband can marry at any time he likes. On the other hand, a wife can marry only after 4 months 10 days of the death of her husband. Divorce can also be through judicial process. Such a divorce can be on the basis of adultery and impotency and also on the basis of false charges of adultery made by the husband. The system of divorce thus makes it quite clear that the husband has an upper hand over the wife in so far as divorce or talaq is concerned. It is because the husband can leave the wife any time he likes, but the wife finds it very difficult to leave her husband, even if both are not harmoniously pulling on.

Divorce without the court: Among the Muslims divorce can be of various kinds. The divorce can be valid as well as invalid. A valid divorce is one which is legally as well as socially accepted. On the other hand, an invalid divorce is one in which both the parties to the marriage are practically living a separate life, but formalities to make the divorce legal have not been adopted. Similarly it can be written as well as oral divorce. Various methods of divorce are as under:

1. **Talaq:** This is repudiation of the marriage by the husband. Though considered morally detestable, it continues. It gives an absolute power to the husband to repudiate his wife. Any husband of sound mind who has attained puberty may by himself or by an agent pronounce talaq. It may be a single pronouncement followed by abstinence during the period of iddat, or by three pronouncements made during three successive tuhrs or by a

single pronouncement with an intention to dissolve the marriage irrevocably, or by three pronouncements made in one sentence at the same time. The presence of the wife or of any witness is not necessary.

- a. **Talaq Sunna:** It is the approved form of dissolution as per the dictates of the prophet.

It has been divided into 2 types (i) Talaq ahasan (ii) Talaq hasan

- i. **Talaq Ahasan:** It consists of a single pronouncement of the word ‘talaq’ in the period of tuhr. Tuhr refers to the period of purity. During this period the woman is free from her menstrual courses. The pronouncement during the period of ‘tuhr’ is followed by abstinence from sexual intercourse during ‘iddat’. The pronouncement made in this form of talaq is revocable till the completion of the period of iddat. But once the period of iddat is over without any sexual intercourse between husband and wife, the pronouncement becomes irrevocable and marriage is dissolved.
  - ii. **Talaq Hasan:** In this type of talaq the husband has to make three successive pronouncement during three consecutive ‘tuhr’. It is essential that these pronouncements should be made during abstinence from the sexual intercourse in each ‘tuhr’. On the third pronouncement talaq is finalized.
- b. **Talaq Bida:** It is of 2 types- (i) Triple pronouncements (ii) single irrevocable pronouncement. These are disapproved forms of divorce.
- i. **Triple pronouncement:** In this form three pronouncements are made in a single ‘tuhr’ either in one sentence or in three sentences. This form of talaq is considered illegal according to the Ithna Ashari and Fatimid laws. But it is lawful according to the Hanafi law.
  - ii. **Single pronouncement:** It comprises of a single irrevocable pronouncement made either during the period of ‘tuhr’ or even otherwise.

**Ila:** Abstaining from sexual intercourse in pursuance of a vow for 4 months effects a divorce between the spouses.

**Zihar:** If the husband links the wife to some prohibited female relation, the wife may require him to perform a penance, or she may apply to the court to direct the husband either to perform the penance or to pronounce talaq. Upon his refusal, the court may grant a divorce.

**Khula:** Where both the husband and the wife are of sound mind and above the age of puberty, they may divorce each other with the consent and at the instance of the wife, upon her agreeing to give a consideration to the husband for releasing her from the marriage tie.

**Mubaraat:** This is a divorce by mutual agreement between the husband and the wife. The difference between the khula and mubaraat seems to be that in khula it is the wife who seeks the divorce and it takes place at her instance, whereas in mubaraat it is by mutual consent and both parties seek a divorce.

**Talaqui-Tafweez:** Under this the wife pronounces the talaq under a power delegated to her by her husband. The husband may himself pronounce talaq, notwithstanding such delegation.

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### 9.12 Summary

The norms and injections of Muslim marriage especially of Shariat are widely followed, despite regional differences in subsidiary customs in respect of Muslim marriage. The Muslim marriage is considered as a very happy occasion of pomp and joy. It is performed in accordance with the socio-economic status of the family. In Islam, marriage is an established system and as pointed out by Kapadia. In pre-Islam society, the prevalent form of marriage was polygamy.

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### 9.13 Self Assessment Questions

1. Explain Muslim marriage.
2. Discuss Muta marriage.
3. Write the types of Muslim marriage.

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### 9.14 Key Words

**Ila:** Abstaining from sexual intercourse in pursuance of a vow for 4 months effects a divorce between the spouses.

**Khula:** Where both the husband and the wife are of sound mind and above the age of puberty.

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### 9.15 Study Guide

- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
- S.C.Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
- P.K.Kar Indian Society(2003).Page-366

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- M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII, March 1968, No.1.Pages:1-2



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## **Unit-10 The Christian Marriage**

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### **Structure**

- 10.1 Learning Objectives**
- 10.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 10.3 Procedure of mate selection**
- 10.4 Marriage ceremony**
- 10.5 The Indian Christian Marriage Act. 1872**
- 10.6 Dissolution of marriage among the Christians**
- 10.7 Summary**
- 10.8 Self Assessment Questions**
- 10.9 Key Words**
- 10.10 Study Guide**

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### **10.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To know the procedure of mate selection in Christian marriage.
- 2.

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### **10.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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The Christians in India constitute only 2.43% of the population comprising many sects: Rome- Syrians, Jacobite and Reformed, Anglican Combinations, Baptists Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Congregationalists and Salationists. All of them consider marriage as a sacred institution. The Christian Churches have always held that universal institution of marriage has a special place in God's purpose for all human life.

However, the institution of marriage among the Christians is not ineluctable, it is not considered an absolute imperative or necessity. According to Christianity, the highest ideal of human life is a life of celibacy. It is believed that sex must be controlled and regulated and without control and regulation sex is an unpardonable sin. Many Christian fathers are vociferous about the virtue of sex control through marriage and hold that marriage is an institution sanctioned and blessed by God.

As regards the aims of Christian marriage, primarily it is desired for procreation and healthy development of one's personality and secondarily marriage is meant for the establishment of family and for enjoying the benefits of mutual cooperation. The constitution of the united Church of Northern India holds Christian marriage as a sacred institution which has been blessed by God. It considers marriage a natural thing and a sacrament wherein a man and a woman are found for ill or well. The wife and the husband are made to share each other's destiny and tread the course of life together through all its ups and downs. Of course, for sometimes it was believed in Christianity that women were the gateway to hell and that one should have no connection with them. But those concepts have changed, now, among the Christians, marriage is essential for human development. It is solemnized in the Church and requires the blessings of the Bishop. Procreation, escape from sex relations without marriage and mutual help and comfort are considered the three objects of Christian marriage.

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### **10.3 Procedure of mate selection**

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Christian marriage being a necessity, the problem of mate selection assumes importance. In the choice of life partners the Christians provide ample freedom to boys and girls. However, the selection of mates can be either by the parties to the marriage themselves or by their parents.

Unlike the arranged marriages practiced among the Hindus, the Christian marriage is born out of the free

choice of the man and the woman and it is an expression of mutual love and affection. In Christian marriage, sufficient care is taken to ensure that the parties to the marriage have no close blood relation, that parties have the same or equal social status, and that they possess good health. Along with these the education and character are also considered. Except the blood relations, the Christians are permitted to marry anyone they like, but usually marriage takes place between parties who are Christian or non-Christian on the one hand and Christian on the other. Utmost importance is attached to love in marriage and solemnization of marriage requires a church certificate.

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#### **10.4 Marriage ceremony**

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After the selection has been made either by the parties themselves or by their parents, the consent for the marriage is conveyed to the clergy who conveys the same to the Council of Bishops. When the consent of the council is obtained, a day is appointed for betrothal. Arrangements are then made for the congregation of friends and relatives for the engagement ceremony. On the fixed day, the members of both the sides gather in the church. The clergy obtains the consent of the parties to marriage and recites from the Bible. The boy then puts a ring on the finger of the girl and the girl also reciprocates it by giving a ring to the boy. That apart, exchange of coconut

and money is made as an expression of acceptance of the marriage bond. The parents of the bridegroom arrange a feast for the other party and thus the engagement ceremony is completed. Once the betrothal is over, the boy and the girl are free to meet each other. But at the same time it is expected that they should not have sexual relationship prior to marriage.

Thereafter, preparations for the marriage are made and a date is fixed for the marriage. Three weeks prior to marriage, a notice regarding the marriage is pasted in front of the church every Sunday inviting objections if any to the marriage, meanwhile the bride and the bridegroom are required to obtain a certificate of the membership of the Church and also application for marriage. This should be given three months before the actual date of marriage. As regards the filling of objection, anyone can do so with the church after paying the fee for the purpose. If the objection is upheld by the church the marriage cannot be solemnized. Otherwise, with the actual completion of all the formalities the clergy performs the marriage in the church on the fixed day.

The marriage is solemnized in the church of the girl's membership. The priest asks for the consent of the bride as well as the bridegroom and after obtaining their consent to the marriage, the priest performs the marriage by a reading from the Bible. After the sermon, the priest asks the congregation whether there is any reason why these two should not be joined in matrimony. If no objection is put forward the priest asks the boy whether he takes girl as his lawful wife. The same is asked to the girl

also. When both of them give positive answers, the wedding rings are exchanged. Finally the priest blesses them, and the main wedding ceremony is over.

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### **10.5 The Indian Christian Marriage Act. 1872**

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In 1872, Indian Christian Marriage Act was passed which determined the category of Christians who are eligible for marriage. The Act authorized the Central and State Government to appoint a Registrar for the purpose. The Act also made provision for a magistrate who could perform the same function. As regards the solemnization of marriage, the Act provided that:

1. Marriage can be solemnized anytime between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Rule-10)
2. Marriage should be solemnized in the church alone (Rule-11)
3. Either of the spouses shall inform the priest and fill up the form given in Schedule-I (Rule-12)
4. The marriage proposal should be given the publicity and it should be notified on the notice board of the church every Sunday at least three weeks before marriage (Rule-13)
5. If a marriage is solemnized at some private place, the Registrar shall be informed thereof and he shall publicize the marriage (Rule-14)
6. If either of the spouses is a minor, the fact should be brought to the notice of the Registrar (Rule-15)
7. In the case of a minor, the consent of the parents is essential (Rule-16)

All the above rules are contained in Chapter I of the Act. The fourth chapter of the Act provides for registration of all the Christian marriages.

Chapter VI of the Act provides the rules for native Indians. The most important among these rules are:

- i. At the time of marriage the age of the boy should not be less than 15 and that of the girl 13.
- ii. At the time of marriage no other spouse of either of the parties should be alive.
- iii. There should be at least two witnesses at the time of marriage and the parties to the marriage should take the oath of marriage before the registrar.

Penalties for irregularities committed in marriage:

The seventh chapter of the Act provides that those who marry without license or given false statement are to be punished both with fine and imprisonment under section 193 of the Indian Penal Code.

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## **10.6 Dissolution of marriage among the Christians**

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The Indian Divorce Act 1896, applies to all those marriages in which at least either of the spouses is a Christian. This Act contains 14 chapters having 62 sections and 15 schedules. Dissolution of marriage has been dealt with in section 10 to 17 of this Act.

Section 10 of the Act provides that the marriage can be dissolved by the wife on the following grounds:

1. Forsaking of Christianity by the husband and his entry into another marriage.
2. Desecration of the wife by the husband
3. Sexual immorality by the husband
4. Raping of wife by the husband and compelling the wife of sodomy and bestiality
5. Sadistic behaviour or immorality
6. Desertion of the wife for two years without reason and sexual indulgence out of marriage.

Similarly a husband can seek dissolution of the marriage if the wife is sexually corrupt. Request for dissolution of marriage can be made either by the husband or the wife. Section 17 of the Act provides that after a thorough examination of the charges leveled either by the husband or the wife and satisfying itself about their veracity, the district court can grant divorce. However, this is subject to an endorsement by the High Court failing which the dissolution of marriage will not be valid.

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## **10.7 Summary**

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The marriage is solemnized in the church of the girl's membership. The priest asks for the consent of the bride as well as the bridegroom and after obtaining their consent to the marriage, the priest performs the marriage by a reading from the Bible. After the sermon, the priest asks the congregation whether there is any reason why these two should not be joined in matrimony. If no objection is put forward the priest asks the boy whether he takes girl as his lawful wife. The same is asked to the girl also. When both of them give positive answers, the wedding rings are exchanged. Finally the priest blesses them, and the main wedding ceremony is over.

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## **10.8 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Discuss Christian marriage briefly.
2. How marriage ceremony is organized among Christians.

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## 10.9 Key Words

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**Christian marriage-** is primarily desired for procreation and healthy development of one's personality and secondarily marriage is meant for the establishment of family and for enjoying the benefits of mutual cooperation.

