BA Sociology (Hons)   **Core-3**

Indian Society

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE & CONTINUING EDUCATION

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UNIT-I
INDOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

1.1. Indology: Meaning and Definition

Indology is known as the science of Indian Society. The Indological perspective claims to understand Indian Society through the concepts, theories and frameworks that are closely associated with Indian Civilization. It made a claim that Indian Society is unique in structure, function and dynamics and cannot be associated with the European Society. Indology relies on book view and culture and denounces rigorous empirical investigation.

Indology is both an approach to study the Indian Society and also an independent discipline with Indian Society as subject matter. In both the form Indology consists of studying language, beliefs, ideas, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, rituals, ceremonies and other related components of culture.

Indology demands inter-disciplinary, multi- disciplinary and cross disciplinary approach. Indology is also older than Sociology. It is antique in its origin owing its origin to 1784 by Sir William Jones of Calcutta. It was in the year 1987 that Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal where he introduced the two departments of Sanskrit and Indology. It is the beginning of Indology in India, which has been followed by several other scholars.

1.2. Scholars of Indology

As it is a fact that Indology is more a textual study, so a lot of scholars have conducted their studies depending on text. The studies conducted during this period covers a wide range of subjects such as social structure and relationships, cultural values, kinship, ideology, cultural

transactions and symbolism of life and the world etc. the studies based on text s have been conducted by many scholars, such as Bernett (1976), David (1973), Fruzzetti and Oslor (1976), Inden and Nicholas (1972), Khare (1975, 1976), Murray (1971, 1973), Marriott (1979), Pocock (1985), Eck (1985) etc. Most of these studies are based on the textual materials either drawn from epics, legends, myths, or from the folk traditions and other symbolic forms of culture. Most of them have been published in "*Contributing to Indian Sociology*" (New Series), edited by T.N. Madan.

Focusing on the origin of the perspective , Indological Perspective owes its origin to the contribution of the Orientalists like William Jones, Henery Maine, Max Muller etc. They have contributed tremendously for the development of the society and from their contribution there was the evolving of Indological Perspective. All of them have based their studies on rich cultural tradition of India and the principle that govern India and out laws of Hindu. Therefore they were also called as the Indologist.

Many founding fathers of Indian Sociology are also influenced by Indology. The various scholars are like B.K. Sarkar, G.S. Ghurye, R.K. Mukherjee, K.M. Kapadia, Irawati Karve, P.H. Prabhu, Louis Dumont.

1.3. Indology and Orientalism

Within Indology there is the bifurcation of two studies. That is Indology or Indic studies and Oriental studies. Both of them have some commonalities and differences. Indology is a sympathetic and positive picture of Non- European society of the East including Indian Society and culture. Orientalism gives an unsympathetic and negative account of the Indian Society.

Indology is said to be the westerner's labour of love for the Indian wisdom. And Orientalism emerged as the ideological need of the Bristish Empire. Indologist like Jones, Louis Renou and Bougle in France and Wilson in British India are the reputed figure and the Orientalist include Muller, William Archard, Max Weber, Karl Marx. There is a general tendency among the Indologist either to exaggerate the virtue of Indian culture, Orientalist were trying to see negative aspect of Indian tradition and rationalize missionary activities and colonial legacy. Indologist over emphasized Indian spiritualist and under emphasized the materialistic culture but the Orientalist did the reverse as they undermined spirituality and over emphasized on materialistic culture.

The Oriental Institute in Baroda was the second important Indological centre in India founded in 1893 by Maharaja of Baroda. The major objective of the institute was to develop a well equipped library of rare and unpublished Manuscript and reference books on Oriental and Indological studies.

1.4. G. S. Ghurye

1.4.1. Life Sketch of G. S. Ghurye:

Ghurye stands as the commander in the Indian Sociological frontiers. He has often been acclaimed as the 'father of Indian Sociology'. Ghurye was the first scholar, who had built up the entire first generation of Indian Sociologists in Post- independence period, almost single handedly. Ghurye backs the credits of being the founders of Indian Sociological Society and the Sociological Bulletin. Ghurye is often accredited as "Theoritical Pluralist" because he tried to study Indian Society and culture through multiple methods.

He relied on both the empirical and textual methods for studying Indian Society. Ghurye was initially influenced by the diffusionist approach of Anthropology and later on he switched to the study of Indian Social reality from Ontological and Anthropological perspective. Ghurye's Indological Approach hovers around the study of Indian Culture and Social Structure drawing its sustenance from sanskritic literature base. He was more influenced by the writings of Indologists of Bhandarkan Institute of Bombay rather than the British writings established by Sir William Jones or Max Muller. So he is often said to be relying on indigenous Indology. Ghurye tried to make a judicious blending between the Indological and Sociological discipline.

Ghurye's "Caste and Race in India" tried to make a reconstruction of a very orthodox traditional and age old social institution of India i.e. Caste. In this land mark work he made a long journey from the traditional textual interpretation of caste from sanskritic literature base to its modern social reality with changing function. According to Ghurye Sociology of India is not static, it emanates from the ancient India, travels through mediaval India and reaches Modern India. Ghurye realized that if an institution cannot be studied in those three distinct phases then we cannot make a claim that we have made a study in totality. Phasal study of an institution makes a study fragmented and haphazard. Ghurye viewed that an institution should be studied on the basis of three things that are transition, transplantation and transformation.

1.4.2. Methodological approach of Ghurye:

In describing Ghurye, two approaches may be approximated. First, one may divide the entire range of Ghurye's writing into a number of broad themes and analyze each of these items

showing how Ghurye discussed the institutions and processes. As the following unit will reveal a thematic analysis of Ghurye's writing as an imperative necessity to assess him properly. In fact despite some of the interesting diversions. His major writings have been arranged thematically. Thus caste, tribes, family and kinship, culture and civilization, religious institution, social tensions etc have been separately analyzed in the body of this unit. An attempt has also been made to explain not only the thoughts of writing of Ghurye but also to make a critical assessment of them vis-àvis contemporary sociological thinking and researches obviously, the present author tried to be as much as analytic as possible in accepting or confuting Ghurye's contributions.

Secondly, the question whether Ghurye's writings can be divided into different phases is also relevant here. The question is important because Ghurye was a prolific writer and had written for more than sixty years. We know that there are writers who have changed their opinion and even approaches in different phases of their life. Hardel Laski, for example, possessed an acute, an analytical and receptive mind and one is to take into consideration the different phases of life in order to analyze his thoughts.

1.4.3. **Works & Writings:**

The few broad areas that have been identified in Ghurye's writings are;

1. Caste.
2. Tribe.
3. Kinship.
4. Culture and Civilisation.
5. Religion.

6. Sociology of Conflict and Integration.

7. Family and Marriage.

The various writings of Ghurye include:

Caste and Race in India (1932)

• Indian Sadhus (1953)

• Bharatnatyam and it's costume (1958)

• Family and Kinship in Indo-European culture (1955)

• Social tensions in India (1968)

1.4.4. Caste in India

Ghurye's understanding of caste is comparative, historical and Indological as well. Unlike his contemporaries he doesn't glorify or condemn caste, rather he considers caste as a product of Indian culture, changing with the passage of time. Hence, it is a subject of sociological interest. Ghurye studies caste mostly as a diffusionist and a historian than as an Indologist. In his book "Caste and Race in India", he agrees with Sir Herbert Risley that caste is a product of race that comes to India along with Aryans.

Ghurye considers it as unfortunate that caste system is mostly understood in terms of Brahminic domination. Caste has gone through the process of fusion and fission in different ways in Indian history. During Vedic period caste was a product of race. Aryans distinguished themselves from non-Aryans just in terms of color but subsequently different ethnic groups developed alliance/relationship with each other and Hindu culture and values moved from Aryan community to non-Aryan communities. Aryans never introduced themselves as Brahmins or as a superior race as against non-Brahmins. Aryan society itself practiced different kinds of occupations which were allocated to different individuals and families. On the basis of their

occupation caste names were allocated to different groups.Therefore Aryans society had architects, peasants, warriors, artisans and their society was highly disciplined, organized and progressive.

Ghurye tells that it may be a matter of fact that caste evolved in India with the advent of Aryans, as their racial character was different from Indians. But at the same time there were different racial categories present in India prior to coming of the Aryans. India was not the home land of one racial group. Aryans advent added one more race to the already existing ones.

Caste was not a hierarchical exploitative system. Aryans carried with them caste system which promoted discipline in their life giving them specialization over particular occupation. No caste was superior or inferior. Occupation change was possible. Hence Aryans became highly specialized and indigenous. People looked forward to Aryans for progress. Therefore they started imbibing these elements into their life. Rulers were taught the virtues of Aryans by the Brahmins who glorified the Aryan culture. These mobile saints spread the embodiment of caste to non-Aryans.

Ghurye points out that caste was considered as central to organized form of division of labour in Aryan society. When Aryans and indigenous communities developed interpersonal relationship through communication and warfare, the disciplined nature of Aryan society was appreciated by indigenous rulers who injected the elements of caste into their social life. In addition to that, priests, monasteries and travelers glorified the virtues of Aryan caste system. Hence the element of caste radiated from northern India to other parts of the country.

1.4.5. Features of Caste:

Ghurye explains caste in India on the basis of six distinctive characteristics:

- Segmental division of society;

- Hierarchy;

- Civil and religious disabilities and privileges;

- Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation;

- Restriction on food, drinks and social intercourse;

- Endogamy.

Segmental division of the society:

Segment is the compartmentalization of the population into groups. It is basically horizontal in character. It generates social grouping but not labelling. The membership is ascribed in character, i.e. it is based on birth and flows from generation to generation. Based on the membership every member has fixed status, roles and tasks. According to the roles assigned they have to perform it. There are moral ethics, obligations and justification value behind these roles.

Hierarchy:

It is the second major characteristic of caste through which Hindu social organization and Indian Society penetrates. After the segmental divisions of the society, they are put in a pyramidical structure then it is called as hierarchy.