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## 10.10 Study Guide

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K. Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
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### **Block-03 Processes of Social Change**

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**Unit-11 Sanskritization**

**Unit-12 Westernization**

**Unit-13 Modernization**

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## **Unit-11 Sanskritization**

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### **Structure**

- 11.1 Learning Objectives**
- 11.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 11.3 Sanskritization**
- 11.4 Models of Sanskritization**
- 11.5 Role of the Dominant caste in Sanskritization**
- 11.6 Motivation for Sanskritization**
- 11.7 Factors facilitating Sanskritization**
- 11.8 Effects of Sanskritization on Social change**
- 11.9 Other effects of Sanskritization**
- 11.10 Summary**
- 11.11 Self Assessment Questions**
- 11.12 Key Words**
- 11.13 Study Guide**



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### **11.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To define sanskritisation.
2. To understand the sanskritisation as a process of social change.

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### **11.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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Change is a significant domain of sociological analysis. Every society undergoes changes. No society is static. Indian society is no exception. The important processes of social change in India include Sanskritization, Westernization, Secularization, Industrialization, Urbanization and Modernization. We shall confine our attention to these processes of social change in reference to the Indian society during the last and present centuries.

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### **11.3 Sanskritization**

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Sanskritization is a culturological concept which means the process of endogenous change in the culture-structure of Indian society. M.N.Srinivas is acclaimed as the founder of it. While preparing his dissertation under Radcliffe Brown and Evens Pritchard at Oxford University, M.N.Srinivas evolved the concept of Sanskritization. He finally used the concept in his book “Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India” to describe the process of cultural mobility, in the traditional social structure of Indian society. While conducting his study of the Coorgs in Mysore, Srinivas found that Amma Coorgs, in adopting some of the customs of the Brahmins, gave up meat eating, consumption of liquor, and animal sacrifice. To denote this process of cultural mobility, Srinivas coined the term ‘Brahminization’. Later on, he replaced it by another term ‘Sanskritization’. Of course, several reasons can be attributed to this conceptual shifting. One of such reasons Srinivas realised was that Brahminization was too narrow a concept to explain the whole process of change. An awareness of the influence of Lingayatism on the life style of the coorgs was another important factor in his preferring Sanskritization to Brahminization. Further, Srinivas realised that in Brahminization. Further, Srinivas realized that in Brahminization only one model namely Brahminic model was referred to at the neglect of the other models such as Khastriya model, Vaishya model, Shudra model at the existential level. Furthermore, at some points, Brahminization and Sanskritization are at variance with each other. For instance, Brahmins of the Vedic period drank Soma (an alcoholic drink), ate beef and offered blood sacrifices. Under the impact of Buddhism and Jainism these were given up in the post- vedic period. All Brahmins except Saraswat, Kashmir and Bengali Brahmins became vegetarian. In short, customs and habits of the Brahmins changed after they had settled down in India. Had the term Brahminization been used, it would have been necessary to specify which particular Brahmin group was meant and at which period. In view of

these facts, Srinivas opted for a comprehensive term called Sanskritization.

Initially, Srinivas defines Sanskritization as the tendency among the low castes to move higher in the caste hierarchy “in a generation or two” by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism. In this sense, Sanskritization is identified with the imitation of the Brahminical customs and manners by the low castes, Srinivas redefines Sanskritization as “a 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’. Thus, Sanskritization connotes a wider meaning being neither confined to the Brahmins as a reference group nor to the imitation of mere ritual and religious practices. It now also means imitation of ideologies such as Karma, Dharma, Papa, Punya, Maya, Samsara, Moksha etc. which find place in Sanskrit literature. These words also frequently occur in the talk of the Sanskritizing castes. Besides, the Sanskritizing castes also follow some of the secular elements. For instance, the lower castes in U.P. have imitated not the rituals or sacred customs of the upper castes but their conspicuous style of consumption and living, such as betel chewing, the wearing of gold ornaments, shoes, and other forms of dresses which were forbidden to them in the past.

Sanskritization has historical as well as contextual meanings. In its specific historical senses, Sanskritization refers to those processes in Indian history which led to changes in the status of various castes or their cultural patterns in different periods of history. History tells that in this process the lower castes could move to the rank of the higher castes as a result of their chivalry, rise in economic and power status and political alliance. This type of vertical mobility (change in position in the upward direction) was legitimized by the consensus of the dominant castes and kings through royal decrees and other formal means as recognized by the priestly castes. Historian Pannikar holds that the non-kshatriya caste could manage to become the kshatriya caste by way of conquering political power. Nandas were the last kshatriya rulers thereafter all the rulers belonged to the lower castes. Thus, Sanskritization in its historical connotation conveys a wider implication.

Contextually, on the other hand, Sanskritization is confined to the micro level. It refers to the universal motivation towards anticipatory socialization of the culture of an immediate higher group by a lower group in the hope of gaining its status in future. Sanskritization, in this form, is a very slow and non-spectacular process of cultural mobility of castes. Without any wider political implication, very often it fails to obtain legitimacy from the dominant caste. Sanskritization at the local level assumes various patterns. Studies show, at many places now the lower castes imitate the customs of the kshatriyas but not of the Brahmins, at some other places, tribes are reported to imitate the customs of the caste Hindus and in a few cases the higher castes emulate the tribal ways of living or undergo the process of tribalization.

In Punjab, the Muslim cultural style has been followed by the upper castes as well as the lower castes.

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## **11.4 Models of Sanskritization**

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### **Cultural Model**

Castes have been assigned high or low status according to the cultural characteristics of Hindus. The wearing of sacred thread, shunning the use of meat and liquor, observing endogamy, prohibition of widow-marriage, observing the restrictions imposed by caste system, worship according to the modes and methods described in the religious text

books daily, an inclination and respect for religious texts and mythological stories, giving alms and gifts, use of incense, lamp, flowers, grains and oblation at the time of worship, going to temples and on pilgrimages etc. have been given sanctity in traditional culture. They are considered to be the measuring standards of sacredness and purity. Therefore adopting in one's life style the way of higher castes and accepting the mandates of Varnas, Ashramas, Karma and Rebirth etc. and showing faith in the thoughts given in Sanskrit literature regarding religion, vice and virtue, salvation, maya and Brahma are a form of Sanskritization. In short accepting the behaviour and code of highness and purity as described in religious texts is a form of Sanskritization.

### **Varna Model:**

In the Varna system the highest status is that of a Brahman followed by Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Antyaj (or the lowest) is the fifth varna which is the lowest and untouchable. At different places Brahmans, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas acquire high respect in the society. The lower castes copy the ideals and life styles of the superior class, where Kshatriyas enjoy of 'superiority' their ideals are copied. Similarly where Vaishyas enjoy superiority the lower castes copy their life-style and ideals. Only the lowest castes (Antyaj) copy the Shudras. There is to say emulating the life-style or ideals of a varna on the basis of honour and superiority enjoyed by that class is called the varna model of Sanskritization.

### **Local Model:**

In every community, some castes are considered to be more respectful than others on account of their numerical or economic power. Not caring for the caste hierarchy, people rest of the community as superior or higher. This caste may be called the "master-class" or in the language of Srinivas "the dominant caste". In a village community, agriculturist castes get the dominance. The lower castes copy the life style of this Dominant-caste and try to rise in status. The local dominant castes serve as the reference group model for the aspirant caste. If the locally dominant caste is a Rajput or a Baniya it will transmit the Kshatriya or Vaishya model. Thus, models of Sanskritization vary according to the dominant caste.

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### **11.5 Role of the Dominant caste in Sanskritization**

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Dominant castes play an important role either advancing or retarding the process of Sanskritization. For a caste to be dominant, it should own a sizeable amount of arable land locally available, have strength of number and occupy a high place in the local hierarchy. New factors of dominance include western education, jobs in administration and urban source of income. These dominant castes stimulate in the lower castes a desire to imitate their prestigious style of life and thereby improve upon their social status. In some places the dominant castes were reported to have harassed the lower castes and dissuaded them from following their life styles by means of force and threat. The census of India (1921), for instances, states that in North

Bihar the high caste Rajputs and Bhumi-har Brahmins prevented the Ahirs from assuming the symbols of the twice born caste.

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### **11.6 Motivation for Sanskritization**

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One of the motivating factors behind the process of Sanskritization is the raising of one's social status in the local caste hierarchy and enjoyment of the same political and economic power which the higher castes used to enjoy. This motivation to raise one's own standard comes from a sense of relative deprivation, because the Hindu society has been rigidly stratified by caste system. Life-chances, social opportunities, economic positions and political privileges-everything was determined by caste system. Rigid caste norms created a wide distance between castes. The higher castes used to enjoy all kinds of social privilege whereas the lower castes were deprived of getting the same; it therefore, was considered the best way of increasing one's social position by taking to the customs and ways of life of a higher caste. Another motive behind Sanskritization is the manifestation of suppressed inter-class hostility. The victims wish to have control over caste system and thereby expiate their frustration on the same battlefield where they acquired them.

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### **11.7 Factors facilitating Sanskritization**

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Some factors have been singled out as contributory to the process of Sanskritization in modern India. Some of them are discussed below:

#### **1. British Rule:**

With the establishment of the British rule in India, the lower castes got more opportunities to Sanskritize themselves and subsequently raise their status as the Britishers were unmindful to this phenomenon and were least involved in the dynamic of caste system.

#### **2. Development of Communication:**

Development of road and transportation in the areas previously inaccessible accelerated the process of Sanskritization. The railways and other improved means of communication enabled people to visit religious centres like Mathura, Dwaraka, Gaya, Kashi, Puri etc.

### **3. Development of the Mass Media of Communication:**

The radio, the cinema, the microphone, newspaper, religious journals have been contributing to the popularization of Sanskrit values and ideologies.

### **4. Political Factors:**

The political institution of parliamentary democracy in free India has contributed to increased Sanskritization. Prohibition, a Sanskrit value, has been endorsed in our constitution. The ideal of equality of all men before the law and the abolition of untouchability have sprung up a culture which was the monopoly of the higher castes beforehand.

### **5. Educational Factor:**

As a result of western education, socio-religious movements like the Arya Samaj, the Brahma Samaj and the Prathana Samaj came into being and which, in turn, contributed much to the process of Sanskritization. Besides, spread of literacy among the low caste groups made Sanskritization feasible.

### **6. Cultural Institution:**

Every temple and pilgrim centre also acts as a source of Sanskritization. During the periodic festivals and other occasions when pilgrims gather at the centre they get opportunity for the spread of Sanskrit ideas and beliefs. Several other cultural institutions such as the sanyasis and other religious mendicants also help spread ideas and beliefs of Sanskrit Hinduism.

### **7. Economic Factor:**

Better economic conditions also facilitate enhancement of the status of a caste in the local caste hierarchy. But acquisition of wealth is not always a necessary pre-condition to Sanskritization. Srinivas has rightly cited the case of untouchable caste of Mysore who got itself Sanskritized even though its economic position remained almost fixed. However, the fact is that Sanskritization becomes easy if economic power is acquired.

### **8. Sectarian Movements:**

Sectarian movements also acted as agents of Sanskritization and when they attracted members from the low castes, they helped raise their status. For example the Bhakti movement geared by the saints embraced all people into its fold ignoring diversities of cults and castes and thereby proved a great Sanskritizing force

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## 11.8 Effects of Sanskritization on Social change

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If Indian culture is chiefly confined to the cultural ideals of twice-born Varnas (Brahmans, Kshatriya and Vaishyas), then we may say that the process of Sanskritization is going on for a thousand years, because foreign invaders instead of spreading their own culture adopted the twice-born culture of India. That is the reason that there is no sign of Salukas who was the successor of Sikander the Great coming from Greece. The Shuk and Huns foreigners who were considered to be low caste or class either by religion or by culture, adopted Indian culture and become Sanskritized. Muslims and Britishers got political hold hence they had no need to Sanskritize.

### **Sanskritization in Religious field:**

Lower castes have erected their own temples like twice born castes they have put the status of their own Great men along with the idols of God and Goddess. Many of them put on sacred thread. They go to their temples regularly and perform Arti and Bhajan. They have engaged priests of their own caste. In temples belonging to the middle castes,

even Brahman priests are engaged. They perform ceremonies like twice-born castes. Sacrifices and Hawan are performed on the naming ceremony of children. The custom of observing fast has increased. They celebrate all festivals like twice-born varnas. They are advancing towards cleanliness. They have left prohibited food. They also do not like dirty occupations. They take care of the cleanliness of their clothes and utensils. The Hinduization of Tribal castes is an example of religious Sanskritization. The members of middle castes have become office holders of different religious institutions. They have specialized in performing ceremonies like Brahmins.

### **Sanskritization in Social field:**

The social aspect of Sanskritization is more important from the viewpoint of change. Sanskritization appears to be more closely related to religious system but the chief aim of Sanskritization is social. The low caste individuals are inclined towards Sanskritization because that way they can elevate their social status and get higher up and caste-hierarchy. They want a place equal to that of Brahmans and Kshatriyas. Not only that some castes claim to be twice-born but some of them have practically acquired that status.

### **Sanskritization in Economic field:**

Sanskritization can be observed in the change of occupations also. Clean trades are a symbol of social height. In the cities of west Uttar Pradesh, Bhangis are working as vegetable and chat hawkers. Members of backward classes are entering into higher posts. Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes get

reservation in services. Twice-born or Brahmin clerks and peons work under officers belonging to scheduled castes.