Certain cultural principles like purity and pollution, prioritization of certain group, preferences of the society, determine the positioning of the social segments in the hierarchy t in layer. The layering of the segments is basically vertical in nature. This caste hierarchy is responsible for spelling out the access and prevention of caste and it becomes the primary consideration for role allocation, responsibility sharing and the imposition of restrictive rules. Hierarchy determines caste norms.

According to Ghurye hierarchy becomes the major consideration for deciding all these aforesaid variables. It basically implies the Division of Labour. The entire gamut of activities in the society is divided into four types like religious, governance, maintenance and menial. Among all these activities the religious activities are given the highest position in society. Therefore Brahmin are given this responsibility. The second major activity is governance, which implies for managing the state craft and defending the populee from external aggression. So it is accorded to Khatriyas. The managerial activities are fixed on Vaishyas, who have to generate sustenance for the society. And the menial activities though an integral part of the society, are given the least priority and accorded to the shudras.

Thus it is the hierarchy that determines the roles. The higher the position in the hierarchy the greater is the role and higher is the responsibility. Hierarchy also determines the individual's access to life chances (education, health, nutrition) and life resources (wealth, power, property). The higher the position in caste hierarchy the easier becomes the access and vice-versa.

The concept of distributing justice was never prevalent but was ever violated in caste system. It was not the productive contribution but the preferencial caste position that determines the caste rights. Rights were never demanded in caste society but were preferencially imposed on certain caste. Prevalence was for higher caste and prevention was for the lower caste.

Restrictive rules were hierarchically driven in character. Every caste had got its typical culture. It formulates its own rules to govern the activities, behavior, attitude, perception of its own members. Restrictive rules in general had its own inter-caste and intra-caste implications. Restrictive rules were more for the Shudras in terms of taboos set for them. Restrictive rules did not have rigor or figure in the middle of hierarchy like Khatriyas, Vaishyas but restrictive rules were again strengthened for the higher caste like Brahmin.

Civil and religious disabilities:

Civil and religious disabilities expressed the rigidity of the caste system. To Ghurye the general reflection of Hindu social life was observed and felt through such disabilities. The disabilities were common to caste in different parts of the country but the caste groups included in it were not common, rather there are variations. Civil and religious disabilities basically came from the concept of purity and pollution. Disabilities were for impure and polluted caste and privileges were for is for pure/higher castes.

Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation:

The occupations have been fixed by heredity. Generally they have not been allowed to change their traditional occupations. Members of a caste maintain their supremacy and secrecy in their jobs and do not allow the other caste group to join in. The upper caste people like Brahmins are free to opt for study of religious books, while this cannot be done by other classes. The lower ranking activities like sweeping bathrooms, washing clothes, scavenging etc have been kept in untouchable category.

Restriction on food, drinks and social intercourse:

Some rules have been imposed upon all caste people. Restriction on feeding and social intercourse are still prevalent in Indian society. There are two types of food i.e. Kachha (cooked) food and Pakka (raw) food upon which certain restrictions are imposed with regard to sharing, for example:

- Caste groups from whom twice born caste people can accept Kachha food;
- Caste group from whom twice born caste people can accept Pakka food;
- Caste groups from whom twice born caste people can accept water but no food;

- Caste groups from whom twice born caste people do not accept water or food and maintain distance.

Endogamy:

Indian caste system is also polarized due to endogamy being determined primarily by Caste. People can marry within caste only. To disobey the caste rule is not only treated as a crime but is also condemned as a sin. The caste panchayat not only denounces inter-caste marriages but also imposes severe punishment upon those who break these rules.

1.4.6. Tribes in India

Ghurye considers that multiple ethnic groups were present in India prior to the entry of Aryans. Hindu culture was not imposed on tribal communities; rather an interaction Aryan culture that was mystical, magical and spiritual got entangled with Tantric culture, magical culture and materialistic culture of different ethnic groups gave way to evolution of Hinduism. Therefore considering Hindu culture as Aryan culture is nonsensical. The tribal deities like Ganesh, Kali, and Shiva were getting equal space in Hinduism with Aryan dieties like Indira, Vishnu, Brahma. Animism, totemism, naturalism for establishing synthesis between multiple culture present in Indian society. As a result the tribes of India consider the Hindu society and its cultural tradition a new home for them. Therefore voluntarily they assimilate themselves within the folds of Hindu society. Many tribal leaders like Tana Bhagat, Vishnu Bhagwat, Kabir Panthi and others successfully carried Hindu cultural attributes to tribal life. As a result, the tribes of the heartland of the country sharing Hindu values have Hinduised themselves. Hence their assimilation within Indian society is almost complete. Ghurye writes "Tribalism always contribute towards the construction of Hindu temple that is yet to be completed", meaning Hindu culture is evolving through a series of dialectics addressing to the demand of people in time and space. Buddhism,

Jainism, Sikhism largely embodied Hindu values with new ideas and doctrines contributing for decline of Hindu culture and tradition. He considers that Hindu cultural values were shared by tribal communities in mitigating the tribe – caste differences. Therefore tribes of India are backward Hindus. Backward' because of epistemology of Hinduism like Sanskar, distinction between Buddhi, Mana, Ahankar are yet to reach them even though they have already gone for Hindu life, ritual and way of life. Ghurye was critical to Elvin's approach of 'isolationism', indicating that forced isolation of the tribes from the larger society will accelerate suspicion leading to secessionist movement. He further indicated that separatist movement in North East India is a product of the cultural distinction between tribes located there and the larger Hindu society. In conclusion one can advocate that Ghurye understands of tribes and their problems largely manifest his nationalist appeal as he considers cultural unity between tribes and caste can only promote integration in Indian society.

1.4.7. Rural- Urbanization

Ghurye says that urbanization in India was not just due to the industrial growth; rather it started within the rural areas itself. He took the references from Sanskrit texts and documents to illustrate the growth of urban centres from the need for market felt in a rural hinterland. Development of agriculture needed more and more markets to exchange the surplus in food grains. So in many rural areas, one part of a village started functioning into a market. This led to a township, which in turn developed administrative, judicial and other institutions. In the past, urban centres were based on feudal patronage, which had demands for silk cloths, jewellery, metal artifacts, weapons etc. this led to the growth of urban centres such as Banaras, Kanchipuram, Jaipur, Moradabad etc.

In brief, it may be said that Ghurye's approach to 'rural-urbanization' reflects the indigenous source of urbanism. During colonial times, the growth of metropolitan centres altered the Indian life. The towns and cities were no longer the outlets for agricultural produce and handicrafts but they became the major manufacturing centres. These centres used rural areas for producing raw materials and turned into a market for selling industrial products. Thus, the metroplotan economy emerged to dominate the village economy. Therefore, the urbanization started making inroads into the rural hinterland in contrast to previous pattern. A large city or metropolis also functioned as the centre of culture of the territory encompassing it.

For Ghurye, the large city with its big complexes of higher education, research, judiciary, health services, print and entertainment media is a cradle innovation that ultimately serves cultural growth. The functions of the city are to perform a culturally integrative role, to act as a point of focus and the centre of radiation of the major tenets of the age. Not any city, but large city or metropolis having an organic link with the life of the people of its region can do this work well.

Ghurye views an urban planner must tackle the problems of sufficient supply of drinking water, human congestion, traffic congestion, regulation of public vehicles, insufficiency of railway transport in cities, erosion of trees, sound pollution, indiscriminate tree felling and plight of the pedestrians.

1.4.8. Critical Appraisal

He fails to recognize the rise of modern India and the contribution of Islamic and British rulers. Town planning, architecture, new administration and technology by both made India altogether different from what it was during Vedic and non-Vedic period. If sociology is a science then

sociologists must have to honor the fact rather than ideology. In Ghurye's sociology ideology predominates over the fact and that is a tragedy for Indian sociology.

A.R. Desai writes that, studying India from the lens of culture provides us no space to understand the real India that lives within inequality, diversity, dialectic and exploitation. Therefore one has to come out of the bondage of Ghurye's sociology to understand real India and the challenges and problems associated.

In a nutshell, one can advocate that Ghurye's sociology is romanticizing India what it is not. Therefore there is a need for Indian sociology to change its goalpost from book view to Field Approach.

1.5. Louis Dumont

1.5.1. Life sketch

Louis Dumont, the French sociologist, is regarded as an Indologist. Dumont used enthnographic detail in this study and applied holistic approach. He also learnt Sanskrit. The 1950 view point of course for the usefulness of a village as a unit of study persisted and, as late as in 1947, Dumont was looked down and criticized for "underrating the significance of the village as a principal unit of social organization by asserting factors of social organization in India, so is village". Presence of castes everywhere, he had said in 1995,was a token of the cultural unity and distinctiveness of India. The fruit of this pedagogic-cum-research endeavour was his magnum opus, Homo Hierarchies. Dumont said that the sociology of India must lie at the 'confluence of sociology and Indology may provide points of departure, the principles derived from it were to be confronted by what the people actually did.

1.5.2. Methodology

As a study of the caste system in India, Dumont's Homo Hierarchius offers several new perspectives of social structure. The notion of ideology and traditions are intrinsic parts of his paradigm. He has brought the method of structuralism to bear upon his study of the caste system. The chief elements of his methodology are:

1. Ideology and structure

2. Dialectic transformational relationship and comparision

3. Indological and structuralist approach

4. Congnitive historical approach

Dumont seeks the ideology of castes in Indology, and in the assumption of the unity of Indian civilization. Defining ideology, he writes: "it designates a more or less unified set of ideas and values". Indian civilization, to him, is a specific ideology whose component is in a binary opposition to that of the West: modern against equality, purity against pollution, status against power etc…. This opposition (dialectic) is the basis for comparison at the level of global ideology within the specific ideology of the caste system. The opposite is between the principles of purity and pollution.

Apart from ideology and structure, the notion of hierarchy has a pivotal place in Dumont's study of caste system. Hierarchy implies opposition between pure and impure, which also determines its dialectics. Hierarchy also suggests the encompasses the impure. Thus Dumont's approach to study of caste system in India provoked very substantial debate.