### **Sanskritization in Living:**

The conditions of living have also been sanskritized. Lower castes get Pucca houses built for them. They have got a drawing room like twice born castes. They are attracted towards chair. Now they sit along with higher castes on the cots without a sense of fear or hesitation. They also keep their houses clean. They put the pictures of leaders and Hindu gods and goddesses on the walls. They take regular bath and put on clean clothes. Formerly they remained semi-naked due to poverty or were compelled to remain so. Now they put on dresses like higher caste and talk in the same language.

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### **11.9 Other effects of Sanskritization**

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Sanskritization has brought hardship for the lower caste women. Prior to Sanskritization, they were following the caste codes which were not so much rigid. But as they got sanskritized they imitated the sex and marriage codes of the Brahmins which were harassing. For example, pre-puberty marriage, ban on widow remarriage, shaving the hair of widow etc. were copied from the Brahmins by the ambitious lower castes. Second, Sanskritization has significant effects on conjugal relation. At times a wife is enjoined to practise the ideal of Pativrata and show extreme fidelity to the husband. Third, Sanskritization has prompted the untouchable castes to give up the consumption of liquor, beef, domestic pork or toddy. On this basis Srinivas predicts that “in the next twenty or thirty years the culture of untouchables all over the country will have undergone profound changes.”

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### **11.10 Summary**

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Sanskritization as a concept of cultural change has been criticized by many on several grounds. **First**, it has been alleged that Sanskritization is an extremely complex and heterogeneous concept. Srinivas himself admits that Sanskritization is not a single concept but a bundle of concepts. **Second**, Sanskritization is a theoretically loose term. **Third**, Sanskritization, in legal sense, is a truth-asserting concept which oscillates between the logics of ideal-typical and nominal definitions of phenomena. **Fourth**, Sanskritization fails to account for many aspects of the cultural changes in the past and contemporary India as it neglects many non-sanskritic traditions. **Fifth**, D.N. Majumdar in his study of Mohana village has shown that there is no tendency among the low castes to neither adopt the customs and manners of the higher castes nor do these help in elevating the status of any caste. **Sixth**, Lynch comments that Sanskritization is culture-bound and is not that much useful to explaining all movements for social mobility in the post-independent India. **Seventh**, Chauhan prefers the use of another concept enhanced ritualization to Sanskritization. Because the former concept can take care of the non-sanskritic elements which cannot be accommodated by the concept of Sanskritization. **Eighth**, Prasad criticizes the concept

of Sanskritization on linguistic ground and suggests Kulinization in place of Sanskritization. Kulinization is the process by which the lower status Brahmins acquired higher status by marrying Kulin Brahmins. **Ninth**, Patel and Singh, while describing the changing portrait of the Lewa Patidar caste of North Gujarat, mention that Sanskritization as well as contra-Sanskritization is operative in the case of Lewa Patidars and certain western factors are responsible for this contra-Sanskritization process. **Tenth**, K.L.Sharma, prefers the concept of reference group to Sanskritization to explain mobility; because in his views, Sanskritization is of ad-hoc nature, it lacks refinement at the conceptual level. Mobility at the individual level can be better understood with the help of reference group behaviour. In spite of these criticisms, Sanskritization as a concept for explaining social changes in modern India is enjoying supreme importance.

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#### **11.11 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Discuss the sanskritisation briefly.
2. How sanskritisation brings social change?

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#### **11.12 Key Words**

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**Kulinization-** is the process by which the lower status Brahmins acquired higher status by marrying Kulin Brahmins.

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#### **11.13 Study Guide**

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K. Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
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## **Unit-12 Westernization**

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### **Structure**

- 12.1 Learning Objectives**
- 12.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 12.3 Features of Westernization**
- 12.4 Types of Westernization**
- 12.5 Impact of Westernization on Indian Society**
- 12.6 Summary**
- 12.7 Self Assessment Questions**
- 12.8 Key Words**
- 12.9 Study Guide**

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### **12.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To explain westernization.
2. To know features and types of westernization.

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### **12.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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The term 'Westernization' conveys two meanings. One is global and the other is exclusively relating to the Indian society. From a global perspective, westernization refers to the process of social change brought about in non-western countries as a result of their prolonged contact with Western culture. In the Indian context, Westernization refers to changes brought about in Indian social life as a consequence of its contact with the British.

For a thorough understanding of the term, it is necessary to distinguish between westernization and Sanskritization. Sanskritization and Westernization are linked processes in modern India and it is not possible to understand one without a reference to the other. This does not mean that both are synonymous. No doubt, they are complementary to each other. Westernization is not hostile to the process of Sanskritization rather it contributes to the spread of Sanskritization. Western technology in the form of the railways, the internal combustion engine, the press, the radio, and the telephone has aided Sanskritization. In spite this complementarity, Sanskritization differs from Westernization in certain respects. Sanskritization implies mobility within the caste system whereas westernization implies mobility outside the frame work of caste. Compared to Sanskritization, westernization is a simpler concept. Sanskritization occurs among the lower castes, whereas it is the high castes who first turned towards western culture. Sanskritization puts a ban on meat eating and alcohol consumption whereas westernization promotes meat-eating and consumption of alcohol, Sanskritization promotes a sacred outlook whereas westernization promotes a secular world view. Lastly, Sanskritization would mean a process of endogamous change while westernization would mean exogamous change.

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### **12.3 Features of Westernization**

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The process of westernization subsumes changes occurring at different levels of technology, institutions, ideology and values. Broadly, it includes all changes that any non-western country like India or any other colonial country, undergoes as a result of prolonged contact with a western culture.

The most important area of change was the value preferences of the non-western societies. A most important value which in turn subsumes several other values, is what may broadly

characterized as humanitarianism which means active concern for the welfare of all human beings irrespective of social inequalities based on caste, economic position, religion, age or sex. Equalitarianism and secularization also form part of the value of humanitarianism. Humanitarianism refers to many of the reforms introduced by the British in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as civil, penal and procedural laws which put an end to certain inequalities that were part of the Hindu and the Islamic jurisprudence. The principle of equality found expression in the abolition of slavery, in the opening of new schools and colleges- which were, in theory at least, opened to all irrespective of religion, race and caste. The new economic opportunities were also open to all, although in practice caste and other elite groups who traditionally lived in the big towns, enjoyed considerable advantages over others.

The introduction of reforms and new laws by the British led to several changes in the Indian customs which were earlier enforced as part of one's religious duty. A religious custom had to satisfy the test of reason and humanitarianism if it was to be allowed to survive. As the British rule gained roots in India, the values of rationality and humanitarianism also became firmly entrenched in the caste-ridden society. The formal system of education introduced by the British played an effective role in perpetuating these values.

Westernization is an all inclusive term. It covers a wide range of changes from western technology at one end to the experimental method of modern science and modern historiography at the other. In the field of technology it has revolutionized the process of mass communication, transportation, industrialization and improved health care facilities and has made available new comfortable gadgets for better living conditions. These changes are intimately linked with the life of the common man and have proved consequential.

The process of Westernization in India was uneven. Only a tiny fraction of Indian population came into direct, face to face contact with the British. And those who came in contact with the British officers did not always become a force for change. Indian servants of the British, for instance, probably wielded some influence among their kin groups and local caste groups but not among others. They often came from the low castes as well. Their westernization was of a superficial kind as the upper castes made fun of them.

The process of westernization has neatly intensified in many ways since 1947. The first and most critical step in westernization was the establishment of Pax Britanica and the revolutions in communications that followed. Extension of the administrative and trading frontiers broke

the centuries old isolation of the different groups inhabiting the remote parts of the country. Similarly the means of transportation and communication opened up avenues for new contacts. Thus, development of communications and the removal of internal custom barriers integrated the economics of various regions in the country. In a word the political and administrative integration of India as well as the development of communication and the beginning of industrialization and agricultural development, increased spatial and social mobility of both the elite and the rural poor which laid the foundation of subsequent nationwide westernization.

The form and pace of Westernization of India varied from region to region and from one section of population to another. For instance, one group of people became westernized in their dress, diet, manners, speech, sports and in the gadgets they used while another absorbed western science, knowledge and literature, remaining free from external attributes of westernization. For example, Brahmins accepted the western style of dressing and appearance, sent their children to westernized schools used gadgets like the radio, car etc. but they did not accept the British diet, dancing, hunting, and the casual attitude of the British about population.

Another feature of Westernization is that it creates many inter contradictory forces which, instead of consolidating, contradict each other. In the political and cultural fields, westernization has given birth not only to nationalism but also revivalism, communalism, casteism, linguism, regionalism etc.

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#### **12.4 Types of Westernization**

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On the basis of influence on the little and the great tradition, westernization can be categorized into two: primary westernization and secondary westernization. By primary westernization Prof. Y. Singh means, “changes induced by the western impact on Indian little tradition.” Such changes generally are of two types: first, the emergence of a westernized sub-cultural pattern through a minority section of Indians who first came into contact with western culture. This includes the sub-culture represented by those Indian intellectuals and scholars who not only adopted many western cognitive patterns and styles of life but also supported its rapid expansion. Thus westernization in its first stage was sub-cultural in nature. It existed only in the marginal sphere.

The second type of primary westernization in the little tradition refers to the process of general diffusion of western cultural traits such as the use of new technology, dress, food and changes in the habits and styles of life of people in general resulting from the cultural contact with the British.

Secondary westernization, on the other hand, was linked with the great tradition of India and it refers to

the changes which have contributed to the growth of various forms of cultural structure extending over the whole of the country. Some examples of such cultural structures are education, law, science, technology, new forms of politicization, urbanization, industrialization and finally new media of cultural transmission through the press, printing and facilities of transport and communication. This form of westernization has all Indian character and has contributed to the emergence of a new Great tradition of Modernization in India.

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## **12.5 Impact of Westernization on Indian Society**

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The encounter between the Indian tradition and western culture was of immense sociological significance. The western tradition had a meaningful impact upon the cultural, political and social systems of India to such an enormous extent that it has been told that such a contact had initiated a new era of change in the Indian cultural tradition. The mode of the western cultural impact on the Indian tradition had distinctive features. Historically, various western traditions came to India with differing political and cultural orientations and exerted variegated influences upon Indian society and culture. The following are some of the areas in which the western impact was visibly noticed.

### **1. Growth of a Universalistic Legal System**

The process of westernization brought in its wake new legal norms which contributed to the growth of a universalistic positive form of law in India. Formerly the legal system was founded on the principles of hierarchy and holism. Accordingly justice was meted out on the basis of the status of various castes and classes in the local hierarchy. Thus, following the prescription of Manu, a Brahmin slandering a Kshatriya had to pay a fine of fifty Panas, but for slandering a Vaishya or Shudra he had to pay twenty five and twelve panas respectively. If the lower castes slandered the high castes, the penalties were more severe. The principle of hierarchy was strictly followed in matters of dispensing justice. Our traditional legal system continued to be group-oriented and non-equalitarian. With the establishment of the British power in India, there came a new turning point in the legal system of the country. Various forms of legal innovation based on the principles of universalism, rationalism and individualism were introduced and thereby to making the new judicial system individual oriented and universalistic. It enacted legislations introducing social reforms in many sensitive areas such as marriage customs the age of marriage, the age of consent for marriage. It established the principle of equality and generated a consciousness of positive rights among the down-trodden castes.

### **2. Impact of Westernization on Education:**

Contemporary education is of western origin. Traditionally, the content of education was metaphysical. It was confined to the upper classes or the twice born castes. Its structure was hereditary and closed. The roles of both the teachers and the taught were qualitative- ascriptive. But Modern education has a

fundamentally different orientation and organization. Its content is liberal and it preaches scientific world-view. Freedom equality, humanism and denial of faith in dogmatism are the major themes of modern education. Its professional structure is not ascriptive. It can be achieved by merit by anyone in the society.

### **3. Impact on the Communication network:**

The media of communication have been introduced in India through the western contact. Printed news papers came into existence only after India's contact with the West. The

Britishers introduced the telegraph, railways and modern postal system in India. Similar improvement has also been made in the other media of communication and transport. The expansion in transport by the railways, roadways, airways and waterways has contributed to the intensification in the volume of interaction and contact between one region with another. The concept of purity and pollution has been given discount since the people of all castes are travelling in the same railway coach or bus.

### **4. Growth of Nationalism:**

Both Nationalism and democracy in the contemporary form are the gifts of westernization. Nationalism implies consciousness of one's nationhood. Its sociological manifestation is the idea of nation-state. Democracy is a special form of political organization and system of values on which nation-state can be founded. The feeling of nationality and respect for democratic norms is a consequence of westernization. It was the fervent patriotic zeal of the western people that made our leaders think of developing India as a united country. Most of the nationalist leaders of the freedom struggle in India got inspiration from western literature and thought. Indian nationalism, however, was not modeled completely on the western pattern.