Analysis of social from a cognitive historical viewpoint has been postulated by Dumont. He conceives of Indian Society not in terms of systems of relationship but as systems of ideational or value patterns or cognitive structures. The focus in social changes study, according to Dumont, should be on "the reaction of Indian minds to the revelation of western culture", and on

how under the impact of the cognitive elements of western culture such as individualism, freedom, democracy etc., the cognitive system of Indian tradition is reacting to rejection or acceptance. The contrast in the Indian and western cognitive systems lies in the holistic character of the former and the individualistic attribute of the latter; this contrast also poses the nature of tension between tradition versus modernity in India.

1.5.3. Writings of Dumont

As stated at the outset, Dumont's main areas of interest are social anthropology and Indology. He has written on wide range of subjects such as Hinduism, caste, kinship, and social and political movements in India. His major works are as follows:

1- La Tarasque(1951)

2- One sous-caste de Inde du sud: Organization sociale et religion des pramalai kallar(1957)

4- Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications (1966, 1970)

5- Religion, Politics and History in India: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology (1970)

6- Homo aequalis (1977)

1.5.4. Homo Hierarchicus

The Homo Hierarchicus: The caste system and its Implication (1966) is an unusual work of Dumont in its conception, design and execution. This is a complete, theoretical work that helps us to access the vast body of available ethnographic data on caste. This work is different from others as it begins with a cardinal explanatory principle-hierarchy-and wholly sets out to build a model.

Hierarchy is said to distinguish Indian society from 'modern' societies whose fundamental social principle is equality. The major theme of this review can be anticipated thus: any hierarchy, like any equalitrian system, is opposed by those who see its effect upon themselves as

disadvantageous, no matter how loudly or piously it is advocated by those who benefit from it. Those low in a hierarchical system universally see it as disadvantageous to them and object to the system or to the manner in which it is applied to themselves. Any social hierarchy, then, is perpetrated and perpetuated by elites and is struggled against as circumstances permit, by those they oppress

1.5.5. Caste system

Dumont describes those who write of 'stratification' in the Indian caste system as ethno or 'socio' – centric. He claims to derive his own view of caste from purely Indian sources, thereby discovering the truth which has escaped those less capable than of transcending their modern, Western biases. The result of his insights, however, is an explanation of caste and culture in India, based on a series of oppositions or dualities (modern / traditional, hierarchy / equality, purity / population, status / powers etc) which is remarkably consistent with the dialectical and structural viewpoints of his European, and especially French, intellectual forbearers. His analysis is at least as suspect of ethnocentrism as those of the stratification sociologists he criticizes for it, as much as they, reflects alien, Western perspectives. The Indian world of ritual hierarchy described by Dumont is as sterile and unreal as the world of stratification depicted by sociologists he vilifies. In each case the people who comprise the system are depicted as unfeeling, regimented automatons ruled by inexorable social forces, conforming unquestioningly and unerringly to universal values. To assert that members of 'traditional' societies behave otherwise is a blanket denial of individuality and initiative which reflects a kind of ethnocentrism and condescension no less distorting in its effect that the 'socio-centrism' which Dumont deplores. Indians are not so simple, so consistent or slavish to custom or to one another as he implies. Surely among the conspicuous strength of Indian society are its tolerance for deviance,

for non – conformity and for diversity, and the many outlets it provides for their expression. Dumont's assertion are as inconceivable as the bland and erroneous claims made by other authors that Indians are not progressive or innovative, or are not motivated to achieve. Such characterizations are simply not true to the Indian experience, however much they satisfy their author's theories. The notion that power and economic and political factors are distinct from and epiphenomenal to caste and that ritual hierarchy is the central fact of castes, independent of power. I would assert that the power status opposition is a false dichotomy in the context of caste. The two are inseparable. Thus, for example, Dumont notes the status claims of upwardly mobile castes, but says, 'to make a claim is one thing, and for it to be accepted is another true enough. The history of myriad cases of this kind (and we may note that they are endemic to India's caste system – the Census of India did not generate them, though it did afford a new area in which to flight them out) demonstrates that the claim is granted or denied on the basis of power. Special circumstances can lead to apparent anomalies (e.g. relatively weak but respected Brahmins; relatively powerful Shudras), but usually status and power go together. Dumont explains all instances of ranking as either the rational manifestation of the hierarchical principle (ritual status) or contradictory and presumably irrational impositions of power. A case as good as that Dumont makes could be made for the primacy of power in caste relationships in India. He asserts that 'no doubt, in the majority of cases, hierarchy will be identified in some way with power, but there is no necessity for this, as the case of India will show'. Actually, the case of India can be used to show that ideology is primary (as Dumont does), or that power is primary, or that both are crucial and inseparable in the functioning of Indian caste. This does not distinguish inequality from exploitation; it identifies their common characteristics and caste systems in India and elsewhere epitomize this relationship. That the relationship is described as