### **5. Impact on Food habits and Mode of eating:**

Westernization has reached the level of food habits and way of eating. Traditionally, Indians ate their meals sitting on the floor. Food was served either on the leaves or on brass, bronze or silver plates. Among the upper castes, and especially among Brahmin, eating was a religious act. The food had to be cooled while the women in charge of cooking and serving it must be in a ritually purer state. Food was being served to children and adults in order of seniority. At the end of the meal, the dining leaves became impure and were thrown out and the places where the leaves rested were purified with a solution of cowdung.

But now the westernized groups increasingly prefer to eat at tables with stainless steel utensils, spoons etc. thus the new mode of eating has contributed to an increase in secularization as the table is not likely to be purified with cow dung after meals and the ritual acts traditionally performed before and after meals and almost dropped.

Changing food habits has brought people nearer to modern food technologies. The use of ghee has increasingly been replaced by vegetable oil both in rural and urban areas. Tea shops are now common in most road side villages and persons of all castes take tea in china cups, glasses or earthen-cups, even if tea might be drawn by a lower caste person. Eating meat and eggs by higher caste members is on the increase. Poultry farms which were previously considered polluting are opened in large numbers.

#### **6. Impact on the Dress Pattern:**

Under the influence of westernization even people living in villages have opted for factory-made clothes like nylon, Terylene, terycot etc. in place of home-spun clothes, readymade garments have become popular. The mode of dress has also undergone a drastic change. The old style of shirt has been replaced by the modern style shirts. It marked a gradual weakening of ideas of ritual purity. The western clothes became more popular even Brahmins sat at dinner with their shirts on.

#### **7. Change in Language:**

Many terms from the English language have entered the dialects of the rural folk. The expansion of civil administration popularized the terms like court, collector, judge, barristers etc. similarly the expansion of transport facilities has rendered the terms like rail, station, signals etc. matters in daily usage. Politicization of villages since Independence has introduced villages to terms like party, socialism, communism, ministry etc. and similarly, spread of medical facilities now makes expressions like injections, mixture, penicillin etc. also household words.

#### **8. Weakening of Traditional Culture:**

Modern education and increased utilitarian and rational values of the Indian elite led them to make sharp criticisms of their own culture. They began casting aspersions on the evils of our traditional culture which used to make submissive. The loathing of and longing for a new culture, the raising aspirations of population for better future made them sort out what was desirable and vice versa. Indians today are more individualistic, free thinking and lead relatively a more free life. Modernization of the tradition is taking place in India today under the impact of the process of westernization.

#### **9. Impact on Marriage:**

Westernization has also brought about noticeable changes in matrimonial relationship. Marriage today is no longer seen as a relationship between two families rather it has transformed to the relationship of two individuals i.e. husband and wife. Husband and wife do not treat each other as superior or inferior but as friends and companions. Love and marriage has sidelined religion. Even marriage ceremony itself has changed.

#### **10. Impact on Family:**

Western culture preaches the individualistic ideology of family which is diametrically opposite to the

collective ethos on which the joint family system is founded, imbibing the individualistic philosophy people give importance to the individual over the group there by they encourage self-men. This has cut the joint family from its very root for which it has started crippling down. Members in a family today prefer freedom to enjoy marital life. Today's brides do not like to remain under the control of laws. New democratic conventions find their place in household affairs too.

#### **11. Impact on the Status of Women:**

A strong influence of the west is tangible on the status of women today. The medieval period in Indian history is witness to the status of women sinking to the nadir and if we find today women getting their due in almost all the fields, a major part of the credit goes to westernization. Education on the one hand generated and encouraged liberal ideas among men while on the other hand it prepared women to strive for natural status of equality.

#### **12. Impact on Religion:**

Impact of science and western education did bring about a significant change in our perception of religion. Uncritical acceptance of religious ideas is being replaced by logical interpretation and acceptance. The social value of religion has gone down. From a collective activity religion has become an individualistic activity. The activity pace of religion is gradually decreasing. There was a time when social, economic, political scenes were all dominated by religion but now it is evolving more or less as an independent institution.

#### **13. Impact on Customs:**

Indian masses which were a bit reluctant initially in accepting the ways of the west are now jumping to their ways. From clothes to houses we live in, all bear the stamp of western style and it has become a status symbol. Cosmetic, decoration of pieces, crockery and even the methods of greetings have all become westernized. In fact, in every activity of life, the impact of the west is easily seen as far as customs are concerned.

#### **14. Impact on Art and Literature:**

The literally sub-culture of India was too influenced by the English literary tradition. 'Romanticism' and 'Psychiatrism' of the west can be found in almost every kind of literary expression of today. Experimentalism, Hedonism and Romanticism have found place in Indian poetry. Equality, environment, freedom, social movement and other related topics have also got place in Indian art and literature. Modern art is definitely a by-product of westernization which could not be easily adopted because of its radically different concepts.

#### **15. Eradication of Social Evils:**

Social evils which had plagued the society and in a way were responsible for making Indian society so



much vulnerable to foreign annexation, could only be given a determined fight after the process of westernization took its root. No doubt, a few social workers had raised their fingers against these social evils before but it was the process of westernization which prepared a broad base through which efforts against these evils could bear fruit. The practice of widow burning, infanticides, stealing of children for slavery, child marriage, ban on widow marriage, untouchability are some of those social evils which are still being fought. Science and technology from the west have done some demystifying effect on these types of practices.

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## **12.6 Summary**

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The western tradition had a meaningful impact upon the cultural, political and social systems of India to such an enormous extent that it has been told that such a contact had initiated a new era of change in the Indian cultural tradition. The mode of the western cultural impact on the Indian tradition had distinctive features. Historically, various western traditions came to India with differing political and cultural orientations and exerted variegated influences upon Indian society and culture. The following are some of the areas in which the western impact was visibly noticed.

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## **12.7 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Discuss westernization briefly.
2. Explain the features of westernization.
3. Write the types of westernization.

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## **12.8 Key Words**

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**Westernization-** refers to the process of social change brought about in non-western countries as a result of their prolonged contact with Western culture.

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## **12.9 Study Guide**

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1. The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
2. Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K. Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
3. D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
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## **Unit-13 Modernization**

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### **Structure**

- 13.1 Learning Objectives**
- 13.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 13.3 The concept of Modernization**
- 13.4 Characteristics of Modernization process**
- 13.5 Modernization and Social Change**
- 13.6 Summary**
- 13.7 Self Assessment Questions**
- 13.8 Key Words**
- 13.9 Study Guide**

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### **13.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To discuss modernization.
2. To explain features of modernization.

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### **13.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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Modernization is a complex process of social change. Modernization is one of the few terms that have come to be the keywords in contemporary discourse on the dynamics of social change. Social scientists use modernization in three senses: first, as a criterion to distinguish between traditional transitional and modernized societies. Second, as an ideal desired by the national elite of the third world countries and lastly as a process of movement of a traditional society or culture, to a modern state. Some other terms such as Anglicization, Europeanization, Westernization, Urbanization, and Industrialization were in vogue before the term 'Modernization' was born. The new term 'Modernization' was evolved by the American Scholars and it gained currency throughout the world in the 1950s and the 1960s. In spite of its popularity modernization lacks a clear-out meaning. It may be due to the misconceptions encircling it and these need demystification at the outset.

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### **13.3 The concept of Modernization**

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The word 'Modernization' derived from the Latin root 'Modo' meaning just now. In chronological sense it means, the latest. The Oxford Dictionary defines the term modern as of the present and recent times, new fashions, not concerned with classic. Thus literally the term modern refers to anything which is new or latest in the style of dress, art or thinking. There are three senses in which we may comprehend the idea of modernization. The first one is most general and synonymous with all kinds of progressive social change when society moves ahead along with some accepted scale of improvement. This usage is not confined to a particular time and can apply to all historical periods. Getting out of caves and building the first shelters was clearly a case of modernization, just as abandoning bullock-carts for automobiles and the radio for T.V. The second meaning is more historically specific. It connotes the idea of a complex of social, political, economic, cultural and psychological transformations occurring in the west from the sixteenth century onwards and reaching its apogee in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It involves the process of industrialization, urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratization, democratization, the rise of capitalism, the spread of individualism and achievement-motivation, the affirmation of reason and science, and many other processes. Modernization as such means attaining modernity. It refers to the process through which a traditional or pre-technological society passes as it is transformed into a society characterized by machine technology, rational and secular attitudes and highly differentiated social structures.

Finally, there is the most specific meaning of the term 'Modernization' referring only to the backward or underdeveloped societies and describing their attempts to catch up with the most developed countries, coexisting with them in the same historical period within the world society. In other words, it describes the movement from the peripheries to the core of modern society.

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### **13.4 Characteristics of Modernization process**

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#### **A revolutionary process:**

In the process of modernization a radical change takes place in human life. Black has compared the transition from tradition to modernity with that of the change from pre- human to human existence and from primitive to civilized societies.

#### **A complex process:**

Modernization is complex process. It cannot be reduced to a single factor or single dimension. It involves changes in all areas of human thought and behaviour. Some of the components of modernization are: industrialization, urbanization, social mobilization, differentiation, secularization, media expansion, increasing literacy and education and expansion of political participation.

#### **A systematic process:**

Modernization is a systematic process. In its wake it changes the total social system. Change in one factor tends to produce a complimentary change in another factor. Various elements of modernization have been highly associated together because they had gone together.

#### **A global process:**

Modernization is a universal process. It originated in the fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe, but now it has become a worldwide phenomenon. It has been brought about primarily through the diffusion of modern ideas and techniques from the European centre to almost all parts of the world. The endogenous development of non-western societies has also contributed to this; in any event, all societies which were at one time traditional are becoming modern.

#### **A lengthy process:**

Modernization takes much time to occur. It does not occur overnight rather it is evolutionary in nature. Much time is required to bring about total changes in society. For example, western societies took several centuries to modernize. It may take generations for societies to move from tradition to modernity.

#### **A phased process:**

The process of modernization proceeds in phases and sub-phases. All the societies have to move through some stages. They have to begin with a traditional stage, pass through a transitional stage and reach the stage of modernity. The patterns of modernization may vary from society to society but all

societies will move essentially through the same stages.

**A homogenizing process:**

Modernization produces tendencies towards convergence among societies. It involves movement towards integration of societies in the long run so that the formation of a world state can be contemplated.

**A progressive process:**

Modernization is inevitable and desirable. Initially modernization causes pain but in the long run it contributes to human well-being, culturally and materially.

**An adaptive process:**

Modernization puts before individuals and groups the need to adapt themselves to the new changes taking place in society. In the process of rapid socio-economic changes, individuals are likely to aspire for various positions and are supposed to perform different roles. Those who fail to keep pace with these changes, perish in the process of modernization new institutions emerge in order to meet the demands of the rapid changes and fulfill new aspirations of the people.

**A dynamic process:**

Modernization implies an ongoing process of change. With the advancement of scientific knowledge and technical skills, the conditions of life undergo a radical change. A society based on subsistence agriculture, clan or village government is traditional as compared to modern society which is regulated by inanimate sources of power and governed by complex organizations and formal institutions. Likewise the latter is likely to give way to a post-modern society articulated by nuclear fission and sustained by test-tube babies.

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### **13.5 Modernization and Social Change**

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The process of modernization has brought forth some significant changes in the structural and cultural spheres of the Indian society. These changes can be discussed under the following heads:

**A. Structural Change:**

Modernization has introduced typical forms of social change in the structure of Indian society. By structural change we mean the growth of new roles and group structures. It analyzed at two levels: the macro-structures and micro-structures. Micro-structures are autonomous in nature. They provide a social space for primary relationships. Their organization is less formal; the relationships are more affective and particularistic. The network relationship is limited. Family, community, clan, tribe, caste or sub-castes are examples of the micro-structures of the Indian society.

Macro-structures refer to those organized roles and relationships which are more extensive, more

formal, and which are organized on universalistic principles and which have to do with the integration or regulation of the larger system of society and involve secondary and higher orders of relationships. Some examples of macro-structures are: political and other types of elite, administration and bureaucracy, industrial workers, and other urban and industrial groups and social classes.

Modernization has also brought forth eye-catching changes in the micro structural phenomena such as caste, family, and village communities. Under the impact of modernization, caste has given up its traditional occupation and dissociated itself from traditional obligation, for example, jajmani relation. Caste endogamy has crumbled down and the incidences of inter-caste marriages are on the increase. Caste activities are gradually expanding. The power structure of caste is also changing.

As the modernization proceeds, the transition from the extended or joint families to conjugal forms or nuclear families has become much more accelerated. Consequently, the socialization of children in the family takes on a new direction. The child grows an independent, imaginative and innovative personality. In the Indian society joint families break up into nuclear families. There is not only a structural change in the family system but also a change in its functions.

Village communities are another important micro-structure of the Indian society. Villages are changing in respect of economic institutions and power structures and inter-caste relationships. The jajmani system is disintegrating. The introduction of statutory panchayats has transformed the structure of village leadership. The emerging leadership consists of young people. It has to face the factions and opposite interest groups. There has been a break in the world-view of the castes and classes. There is a rising motivation for education, status mobility and share in local, regional and national power structures.