paternalism that it is rationalized as being for the benefit of all − is universal and hardly surprising since such description are purveyed by the beneficiaries of the system, who arrogate to themselves the role of spokemen for it. The notion that caste occurs only in India and is not subject to cross cultural comparison. The theoretically weakest part of the book is where Dumont discusses and dismisses the notion of cross- cultural comparisons of caste organization. In this there is an anachronistic, romantic and perhaps ethnocentric element partaking of the old stereotype of 'the mysterious East', reminiscent of the authors similarly held notion (discussed above) of the qualitative differences between wholistic, 'traditional' societies and individualistic, 'modern' ones. Not that Dumont is entirely wrong. In fact this is the only way to determine what is specific to one culture, society or situation, and what is common to types or categories of social organization, or is common to recurrent process and historical circumstances. Since, including social sciences depends upon identifying and comparing common phenomena in the universe of unique elements. Whether and in what ways phenomena are 'the same' must be carefully specified but to require that they be in all respects identical is to deny the possibility of a science of society. In any case, to deny the possibility of comparison of caste in India with other social system is a logical trap for the thing called 'caste' varies widely within Hindu India by region and rank. Unfortunately, the theme of non-comparability of India caste is central to the argument of the entire book. Dumont is evidently unaware of the nature of conspicuously hierarchical, rigidly stratified caste like system outside of South Asia, and particularly of the value systems − the ideologies underlying them. An even casual acquaintance with the system of ranking, separation, repression and their accompanying value system in the United States, in Japan and in Runada for example, would preclude most of his arguments about the non-comparability of hierarchy in India. Dumont unwillingly puts his finger on the central issues

when, citing Talcott Parsons, he notes that hierarchy inevitably implies equality within the hierarchically ordered group. This is exactly the case in the American caste system. The ideology is equalitarian only as applied within the caste (White or Black); it is hierarchical when applied without. To confuse this with equalitarianism is inexcusable with reference to India. It is worth nothing in passing that contrary to Dumont's assumption, caste membership in America is not based on physical traits, important as they are, but as in India on birth on putative heredity of which physical traits are major criteria. The crucial fact is that one is born black, not that one looks black. The limited biased, albeit scholarly, sources of evidence upon which the arguments are based. The nature of the sources upon which Dumont relies in his analysis account for the books other shortcomings to large extent, shortcomings which is regarded as fatal to its purpose; explication of the nature of caste in India. The result is that the conveys a view of caste which is artificial, stiff, stereotypical and idealized. It is a view which confirms rather closely to the high caste ideal of what the caste system of Hindu India ought to be like according to those who value it positively; it conforms well to the theory of caste purveid in learned Brahmanical tracts. But it bears little relationship to the experience of caste in the lives of the many millions who live it in India, or to the feeble reflections of those lives that have made their way into the ethnographic, biographical and novelistic literature. A frank talk with a untouchable who knows and trusts one would be enough to make this clear. Hundreds of such talks would confirm it. A careful and empathetic reading of the recent empirical literature supplemented by the epic and mythic literature from which we learn much of the social history of India would do the sarge. Instead, we get from Dumont a view of caste in India an a logous to the view one might derive of race relations in America if he were to consult the United States Constitution Declaration of Independence, Pledge of Allegiance, contemporary political party platform, speeches   of

incumbent politicians authorized text books and editorials of major (and especially Southern) newspaper. The pictures is not wholly false, but neither it is true, it is biased. In this case it amounts to a celebration of the rationales for a system of institutionalized in equality as advertised and endorsed by its architects and beneficiaries.

1.5.6. Concept of pure and impure

To understand the meaning of pure and impure Dumont had dealt with two basic questions. Those are: Why is the distinction applied to hereditary groups? And, if it accounts for the contrast between Brahmins and untouchables, can it account equally for the division of society into a large number of groups, themselves sometimes extremely sub-divided? According to Dumont this opposition of purity and pollution is always between the two extreme categories. The Brahmins being the higher caste and having priestly job are considered to be pure. The untouchables being at the lower rank and doing the menial jobs are considered to be the impure. These untouchables are always left at a segregated place from villages along with various kinds of impositions on them. They are being restricted from the access of the common places like temple, well etc. It is not only restricted to individual rather this kind of pure and impure differentiation is also found in case of various objects like: silk is purer than cotton, gold than silver, than bronze, than copper.

1.5.7. Theory of Varnas

Dumont has viewed that India has the traditional hierarchy of Varnnas, colours. Through this there is the fourfold division of the society, such as Brahmins or priest, Khatriyas or warriors, Vaishyas or the traders/ merchants and the Shudras or the servants. He found that there was no categories below this called to be the untouchables. Caste and varnas are to be understood with relationship of hierarchy and power.

He has made a disjunction between the ritual status and the secular power which includes the political and economic power. There is the subordination of the political and economic criteria of the social stratification to that of the ritual status in Dumont's model. At the end Dumont discusses, the significant changes in the castes. He views that the traditional interdependence of castes has been replaced by "a universe of impenetrable blocks, self-sufficient, essential, identical and in competition in one another". Various sources of changes in caste system includes judicial and political changes, socio-religious reforms, westernization, and growth of modern professions, urbanization, spatial mobility and the growth of market economy. But, despite all these factors making for change, the most ubiquitous and the general form the change has occuredin contemporary times is one of a 'mixture' or 'combination', of traditional and modern features (Dumont, 1966: 228-31).