## **B. Cultural Change:**

Modernization has initiated a profound change in the Indian cultural tradition. Broadly, we can categorize the Indian cultural tradition into two: the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition. The Great Traditions refer to those traditions which grow because of outside contact and are found at national level whereas the little traditions are local in origin and are found at the folk or peasant level. Some examples of the Great traditions are industrialization, urbanization, expansion of modern education, growth of universalistic legal system, transportation and mass communication, mass politicization and science and technology.

### **1. Industrialization:**

Industrialization in India has been the cause and consequence of modernization. Though the process of modern machine based industrial model of production started during the British rule, its volume was hopelessly less. It could not have any significant effect on India's age-old socio-cultural institutions. After independence the real process of industrialization has started. The process of industrialization has

changed the whole social system based on the principle of ascription and a subsistence agricultural economy. As a result, the economy, the politics, the social institutions, the system of stratification of the country and the way of life of people and their standard of living have changed appreciably. Industrialism has fostered rational and secular attitudes. Traditional thoughts and actions gradually lose their hold.

## **2. Urbanization:**

Modernization leads to urbanization and urbanization also leads to modernization of culture. The higher is the degree of modernization in a society, the higher is its degree of urbanization. Urban centres are the centres for the diffusion of modern values to the villages. Urban returnees carry the ways of life and habits from the cities to the villages. Urbanization brings about transformation in various social institutions such as the family, social stratification, patterns of social interactions, value preference of the people etc. the interrelationship among urban people is directed towards meeting some specific needs. Secondary group relationships always predominate in the urbanized societies. In the context of Indian society urbanization not only fosters modern values but also reinforces traditional values and institutions.

## **3. Expansion of Modern Education:**

Modernization in Indian society brings about a radical change in the orientation and organization of education. Contrary to the traditional education, its content becomes liberal and it propagates modern scientific world-views. It imbibes modern themes like humanism, liberalism and secularism. It incorporates the courses in sciences, medicines and engineering. The organizational structure of education also has undergone a significant change. Teachers are being recruited on the basis of educational achievement irrespective of their caste creed and religion. Education is also imparted to all without caste bar. By educating the people, a sense of unity, the feeling of nationalism, liberalism and freedom and an urge for effective political participation have been created in the mind of people.

## **4. Change in Legal Structure:**

Modernization also brings changes in the customs and laws of the Indian society. It leads to the emergence of a universalistic legal system based on the principle of universalism, rationalism and individualism. Through law many forms of cultural changes, such as the abolition of Sati, the introduction of widow remarriage etc. were brought out. New legal system challenged the traditional system of hierarchy and holism. It contributes to the growth of multiple legal professions and establishment of rule of law.

## **5. Spread of Transportation and Communication:**

Modernization has led to the growth and expansion of nationwide net-work of transport and

communication. As a result of transportation and communication, the barriers between regions have broken down. People become both physically and mentally mobile. The large-scale circulation of newspapers and periodicals and other easy means of communication have a double edged impact on the Indian society. On one side, it has modernizing effects on the other, traditionalizing effect. Mass communication has accelerated the process of industrialization and urbanization and the same time it has strengthened primordial ties like caste, religion, race etc. Cheap printing presses and easy means of communication have contributed to the intensification of caste solidarity.

#### **6. Mass Politicization:**

Only due to the process of modernization in India, the enlightened Indian elites could think of introducing political institutions based on values of democracy, equality, liberty, freedom and justice. As a result, the government of India could set up a constitution based on the democratic system. In a democratic system, the Government is responsible to people and people normally express their preference for a party through elections. The decision making, no more, remains an elite affair, but masses also become politicized. They are politically very much conscious; they participate in political gatherings, hold political discussion and evaluate the decisions of authority.

#### **7. Change in Little Tradition:**

Besides, change in the little tradition i.e., daily life, customs, and habits of people at the grass-root level also takes place. Especially changes in Dress, food habits, rituals, vocabulary, material culture, mode of travel and types of conveyance and customs become manifested. Home-made clothes have been replaced by factory-made clothes. Observation of rules relating to eating of food and drink has been abandoned. Meat eating and use of eggs have been popular among the high castes. The coat-suit, dining table, spoon eating is rapidly coming into the Indian way of life. English language, western food and dress habits are considered to be status symbols. All these changes resulted from the introduction of a fluid political structure, adult franchise and a decentralized process of decision making.

#### **8. Technological Changes:**

With the process of modernization, the Indian society has experienced tremendous changes in the technological sphere which involve development of new techniques, new inventions, new modes of production and new standards of living. These changes have resulted in the decay of old traditional craftsmanship, and diversification of occupations and it has brought men and women to factory and office. New industrialism also brought in modern value patterns. Similarly, mechanization of agriculture in India has resulted in increased agricultural production and has affected farm economy and farmer's household life. Technological advancement resulted in greater functional inter-dependence and differentiation between parts and greater mobility of the members with respect to location and



occupation.

Undoubtedly, the process of modernization has brought in significant changes in political, social, economic and cultural spheres of the Indian society. But, it is not without stresses and strains

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### **13.6 Summary**

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Modernization has also brought forth eye-catching changes in the micro structural phenomena such as caste, family, and village communities. Under the impact of modernization, caste has given up its traditional occupation and dissociated itself from traditional obligation, for example, jajmani relation. Caste endogamy has crumbled down and the incidences of inter-caste marriages are on the increase. Caste activities are gradually expanding. The power structure of caste is also changing.

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### **13.7 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. What is modernization?
2. Write various characteristics of modernization.

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### **13.8 Key Words**

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**Modernization-** The word 'Modernization' derived from the Latin root 'Modo' meaning just now.

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### **13.9 Study Guide**

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1. The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
2. Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K. Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
3. D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
4. S.C. Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
5. P.K. Kar Indian Society(2003).Page-366
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7. M.S.A. Rao in his obituary article on K.M. Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin. Volume NoXVII, March 1968,No.1.Pages:1-2.

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## **Block-04: Contribution of Social Reforms in India**

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**Unit-14 Contribution of social reforms in India**

**Unit-15 Scheduled Castes**

**Unit-16 Scheduled Tribes**

**Unit-17 Other backward Classes**

**Unit-18 Law and Status of Women in India**

**Unit-19 Reservation of SCs and STs in Employment, Education and Legislature Status and Emerging Issues**

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## **Unit-14 Contribution of social reforms in India**

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### **Structure**

- 14.1 Learning Objectives**
- 14.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 14.3 Brahmo Samaj**
- 14.4 Arya Samaj**
- 14.5 Summary**
- 14.6 Self Assessment Questions**
- 14.7 Key Words**
- 14.8 Study Guide**

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### **14.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To discuss Brahmo Samaj.
2. To understand Arya Samaj.

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### **14.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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The medieval pre-capitalist Indian Society, under the British, gradually transformed itself into the modern capitalist society. The capitalist society established by the Britishers was based on the principles of individual liberty, equality, free competition, contract and private property. This was in sharp contrast to the medieval pre-capitalist society which stood for authoritarianism, maintained social distinctions on birth and sex and sub-ordinate the individual to caste and joint family. The new socio-economic reality based on the philosophy of liberalism, nationalism and democracy necessitated changes in the old religion conditioned by a different set of socio- economic conditions of a medieval society. As such, a number of religious reform movements were started in India with a view to extending these principles of liberalism to religion.

In India, the scope of religious reform movements was not confined to religious reform alone; it also included reconstruction of social institutions and relations. This was inevitable, since religion and social structures in India were organically interlinked. Many social institutions like the caste, untouchability, inequality of sexes etc flourished in India mainly because of the support they received from Hindu religion. Therefore, religious reform was to go hand in hand with social reforms. The prominent reform movements in India are Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj etc.

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### **14.3 Brahmo Samaj**

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Brahmo Samaj was the first reform movement in India. It was started in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who is regarded as the father of Indian nationalism. He was a democrat and a humanist. He attacked polytheism and viewed it as a degeneration of ancient Hindu monotheism. He denounced idol worship of the Hindus and preached the concept of “one God of all religions and humanity”. He believed that polytheism and idolatry were harmful to Hindu society.

He advocated for a rational approach to religion. He asked everyone to study the scriptures by oneself without a Brahmin priest as an intermediary and accept only those religious doctrines which stand the test of his own ethical reasoning.

He clearly recognized that religious reform was a vital condition for social reform. He wanted to bring about social reforms through a religious-reform movement, since he believed that Hindu

society was largely dominated by religion. Therefore he included social reform as a part of his religious-reform movement.

He strongly attacked the caste system and declared it as anti-national, anti-democratic and inhuman institution. He fought against such social evils like sati, child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, polygyny, female infanticide etc. In short, he led a crusade against all injustice done to women and stood for equality between man and woman.

Ram Mohan Roy, as he was an admirer of the rational democratic culture of the west, organized a number of educational institutions in the country on western model for the spread of western ideas like liberalism, rationalism, democracy, nationalism etc.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy said, British rule in India was not an unmitigated evil. He saw something positive and good in it; because it facilitated certain progressive measures like the abolition of sati, female infanticide and established a number of educational institutions, free press etc.

He was, however, a critical admirer of the British in India. He did not hesitate to protest and criticize the British Government whenever he thought that it had taken a reactionary measure. Thus, for example, he organized a protest movement against the Government when it took a measure to curtail the freedom of the press and also strongly criticized the British policy of excluding Indians from higher posts in the administration.

The Brahmo Samaj, as it included religious, social, and political reforms in its programme, paved the way for the later social reform movements started by Ranade and others and the political movements initiated by the Indian National Congress. This was the historical significance of Ram Mohan and his movement 'Brahmo Samaj', in India. In appreciation of his contribution, Rabindranath Tagore rightly said, "Raja Ram Mohan Roy inaugurated the modern age in India".

Debendranath Tagore assumed the leadership of the Samaj after the Ram Mohan Roy. He was skeptical about the infallibility of the scriptures and rejected them as an authority. In their place he installed intuition as the authority and based the religious-ideological doctrines of the Samaj on it.

The Brahmo Samaj, thus, played a very important historical role in the inauguration of a new era in India by freeing the individual from the stranglehold of authoritarian religion by proclaiming individual liberty and national unity and also by democratizing the Hindu social institution.

However, this reform movement was not successful in attracting the masses, because it was essentially an intellectual movement, inspired by western ideals. It is no wonder that its

membership was mainly confined to the western educated elite of the society.

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#### **14.4 Arya Samaj**

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Swami Dayananda is the founder of the Arya Samaj. He was born in 1824 in a Brahmin family. Swami Dayanada started his education at the age of five. Dayanand's father was his teacher who taught him Vedic education. He learnt Sanskrit and the rules of grammar and their application. He also studied logic, philosophy, law and ethics etc. He became a Sadhu, wandered all over India, met a number of Sadhus and pundits and quenched his spiritual thirst.

In those days, the British rule in India created the problems of untouchability that condemned the Shudras to a sub-human existence, child marriage, the purdah system, illiteracy and the low status of women. The heinous practice of Sati was also prevalent during the colonial rule. These problems, which branched out from the colonial oppression in India, made Dayananda restless and uneasy. Furthermore the Britishers tried to reduce India to an agricultural colony of England because their desire was that India would only produce raw materials for British factories and thereafter India would become captive market where the machine made goods from England will be sold. Dayananda believed that it was made possible due to the prevalence of superstitions, religious diversity, multiplicity of sects, scores of religious gurus and sub-faiths each running down the other. The predominance of the Brahmin priests and their role in hindering the spread of Bhakti Movements might be attributed to the causation of India's backwardness at that time. The Brahmin priests were considered the final authority for all matters, particularly in rituals and customs and nobody could question their authority. The householders always tried to keep the Brahmin in good humour by paying him handsomely and feeding him satisfactorily. All these were possible due to blind faith, superstition and ignorance of people in Indian society. Nevertheless such traditional belief and dominance of the Brahmins, could not keep all the Indians within its fold. Some of the Indians realised the gravity of situation and launched the Bhakti movement or propagated Sufism or Veerashaivism.

Dayananda realized that he must do something to reform the society. He propagated his own vision of Hinduism. He started arguing with many religious pundits. He tried to form society several times. He made some short-term attempts also, once in Arrah in 1872 and the next time in Banaras in 1874. Again he failed in his attempt to set up Arya Samaj at Rajkot on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1875 and also at Ahmedabad in January 1875. But finally on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1875, he succeeded in setting up the Arya Samaj at Bombay. It was revised at Lahore in 1877. In Bombay it proved very successful. A combination of factors created a right atmosphere for his renewed attempts to spread the influence of Arya Samaj. He launched a frontal attack on the numerous abuses like idolatry, polytheism, belief in magic, charms, animal sacrifices,

feeding the dead through sraddhas etc. he rejected the popular Hindu philosophy which held that the physical world is an illusion 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 seek union with God.

The creed and principles of the Arya Samaj first defined in Bombay in 1875 comprised of 28 rules which touch religious, social, educational and organizational matters. The 28 rules were exhaustive and detailed. These were numerous and could not be remembered. Therefore, in 1877 at Lahore the rules were revised and their number was cut down to ten. The 10 principles were approved by Dayananda and have remained unaltered to this day. All Aryas are expected to conform to them. The first two rules are related to God and the third to the Vedas. The Arya Samaj is based on the Vedas and God. The ten principles are:

1. God is primary source of all knowledge and of all things that can be known through knowledge.
2. God who is All-truth, All-knowledge, Almighty, immortal, Creator of universe, alone is worthy of worship.
3. The Vedas are books of all true knowledge. It is the prime duty of all Aryas to Study and propagate the Vedas, to hear and preach it.
4. An Arya should always be ready to accept truth and abandon untruth.
5. All actions should be performed according to Dharma and after considering the right and wrong of each accept the right and shun the 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. We should deal with love, righteousness and consideration of their merit.
8. We should work for the liquidation of ignorance and promotion of knowledge.
9. Everybody should consider his own progress and depend upon the upliftment of all other persons.
10. Social well-being of movement should be placed above the individual's well being, but everyone is free to work for his own welfare.

The social ideals of the Arya Samaj reflected the ideals of the Vedas, these were:

1. Fatherhood to God and Brotherhood of Man.
2. The equality of the sexes.
3. Justice and fairplay between peoples and between the nations.
4. Equal opportunity to all according to their merit.
5. Love and charity towards all.

The Arya Samaj opened a vast number of educational institutions and orphanages. The educational institutions were meant for boys and girls. Thus the Christian missionaries could be weakened and prevented from encouraging conversion. The Arya Samaj reconverted the Moplas of Malabar from Islam to Hinduism. The authority of the Vedas conditioned by rationalism and utilitarianism constituted the social programme of the Arya Samaj. Dayanand formed many Gurukuls due to his emphasis on the educational programme and endeavour to diffuse knowledge and dispel ignorance. The first D.A.V College was founded in Lahore, which later became a focal point of national education in the country. The educational policy of Arya Samaj was completely different from that of Lord William Bentick's policy of 1834 and that of the Christian missionaries. The main aim of these policies was to make clerks for British administration and conversion into Christianity. The Arya Samaj successfully arrested the exodus of conversion to Christianity and performed an important social mission in defending Hinduism.

The Arya Samaj, apart from its social and religious reforms, also remained in the forefront of political movement. Dayananda acted as a forerunner in the national and political awakening of the country. It produced leaders of the eminence of Lala Hans Raj, Pandit Guru Dutt and Lala Lajpat Rai. Dayananda gave the political slogan "India for Indian's". The Arya Samaj played a stellar role in bringing about the transition of the loyalist character of the Indian National Congress to a mass political movement. A large number of members of the Arya Samaj extended their support to Mahatma Gandhi. The Britishers looked Arya Samaj with suspicion, so much so that in course of time it was considered a seditious body. The members faced prosecutions and deportation. Those members of the Arya Samaj, who were in civil or military service, were sacked. Nevertheless, the samaj always claimed, that it was a non-political organization

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## **14.5 Summary**

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In India the scope of religious reform movements was not confined to religious reform alone; it also included reconstruction of social institutions and relations. This was inevitable, since religion and social structures in India were organically interlinked. Many social institutions like the caste, untouchability,



inequality of sexes etc flourished in India mainly because of the support they received from Hindu religion. Therefore, religious reform was to go hand in hand with social reforms. The prominent reform movements in India are Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj etc.

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#### **14.6 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Write a short note on Brahmo Samaj.
2. Write briefly about Arya Samaj.

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#### **14.7 Key Words**

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**Polytheism-** believing on many god.

**Monotheism-** believing in single god.

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#### **14.8 Study Guide**

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1. The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
2. Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
3. D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
4. S.C.Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
5. P.K.Kar Indian Society(2003).Page-366
6. M.N.Srinivas Social change in Modern India(1966) Page47
7. M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII, March 1968, No.1. Pages:1-2

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## **Unit-15 Scheduled Castes**

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### **Structure**

- 15.1 Learning Objectives**
- 15.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 15.3 Scheduled Castes**
- 15.4 Summary**
- 15.5 Self Assessment Questions**
- 15.6 Key Words**
- 15.7 Study Guide**

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## 15.1 Learning Objectives

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To understand Scheduled Castes.

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## 15.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge

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The expression 'Scheduled Castes' was first coined by the Simon Commission and used it in the Government of India Act-1935 to refer to certain castes. The framers of the constitution adopted the same expression and embodied it in the constitution but did not try to define it clearly. Article 341 of the Constitution empowers the President, in consultation with the head of the particular state, to notify by an order "the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which for all the purposes of the constitution be deemed to be scheduled castes in relation to that state". The second clause of the same article empowers the parliament to pass a law to include in or exclude from the list so notified by the President "any race, caste, tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe". Keeping this article in view, Prof. Ghurye defines Scheduled Castes as, "those groups which are named in the scheduled castes order in force for the time being".

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## 15.3 Scheduled Castes

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These Scheduled castes are the lowest castes of the Hindu society and are mostly untouchable castes. According to Dr. D.N. Majumdar, "Untouchable castes are those who suffer from various social and political disabilities many of which are traditionally prescribed and socially enforced by higher castes".

The scheduled castes were formerly known as the 'Panchama', the 'Antyaja', the 'Avarna', the 'Chandala', the 'Depressed castes', the 'Exterior castes' etc. Gandhiji lovingly called them Harijans meaning the people of God. These castes are found all over India.

Theoretically, these castes are not a part of Hindu Social Organisation because according to the doctrine of 'Chaturvarnya', there are only four divisions in Hindu society and there is no place for a fifth division. Yet they are closely connected with the Hindu social life. As Srinivas says, "They perform certain essential tasks in agriculture, often they are village servants, messengers and sweepers and they beat drum at village festivals and remove leaves on which people have dined at community dinners."

The origins of these castes are not clear. Hindu tradition says that the untouchable castes are formed as a result of the practice of the forbidden 'Pratiloma' marriage. It is, for instance, said that the children born out of the union between Brahmin females and Sudra males belong to the untouchable caste namely the 'Chandala'. According to Riseley and Majumdar, the origin of untouchable castes lies in "racial and cultural differences." Nesfield holds the association of these castes with dirty and unclean occupations

responsible for their being untouchable. Ghurye is of the opinion that the ideas of occupational or ceremonial purity and pollution are responsible for the origin of untouchable castes. Hutton on the other hand says that race, religion and social custom all have contributed for the growth of untouchable castes.

These castes suffered from various social, economic, religious disabilities for centuries. Their touch, even their sight was considered to be polluting and therefore, they were not allowed free movement in a village or a town. In some parts of the country they were even prevented from coming out of their houses during day time. They were not allowed to draw water from public wells. Their children could not attend schools. They were the poorest of the poor and were traditionally associated such low and despised occupations like Scavenging, basket making, working in leather etc. they were not allowed to enter into Hindu temples. They were treated as communal slaves and so their position was worse than that of a slave.

Efforts are afoot to bring about radical changes in the position of these castes. The Constitution abolishes untouchability and contains a number of special provisions for the promotion of the interests of these castes. As a consequence of these constitutional provisions, a certain number of seats, roughly in proportion to their population, are reserved for them in both central and state legislatures. A convention has been developed to include at least one member of these castes in the central and state cabinets. Their representation is assured at all level of the Panchayati Raj system. Besides, a fixed percentage of jobs is being reserved for them in the central and the state services. In order to give a boost to their education seats are reserved in the various educational institutions and scholarships are liberally given to them. Above all, the Government has been spending huge amounts of money for their upliftment.

The Government of India enacted the Untouchability Offence Act 1955, which delegitimizes all the disabilities suffered by these castes and made the practice of untouchability in any form an offence punishable by a fine of five hundred rupees or imprisonment for a period of six months or both. The Protection of the Civil Rights Act, which has been recently passed by the Parliament, contains more severe punishment for the practice of untouchability.

In addition, some individuals and organizations in their private capacity have made successful efforts for their development. The recent history of the changes in the position of the Scheduled Castes is closely connected with the untiring efforts of individuals like Narayan Guru, Ambedkar, Gandhiji and organizations like S.N.D.P Yogam, Harijan Sevak Sangh. Depressed Class Union, Scheduled Castes Federation. Sri Narayan Guru established the S.N.D.P Yogam as far back as 1920 in Kerala for the uplift of the 'Ezhara' community. His main gospel was "one caste, one religion, one God". He tried to raise the position of the Ezhara community by two means namely education and Sanskritization. In order

to achieve his goal, he established a number of schools and colleges and travelled throughout Kerala to help them change their old habits and taught them clean and good habits.

Ambedkar a great Harijan leader met the franchise committee in 1917 and pleaded for direct representation of the depressed class in Bombay legislature through separate electorate. He, as the leader of his 'Mahar' community, took many steps to reform their way of life. He urged them not to remove dead cattle from the village community and to give up drinking alcohol and begging. On the other hand, he asked them to send their children to schools, dress well and develop good habits. Above all, he taught them self respect. On a few occasions, he attempted forcible entries into temples. That's he did to establish the rights of the untouchables as Hindus. But at the first round table conference he maintained that untouchables constituted a distinct group separate from the Hindu community and wanted a separate electorate for them. He also spoke and complained about the miserable condition of the untouchables and succeeded in getting the Government's attention to their plight. At the second round table conference, Ambedkar and Gandhi failed to reach an agreement on the problem of political status of untouchables. The British Prime Minister, however, announced the communal award according to which the untouchables were granted separate seats in provincial assemblies. Ambedkar wanted a revolution in the mentality of the caste Hindus as far as untouchables are concerned. He, as the chairman of the drafting committee of the Indian Constitution, was greatly responsible for the inclusion of many special provisions for the uplift the untouchables in the Constitution and for the abolition of untouchability.

Gandhiji also made relentless efforts for the welfare of the 'Harijans'. As far back as 1920, Gandhiji wrote "untouchability cannot be given a secondary place in the programme". Without the removal of the taint, Swaraj is a meaningless term. Through his Vykom 'Satyagraha' he tried to persuade the Government and the caste Hindus of Travancore to open the temple streets for the untouchables. In December 1932, he declared that there could be no rest for him until untouchability became a thing of the past. So he made removal of untouchability one of the planks of his political platform. The present-day position of the Harijans owes much to the efforts of this great leader.

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## **15.4 Summary**

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The Government of India enacted the Untouchability Offence Act 1955, which delegitimizes all the disabilities suffered by these castes and made the practice of untouchability in any form an offence punishable by a fine of five hundred rupees or imprisonment for a period of six months or both. The Protection of the Civil Rights Act, which has been recently passed by the Parliament, contains more severe punishment for the practice of untouchability.

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**15.5 Self Assessment Questions**

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**1. Write who are scheduled castes.**

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**15.6 Key Words**

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**Harijans**- meaning the people of God.

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**15.7 Study Guide**

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
- S.C.Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
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- M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII,March 1968,No.1.Pages:1-2

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## **Unit-16 Scheduled Tribes**

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### **Structure**

- 16.1 Learning Objectives**
- 16.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 16.3 Scheduled Tribes**
- 16.4 Summary**
- 16.5 Self Assessment Questions**
- 16.6 Key Words**
- 16.7 Study Guide**

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### **16.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To know who are Scheduled Tribes.

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### **16.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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The government of India without clearly defining a tribe simply prepared a list of tribes for special treatment and called them scheduled tribes. But every year more and more communities claimed tribal status and applied for their inclusion in the list. Consequently, the list was revised and according to the scheduled tribes list modification order 1956, there are 414 tribes in India. It is, therefore, necessary to define a tribe as clearly as possible. For our purpose, we may accept the definition given by the members of the tribal communities themselves who met in Shillong in 1962

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### **16.3 Scheduled Tribes**

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According to 1971 census, 40 million people, constituting 7% of the total population of India, lead tribal way of life. They are spread all over the country. They belong to different levels of cultural development. Territorially, tribal India can be divided into three main zones and a small zone in the Bay of Bengal. They are the North-North-Eastern Zone, Central Zone and Southern Zone on the main land and a small zone comprising Andaman and Nicobar island in the Bay of Bengal. The tribes found in the North-North Eastern Zone mainly belong to the Mongoloid race and mostly speak language belonging to Sino-Tibetan Speech family. In Central zone we find the bulk of the tribal population of India. They are mainly of Australoid race and speak languages and dialects belonging to Austric speech family. In the Southern Zone we find some of the most ancient tribes of India such as the Kadar. The Kadar are said to be of Negrito race. The tribes of this zone generally speak languages belonging to the Dravidian speech family. Besides there are a few tribes in the small and isolated zone of Andaman and Nicobar islands, who belong to the Negrito race.

The tribes of India are at different levels of socio-economic development. Some of the tribes like the Kadar and the Malapantaram are food gatherers and hunters. The economy of some other tribes like the Kamar and Baiga is mid-way between food gathering and primitive agriculture. However most of the tribes in India primarily depend on some form of agriculture with forest product as secondary income. The Oraon, the Munda, the Bhil, the Santhal, the Gond and the Ho may be cited as a few examples. They mostly practise shifting cultivation. Tribes like the Toda are pastoral. Some other tribes depend upon handicrafts like basket making, spinning, weaving, pottery etc. of late there are tribal people who work in the tea plantations and modern industry.