1.5.8. Critical Appraisal

Dumont's work is based on traditional Indian Texts. Consequently, the features of the caste system, as projected by Dumont, seem to be unchanging. In reality, the caste system has changed in various ways during a period of time. Dumont also seems to characterize Indian Society as almost stagnant, since he emphasizes the integrative function of caste system. Dumont has been criticized on the ground that he is always concerned with the system integration and system maintenance than with change or conflict. Even Dumont was criticized for his ideas on Purity and pollution, as they are not universal.

1.6.   CONCLUSION

The current chapter has briefly dealt with the meaning and concept of Indology. As a textual study it has also provided an insight that how the literature has been a source for the study of Indian Society. However it has not left for understanding the contribution of the famous

Indologists like Ghurye and Dumont. The chapter has reflected on the major contributions and the major studies of Indian society done by Ghurye and Dumont.

1.7. KEYWORDS

Indology, Orientalism, Caste, Homo Hierarchicus

1.8. SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is Indology?

2. Discuss the major characteristics of Caste System as described by Ghurye?

3. What is Homo Hierarchicus as described by Dumont?

4. What is Varna Theory?

5. What do you understand by Rural-Urbanization?

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UNIT-II
SRRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM PERSPECTIVE

2.1. Understanding Structural- Functionalism

Structural-Functional approach in the study of society emerged from the writings of early thinkers like August Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim during the later part of 19th century and became a predominant trend in sociology, social and cultural anthropology and other social sciences during the first half of 20th century. Functional approach to the study of phenomena emerged initially in biological sciences and later on adopted in other sciences and social sciences. The key points of the functionalist perspective may be summarized by a comparison drawn from biology. A biologist carries out the study of an organism, say human body, by analyzing various parts, such as brain, lungs, heart and liver. However if each part is examined in isolation, it will not reveal the entire working and maintenance of the part unless studied in relation to other parts comprising the whole organism. Functionalism as an approach adopts a similar view. Functional approach to the study of society views society in terms of its constituent parts and their relationship with each other in order to maintain the society as a whole. Radcliffe-Brown defines function of any social institution in terms of the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the whole society. Functionalism begins with the observation that behaviour in society is structured. Relationships between the members of society are organized in terms of rules or norms and hence patterned and recurrent. Values provide general guidelines for behaviour. The structure of the society may be seen as the sum total of normative behavior – sum total of social relationships, which are governed by norms. According to Radcliffe-Brown, social structure refers to 'person to person relationship institutionally defined'. The main parts of society, its institutions such as the family, the economy, the educational and political systems are

major aspects of social structure. These parts of the social structure have their contribution to make for the maintenance and survival of the society. In other words, each part of social structure has a specific function to perform towards maintenance of the society. From a functional perspective, society is regarded as a system. A system is an entity made up of interrelated parts which are interdependent. Changes in the functioning of any part will in some way, affect every other part and the system as a whole. These parts are integrated and collectively contribute towards the maintenance of the order and stability of the system. Functionalists believe in consensus, order and stability of the system. Unlike the evolutionists, the functionalists search for the origin of institutions in terms of the essential functions they perform.

2.2. STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH IN INDIA

The Structural-functional approach has been a predominant approach in the study of Indian society since the 1940s till the end of the 20th century. Students of Indian society, both sociologists and social anthropologists, have undertaken extensive analysis of the caste and village systems in order to understand the unique nature the Indian society. Among the Indian scholars, G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas and S. C. Dube may be considered to be in the forefront of structural- functionalist approach in the study of Indian society. The structural- functionalists view that the Indian society is made up of castes as significant parts that collectively constitute the social system. Castes form the units or the building blocks of Indian social structure since they have been enduring or lasting groups that determine the person to person institutionally defined relationship in the society. Ghurye underlines the basic features of castes as units of Indian social system

2.3. M.N. SRINIVAS

2.3.1. Life Sketch of M. N. Srinivas

Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas (1916–1999) was a world-renowned Indian sociologist. He is mostly known for his work on caste and caste system, social stratification and Sanskritization in southern India. He is also famous for his ideas on the concept of "Dominant Caste".

Srinivas's essays combine empirical richness and analytical rigor, theoretical sophistication with elegant prose. The mind that conceived them is sharp as well as wide-ranging. The hand that penned them is sensitive to nuance and style.

He was interested in economics, politics, history and literature, but came to those topics and disciplines from his own deep base in sociology and social anthropology. At the same time, Srinivas recognized the difference between sociology and journalism, between scholarship and common sense. His desire was to go beneath the surface of events to explore the structural and historical forces that shaped and reshaped these events. But he also paid attention to communicating the results of his enquiries in accessible prose. And he refused to take recourse to jargon. If he coined new words or terms, he made sure they aided understanding rather than obfuscating it.

2.3.2. Methodological approach of Srinivas

Srinivas was basically interested not to understand the countrymen through the Western books or through sacred books and literature rather was interested to study them from direct observation and his field experiences. So he made an intensive study on the Coorgs. Srinivas studied mostly about the caste and religion to highlight the structural-functional aspects and the dynamics of caste system. According to Srinivas there are basically two ways of understanding our society. Those are: book view and field view.