Over the last hundred years, the tribes in India have actively come in contact with more advanced



cultures. As a result of the cultural contacts, some drastic changes have taken place in the tribal way of life. Mazumdar points out, "Today most of these tribes have come in contact with advanced communities, have learnt traits of their neighbours, have borrowed patterns of their dress and developed an intricate material economy. Some of these tribes have progressed at a tremendous pace effecting in a few years changes which have taken centuries to achieve in other areas."

These drastic changes have however given rise to new problems. First, religious conversions to Christianity or Hinduism have produced religious cleavages in many of the tribes. These differences based on religion have shattered their unity and increased social conflicts and dissensions. Second, because of the contact with other cultures many tribal people are adopting alien customs and modes of life which often contradict tribal ways of life. This has led to cultural conflicts in many tribes of India. Third, contacts with other cultures have given rise to many social problems like increase of bride price, incidence of child marriage, increase of premarital and extramarital sexual relations, increase in the number of divorces and the incidence of prostitution and venereal diseases. Finally, these cultural contacts have led to the disintegration of economic system of most of the tribes. As a result, most of the tribal people are working as labourers in plantations, agricultural farms, mines, factories etc. The employers exploit these ignorant tribal people. Traders, contractors and religious missionaries also exploit them in many ways. On the whole it may be said that contacts with other cultures have led to the disintegration of tribal social organization and way of life. In fact, some of the tribal groups have become either low caste Hindus or Christians. However a few tribes are still relatively uninfluenced by other cultures and therefore are leading tribal way of life.

Therefore, the major aim of tribal welfare programme should be to solve these problems arising out of uncontrolled, haphazard and sometimes disastrous culture contacts. There was a school of thought which advocated for a policy of isolation of the tribes to solve these problems. The chief exponents of this policy were Hutton and Elwin. Hutton suggested the creation of self governing tribal areas with powers of self determination. Elwin, on the other hand, suggested the creation of national parks, where tribals would live without being unduly influenced by outsiders. But later he discarded his own views. This policy is now rejected on the grounds that it creates a zoo or museum of tribal life instead of helping the tribal people to improve their conditions with the help of modern knowledge and resources. The second policy which may be called the policy of assimilation was suggested by some social reformers and voluntary organizations. The Christian missionaries and social reformers like Thakkar Bapa recommended for their assimilation into Christian or Hindu communities. This view is not found to be acceptable because the tribes would lose their identity. Therefore a third policy namely the policy of integration is now accepted and actively followed. This policy stresses that the tribes

should neither be converted into zoos or museums, nor should they be assimilated into the larger society without leaving any traces of their former identity, but they should be integrated with the larger society in such a way that they will be active parts of Indian society while retaining their former tribal identities. According to this policy the principles to be followed are:

1. The tribal people should be allowed to develop along the lines of their own genius. We should avoid imposing anything on them, instead we should encourage their own way of life.
2. Tribal rights to land and forests should be respected.
3. We should train and develop a team of their own people to man their administration and development programmes. There should not be too many outsiders.
4. We should not over administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should work through and not in rivalry to their social and cultural institutions.
5. We should judge results not by statistics or the amount of money spent but by quality of human character that is evolved.

The Indian Constitution has made a number of special provisions for the welfare of the tribal people. In accordance with the constitutional provisions, the central and state governments have taken measures for their upliftment. A number of research institutes are established for the study of their culture and problems. At the central level, a commissioner, attached to the home ministry, looks after their welfare and he is assisted by several regional assistant commissioners. In the states there are special directorates of tribal welfare to take care of the tribes. In order to encourage education schools are being established in tribal areas. A number of seats in medical, engineering and technical institutions are reserved for the tribal people and scholarships are liberally given to them. Besides, a number of seats in both the central and state government services are reserved for them. Reservations are also made for the tribal people in the central and state legislatures. Some of the tribal representatives have risen to the rank of ministers. The government has enacted law to protect their rights on land in tribal areas. In addition crores of rupees are being directly spent on tribal development. Special multipurpose tribal blocks have been created for their all round development. But, in spite of all these efforts their conditions are far from satisfactory. The solution of tribal problems is not so simple. It requires a multisided planning.

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## **16.4 Summary**

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The Indian Constitution has made a number of special provisions for the welfare of the tribal people. In accordance with the constitutional provisions, the central and state governments have taken measures for their upliftment. A number of research institutes are established for the study of their culture and problems. At the central level, a commissioner, attached to the home ministry, looks after their welfare and he is assisted by several regional assistant commissioners.

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**16.5 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Write a short note on Scheduled tribes.
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**16.6 Key Words**

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**Kamar-** one of the tribal group of Madhya Pradesh.

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**16.7 Study Guide**

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
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## **Unit-17 Other backward Classes**

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### **Structure**

- 17.1 Learning Objectives**
- 17.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 17.3 Other Backward Classes**
- 17.4 Summary**
- 17.5 Self Assessment Questions**
- 17.6 Key Words**
- 17.7 Study Guide**

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### **17.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To understand Other Backward Classes.

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### **17.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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The Britishers in India introduced schools and colleges where education in secular subjects like medicine, engineering, law etc. was imparted through English medium. The higher castes and classes especially the 'Brahmins', owing to their tradition of education, successfully utilized the new opportunity to their own advantage and got themselves educated. The lower castes and classes which had no such tradition lagged behind in getting themselves educated. The members of the higher castes and classes could get into government services and other professions and further enhanced their prestige. This resulted in widening the cultural, social and economic distance between the higher and lower castes.

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### **17.3 Other Backward Classes**

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The lower castes and classes found themselves at a disadvantageous position and they also realised that mere Sanskritization could not provide them the avenue for social mobility. Therefore they desired to get themselves educated and enter into government jobs and professions and thereby enhance their social positions.

However, they soon realised that the qualified youth from their castes and classes were not in a position to get into professional and postgraduate courses as admission to these courses was based on marks obtained in high schools and colleges. Children of lower caste and class could not compete with the children of higher caste and classes with literary family background. Besides they feared that their children were being discriminated against as the teachers and examiners were from higher castes and classes. Further the lower castes and classes faced a similar situation in matters relating to appointment in government services because the appointing authority at the lower levels of the government was mostly of higher castes and classes.

The backward class movement was started in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The aim of the movement was mainly to limit the monopoly of higher castes and classes especially the Brahmins in the south, in the fields of education and government jobs. The opposition did not come from the lowest class, it came from the rich and powerful higher caste like Reddis, the Kamma, the Vellalas, the Nayars etc. Muslim, Christian and other communities also joined them. Therefore, the movement was known as the Backward Class Movement rather than Backward Caste Movement.

During the 50s, there was a controversy over the criteria for the determination of Backward Class. The national elite and the local Brahmin leaders pleaded that the individual should be regarded as the unit

and income should be the criterion for the determination and selection of people for special concessions in matters regarding education and government services. The non-Brahmin leaders opposed it and pleaded for caste to be the sole criterion for the determination of backward class. This controversy continues even today. The national leaders do not favour caste as the sole criterion because they fear that it will lead to fragmentation of society. The local leaders of Brahmin and other highest castes also are not in favour of caste as the unit because they fear that it will narrow down their opportunities in the fields of education and services. The non-Brahmin lower caste leaders do not favour income as the criterion because they fear that their own opportunities will become limited as the well qualified poor Brahmins will snatch away all the concessions.

In 1953, the Government of India appointed a commission to determine the criteria for the selection of Backward Class. The commission suggested four basic criteria of backwardness. They are:

1. Low social position in the traditional caste hierarchy.
2. Lack of education in the major section of the caste or community.
3. Inadequate or no representation in the government services.
4. Inadequate representation in the field of trade, commerce and industry.

On the basis of these criteria, the commission prepared a list of 2400 castes for special concessions to be given in education and government jobs. It also recommended for the inclusion of certain section of the Muslims, Christian and Sikh communities. Every year, the number is increasing as new castes and communities apply for their inclusion in the list.

The commission holds a number of causes responsible for the backwardness of these castes and communities. It states that social, environmental, economic and political causes have operated over the centuries and created this colossal problem of backwardness. The commission also suggests a number of measures to be taken for the uplift of these backward classes. It recommends that scholarships should be given to the students of these classes and 70% of the seats in the professional colleges should be reserved for them. It also recommends that 25% of the class-I vacancies, one third of the class-II vacancies and 40% of the classes-III and IV vacancies in government services should be reserved for these other backward classes over and above the reservations made to the scheduled castes and tribes.

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## **17.4 Summary**

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The backward class movement was started in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The aim of the movement was mainly to limit the monopoly of higher castes and classes especially the Brahmins in the

south, in the fields of education and government jobs. The opposition did not come from the lowest class, it came from the rich and powerful higher caste like Reddis, the Kamma, the Vellalas, the Nayars etc.

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**17.5 Self Assessment Questions**

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**1. Who are Other Backward Classes?**

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**17.6 Key Words**

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**Nayar-** a community of Kerala.

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**17.7 Study Guide**

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
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- M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII,March 1968,No.1.Pages:1-2

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## **Unit-18 Law and Status of Women in India**

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### **Structure**

- 18.1 Learning Objectives**
- 18.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 18.3 Law and Status of Women in India**
- 18.4 Summary**
- 18.5 Self Assessment Questions**
- 18.6 Key Words**
- 18.7 Study Guide**



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### **18.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To the various laws of India.
2. To answer the status of women in India.

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### **18.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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Law has always been an important instrument to initiate social change in all democratic societies. The Pre-Independent India had experienced the non-interference in Hindu and Muslim laws, which were claimed to be of divine origin. The British authorities did not touch those sensitive aspects of the Indian social system. The British rulers were so afraid that they felt that the interference might lead to repercussions which might be “ruinous to the stability of their empire in this country.” They, therefore, adopted the plausible and seemingly reasonable attitude of non-interference. Due to the apathetic attitude of the Britishers towards social legislation aiming at the upliftment of women, there was a complete stagnation in the socio-economic sphere. It further hindered the adjustment of law to changing requirements.

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### **18.3 Law and Status of Women in India**

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The Pre-Independent India had experienced the non-interference in Hindu and Muslim laws, which were claimed to be of divine origin. The British authorities did not touch those sensitive aspects of the Indian social system. The British rulers were so afraid that they felt that the interference might lead to repercussions which might be “ruinous to the stability of their empire in this country.” They, therefore, adopted the plausible and seemingly reasonable attitude of non-interference. Due to the apathetic attitude of the Britishers towards social legislation aiming at the upliftment of women, there was a complete stagnation in the socio-economic sphere. It further hindered the adjustment of law to changing requirements. The Hindu society remained fossilized and not allowed to evolve and even moderate changes were being described as radical and revolutionary by the British rulers. This policy of stagnation created social tensions, which would have taken serious proportions, but for the untiring efforts of some of social reformers. They hinted at the major social evils which paralyzed the Indian society at that time such as the practice of child marriage, sati and child widow. These 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian social reformers, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and others, did not base their case on the ancient Hindu scriptures but on the intellectual liberal tradition of the west. They met annually at the Indian Social Conference to address the lamentable social crisis of the day.

Finally, as a sequel to their ceaseless endeavour, the British Government responded to these proposals of reform by enacting the following social legislations: (i) The Widow Remarriage

Act, passed in 1856, (ii) Civil Marriage Act, passed in 1872, (iii) Married Women's Property Act, passed in 1874. Mahatma Gandhi became the leader of the Indian National Congress in 1919. Congress had already inducted women; but, with Gandhi in control, the participation of woman in freedom struggle gained further momentum. Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins had already founded the Women Indian Association. Being aware of the fomenting activities of such organizations by and for women and having faith in the enormous moral power of women to influence events, Gandhi sought to elevate women from their position beneath the troubled surface of Indian society. In 1925, National Council for Women was founded and all Indian Women Conference (AIWC) was set up in 1927. These social welfare organizations projected many issues of social consequence to Indian women-essential questions arising from inheritance and marriage laws. Being pressured by these organizations the British Government passed: (i) The Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, (ii) The Prevention of Prostitution Act 1923, (iii) The Hindu Inheritance Act of 1929.

The participation of women in politics and avenues for employment drew a large number of women from seclusion of their homes. The Government of India appointed a commission to consider such issues as Hindu inheritance and the position of woman in respect of monogamy, dissolution of marriage and property rights. The measure for the enhancement of women's legal status, in the post-independence period mainly related to the regulations regarding polygyny, age at marriage and divorce. The concept of monogamy was based on equality of relationship between man and woman. In India the absence of a uniform civil code permitted various religious groups to follow their personal laws with regard to marriage and family. Nevertheless, barring the Muslims, probably all other religious communities have accepted monogamy. But this did not undermine the fact that polygamous marriages were completely absent among the non-Muslim communities, under the customary law, the right of Hindu wife to obtain a divorce confronted many more obstructions than that of husband. A daughter's right to ancestral property was not legally ensured.

After achieving Independence, the Congress Government, declared India a welfare state. Article 14, 15 and 16 of the Constitution enumerated the Fundamental Rights of People and guaranteed to all citizens equal protection of law and equality of opportunity in employment. With regard to these constitutional provisions the Government made a series of legislations to improve the social status of women. The Special Marriage Act of 1954 made provision for obtaining a decree of divorce by mutual consent on the ground that the parties have lived separately for a year and that three years have elapsed since the date of the marriage.

Demand for change and improvement in the legal status of women was not only Gandhi's endeavour in favour of women, but also their active participation in the national movement. Hindu Women's Right to

Property Act may be cited as a land mark social legislation in this regard. Prior to the enactment of this Act, the Hindu widow was leading a life full of misery and plights, she only had the right of maintenance after the death of her husband. But this Act did not make any provision for daughter's share in the property and she continued to be excluded from inheritance by the male members. The aspiration for modernization of the legal structure impelled the then Government of India to appoint the Rau Committee to recommend transformations and codification of Hindu Laws. The Rau Committee submitted the draft code in 1944. Soon after Independence, under the stewardship of Nehru, the Draft Code was sent to the Ministry of Law for further suggestions. Then it was referred to the select committee headed by B.R. Ambedkar in 1948. The code sought to effect revolutionary change in existing structure of Hindu society. In 1955 in the changed scenario and with the opposition mostly muted about social legislation, the long-awaited bill was pushed through. Thus, under the stewardship of Nehru, a beginning was made with the laws of marriage, divorce and inheritance of property for Hindu women. He was equally worried about making legal provision for raising the status of women in other communities. It was under his leadership that Article 44 of the Constitution- Uniform Civil Code could be included in the directive principle. His first interference in Hinduism cast aside the customary law, made the provision of divorce and gave equality to both the sexes, as per The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. This Act also applied to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs. Provision for regular monthly maintenance for either of the two spouses was made in this Act. Like the Special Marriage Act, of 1954, the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 helps to engender the spirit of equalitarianism.

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 applies to the Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs and determines the legal heir of a deceased person on the basis of affinity, irrespective of sex. Thus this Act further prepared India to accept equality of the sexes by giving a woman full ownership in the inherited or acquired by her.

The Adoption Law which was made applicable to the Hindus, in 1956, brought tremendous changes in the rights of Hindu women, as regards the adoption of a child. After the enactment of the Act, she was legally permitted to adopt a son or a daughter. The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in women and girls Act became Law in 1956. As it is obvious from the title of this Act, it stipulates, the prostitution of women finally faced proscription. The Mid-1970's can be designated as a watershed era for women. The United Nations declared 1975 to 1985 as the Women's Decade. This had a special significance in the Indian context as a special emphasis was needed at all levels of planning on various Women's programmes. As a sequel to that the Central Government appointed a committee on the status of women in India. The committee submitted the report in 1976. On the basis of the recommendations of this committee the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954 were amended by the

Indian Parliament in 1976 to accept mutual consent as a basis of divorce. The Child Marriage Restraint Act was amended in 1978. It raised the age of marriage for the girls from 15 to 18 and for boys from 18 to 21. More stringent provision was made for the offence of rape, through the Amendment of 1983 in criminal Law. The Central Government encourages the states to set up Special Dowry

Prohibition Officers for effective implementation of the Act. SITA (Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act), became law in 1956. SITA is basically a penal statute and does not attempt to abolish prostitution but only to control it. The SITA Amendment Act, 1986 has made provision of punishment for the traffickers.

Despite the social invention of the legal dissolution of marriage, under Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and Marriage Laws Amendment Act, 1976, divorce is viewed with disdain in the Indian scenario and a divorced woman is stigmatized. As a sequel to that, most of Indian women do not think in terms of legal termination of marriage, even though they are subjected to severe torture and all types of harassment. In the name of the honour or prestige of the family, they silently put up with all kinds of oppression and accept the worst ever injustice meted out of them. This is more so in case of the non-working women who are economically dependent on their male partners for their own maintenance as well the maintenance of their children. The divorced women also find it different to pull on well with their daughters and sisters due to apprehension of loss of family prestige. The non-working divorcee-women also face difficulties in their adjustment with their parents or brothers as they are, in most of the cases, considered as additional burden on the family.

Thus, an examination of the status of women in India with reference to the various legal provisions amply reveals that enactment of law alone cannot bring the desired result for uplifting the status. What is really needed is the changing attitude of people towards women, changes in the belief in the inevitability of marriage, social stigma attached to divorce etc. In the light of the above disabilities faced by Indian woman, the following pre-requisites, for the real upliftment of women's status, may be suggested: (i) Reduction of emphasis laid on wife and mother (ii) Formation of healthy attitude towards the spinsters (iii) Provision of initial facilities for those who desire divorce with minimum expenses and embarrassment (iv) Provision of protective measures to women in regard to their specific disabilities arising out of biological and cultural factors (v) Provision of equal opportunities, especially in respect of economic and political participation of woman (vi) Recognition of women's work in the household (vii) Acceptance of women as part time workers, with parity of wages and salaries with full time male-workers.

It may take decades together to translate these suggestions into action. But serious thinking on the

women's issue, recognition of women's role in the household and realization of their contribution towards facilitating the role performance of others will certainly impel all to embark upon quick steps for real equality of status of man and woman.

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#### **18.4 Summary**

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The examination of the status of women in India with reference to the various legal provisions amply reveals that enactment of law alone cannot bring the desired result for uplifting the status. What is really needed is the changing attitude of people towards women, changes in the belief in the inevitability of marriage, social stigma attached to divorce etc.

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#### **18.5 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. Write briefly about the status of women in India.
2. What are the various laws in India?

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#### **18.6 Key Words**

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**SITA-** Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act.

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#### **18.7 Study Guide**

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1. The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
2. Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
3. D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
4. S.C.Dube. The Study of Indian Society Page:32-34
5. P.K.Kar Indian Society(2003).Page-366
6. M.N.Srinivas Social change in Modern India(1966) Page47
7. M.S.A.Rao in his obituary article on K.M.Kapadia in Sociological Bulletin.Volume NoXVII, March 1968, No.1. Pages:1-2

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## **Unit-19 Reservation of SCs and STs in Employment, Education and Legislature Status and Emerging Issues**

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### **Structure**

- 19.1 Learning Objectives**
- 19.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**
- 19.3 Constitutional Provisions**
- 19.4 Government Services**
- 19.5 Education**
- 19.6 Political Safeguards**
- 19.7 Reservation as a policy-Employment, Education and Legislature**
- 19.8 Reservation in Government sector**
- 19.9 Summary**
- 19.10 Self Assessment Questions**
- 19.11 Key Words**
- 19.12 Study Guide**

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### **19.1 Learning Objectives**

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After going through this unit, the learner will be able-

1. To know the various constitutional provisions.
2. To understand reservation policy in case of employment, education and legislature.

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### **19.2 Introduction / Assessment of Prior Knowledge**

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India's affirmative action policy, more popularly known as "Reservation Policy", is authored by the provisions in the Indian Constitution which was adopted in 1950, though its initiation at the country level dates back to the early 1930s.<sup>2</sup> The two important features of the provision in the constitution which needs to be acknowledged for the purpose of this working paper are: the principle of "Non-discrimination and Equal opportunity" and the provisions enshrined in the Constitution empowering the State to take steps to ensure equal opportunity. Article 16 provides for "equality of opportunity for all citizens in the matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State".

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### **19.3 Constitutional Provisions**

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The two important features of the provision in the constitution which needs to be acknowledged for the purpose of this working paper are: the principle of "Non-discrimination and Equal opportunity" and the provisions enshrined in the Constitution empowering the State to take steps to ensure equal opportunity. Article 16 provides for "equality of opportunity for all citizens in the matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State". It bans discrimination, particularly in any employment or appointment to any office under the state on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence, or any of them. In fact Article 17 abolished the institution of untouchability which sanctified discrimination and exclusion of the erstwhile untouchables. The Article states: "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden". Accordingly, the constitution empowered the state with the responsibility to ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunity in practice. Article 46, a 'Directive Principle of State Policy' states: The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Such provisions in the constitution relates to government services, education, political representation and others

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### **19.4 Government Services**

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The Constitution provides for both appointment and promotion in the government services. Article 16 (4) empowers the State to make "any provision for the reservation in appointments, or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens". Article 16 (4 A) enables the State to make provision for reservation in matters of promotion to any group or groups of posts in the services under the State in favour of the SCs

and STs. Article 335 states: The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments of services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

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## **19.5 Education**

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In the case of education, the provision relates to non-discrimination in educational institutions, equal representations, and measures for educational promotions. Article 15 (4) states that “Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes”. Article 29(2) provides protection for admission and against discrimination in any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

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## **19.6 Political Safeguards**

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The constitution empowers the State to take steps to provide due representation to the SC/STs. Various articles contain provisions for the reservation of seats for the SC/STs in the nation’s legislative bodies in proportion to their population: Central Legislative Assembly (Article 330), Legislative Assembly of the States (Article 332), in Municipalities (Article 243 T), in various Panchayat (local self government) level bodies, namely, village, *taluk* (block) and district (Article 243 D).

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## **19.7 Reservation as a policy-Employment, Education and Legislature**

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The Indian Government’s approach towards the SC/ST population has primarily been shaped by the provisions in its Constitution which basically guarantees equality before the law, and empowers the State to make special provisions to promote the educational and economic interest of the SC/ST and to provide legal and other safeguards against discrimination in multiple spheres.

The Government has applied a twofold strategy which includes:

- (a) Legal safeguards against discrimination,
- (b) Proactive measures in the form of ‘reservation policy’ for state sector and state supported sectors, and
- (c) Policy in the form of informal affirmative action for private sector (namely agriculture and private industry, in which more than 90 percent of the SC/ST workers are engaged) as part of a general developmental or empowering measure.

Anti-discriminatory measures include enactment of anti-untouchability act of 1955 (renamed as protection of Civil rights Act in 1979) and Schedule Caste/Tribe Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989. Under the first Act, practice of untouchability and discrimination in public places and services is



treated as offence. The second Act provides legal protection to SC/STs against violence and atrocities by the high castes.

Reservation for both SC/ST in government services, educational institutions and political bodies like legislature also falls under anti-discriminatory, but proactive measures. These pro-active measures have been used to ensure proportional participation of the SC/ST in various public domains. The reservation policy is confined to a tiny state-run and state-supported sector, whereas the vast private sectors where more than 90 per cent of the SC/ST population workers are engaged are excluded. They therefore remain unprotected from exclusion and discrimination. In the absence of reservation policy in the private sector, the state has used 'general programmes' for economic, educational and social empowerment of the SC/ST. The focus has been to improve the private ownership of fixed capital assets, education, and improved access to social needs like housing, health, drinking water, electricity and others. The strategy for improving or building the private ownership of capital assets, education and social needs, which has been generally taken as a part of the anti-poverty programme, is also used as a method of earmarking quotas in an informal manner for the SC/ST population of the country.

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## **19.8 Reservation in Government sector**

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It is important to note that the Indian affirmative action policy is confined to government and government aided sector of services and educational institutions; the private jobs and educational institutions are completely excluded from the purview of the policy. Accordingly, the reservation policy is operative mainly in three spheres: government jobs, admission to public educational institutions and seats in central, state and local legislatures and bodies. Over a period of time, as the government sphere expanded, so did the scope of reservations to include newer spheres like: government housing, government spaces for shops and commercial activities and a number of other small spheres.

The most important is the reservation in government services. Article 16(A) permits reservation in favour of backward castes and in pursuance of this provision, the Government has made reservation for SC/ST in proportion to their share of population. There is also reservation in promotion of employed persons. The government services generally include government civil service, public sector undertakings, statutory and semi-government bodies, voluntary agencies, etc. which are under the control of the Government or receiving grant-in-aid. However, there are also certain services at the central level that do not come within the purview of reservation policy: these prominently include the defense and the judiciary. Reservation policy is accompanied by an array of other special provisions designed to facilitate and enhance the probability of the reserved groups to compete for government jobs. These include: relaxation of minimum age for entry into the service, relaxation in minimum standard of suitability within reasonable limits (subject to required minimum qualification), relaxation in

fee, and provision for pre-examination training, separate interview for SC/ST persons, provision of expert from SC/ST background on selection committee and others.

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## **19.9 Summary**

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Accordingly, the reservation policy is operative mainly in three spheres: government jobs, admission to public educational institutions and seats in central, state and local legislatures and bodies. Over a period of time, as the government sphere expanded, so did the scope of reservations to include newer spheres like: government housing, government spaces for shops and commercial activities and a number of other small spheres.

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## **19.10 Self Assessment Questions**

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1. What are the various constitutional provisions for disadvantaged group?
2. How reservation policy in case of employment, education and legislature is executed?

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## **19.11 Key Words**

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**Safeguards-** provisions for protecting interest.

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## **19.12 Study Guide**

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- The cultural Heritage of India-vol.I Page:349
- Paul Deussen as quoted in by R.N and R.K.Sharma in INDIAN Social Thought-Page :11
- D.S. Sharma Essence of Hinduism-Page:14
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