Book view is to understand the society from the books and literature available and is otherwise known as Indological approach. But Srinivas has emphasized more on field view, where understanding society from field work is considered as important.

2.3.3. Works & Writings

M.N. Srinivas has written various books and articles based on the field work experiences. His major contribution includes:

A. Social Change

B. Religion and Society

C. Dominant Caste

D. Sanskritization

The various scholarly writings of Srinivas include

A. Social change in Modern India (1966)

B. Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India(1952)

C. Caste in Modern India and Other Essays(1966)

D. The Dominant Caste and Other Essays (1987)

E. India's Villages (1955)

F. India: Social Structure (1980)

2.3.4. Social Change

Change is ever present in the society. It is a reality. Human society also experiences change in different dimensions in different times. While focusing on change every kind of change is not considered under the concept of Social Change. The basic meaning of Social change is the change in the social structure. The term social change refers to any significant alteration in

behavior patterns and cultural values. This type of change may have a lasting effect on a society's culture that has undergone transformation.

2.3.5. Sanskritization

Srinivas coined the term Sanskritization to reflect the social mobility present in Indian Society. According to M.N. Srinivas "Sanskritization is 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, and frequently, a "twice" born caste. It is followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than traditionally concealed to the claimant caste by the local community. Such claims are made over a period of time, sometimes a generation or two before they are conceded." In his study of Mysore Village, Srinivas finds that at some time or the other, every caste tries to change its rank in the hierarchy by giving up its attributes and trying to adopt those of castes above them. this process of attempting to change one's rank by giving up attributes that define a caste as low and adopting attributes that are indicative of higher status is called 'Sanskritization'. This process essentially involves a change in one's dietary habits from non- vegetarianism to vegetarianism, and change in one's occupation habits from unclean to clean occupation. The attributes of a caste become the basis of interaction between castes.

2.3.6. Dominant Caste

The concept of dominant caste has been used for the first item in sociological literature by an eminent Indian Sociologist M.N. Srinivas in his essay Social System of a Mysore Village, which was written after his study of village Rampura. The concept occupies a key position in the process of 'Sanskritisation'. The term dominant caste is used to refer to a caste which "wields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy." These castes

are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life. The people of other lower castes look at them as their 'reference group' and try to imitate their behavior, ritual pattern, custom and ideology. In this way, the dominant caste of a particular locality plays an important role in the 'process of cultural transmission' in that area. The members of a dominant caste have an upper hand in all the affairs of the locality and enjoy many special opportunities as well as privileges. Srinivas has defined the following six major characteristics of Dominant caste.

i) *Land Ownership*:

Land is the most precious possession in rural area since it is the principal source of income. Uneven distribution of locally available cultivable field is a regular phenomenon of Indian Society. A vast area of land is concentrated in the hands of rich minority. Generally the big landowners come from higher castes. These land owners employ the people of other castes as their laborers. They also give land on rent to the people. As a result, the entire population of the locality remains obliged to the few land owners of a particular caste.

These few landlords of a caste exercise considerable amount of power over all other castes and become the dominant caste of that locality. Srinivas cites the examples of landowning jats treating Brahmins as their servants in Punjab. Thakur landlords also deny cooked food from all Brahmins accept their gurus and religious teachers.

ii) *Numerical Strength*:

The numerical strength of a caste also contributes towards its dominance. The more the number the greater the power. In many areas, the Kshyatriyas due to their large population are able to exercise their control and power even over the few rich Brahmins of a locality and are able to dominate the socio-political situation.

iii) *High place in local hierarchy***:**

Indian Society has been stratified into various groups on the basis of caste system organised according to the beliefs and ideas of purity and pollution. In every locality certain caste is accorded high status owing to its ritual purity. They always enjoy social superiority to all other castes in every aspects of social life.

All the factors described above contributed towards the dominance of a caste in traditional society. With the onset of modernization and change in the attitude and belief of people the following new factors have come up overshadowing the old ones,

iv) *Education***:**

The caste, member of which are highly educated, is naturally looked up by the members of others castes. Due to their high education, they win the morale of others. The illiterate people have to take their help in many occasions owing to the complexities of modern social life. The educated people, due to their adequate information and knowledge about various developmental activities, plans and programmes, are also in a better position to utilise them which aids to their prosperity making them dominant in a particular area.

v) *Job in administration and urban sources of income***:**

The caste, the majority members of which is in government bureaucracy or has sound economic strength, always finds itself in an advantageous position. Its members hold legal and administrative powers by virtue of their being government officials. They help their other caste fellows to have different sources of urban income like supplying of food grains to urban dwellers, doing various types of business.

In this way they strengthen their economic position and become comparatively rich then, the members of caste who are engaged only in agricultural activities. All these aid to the higher position of that caste in a locality and make it dominant.

vi) *Political involvement***:**

The dominant place of politics in contemporary Indian Society can hardly be undermined. The caste being more involved in political affairs of the state or locality, automatically raises its position and exercises control in all fields of social life. Till now we have been emphasizing on the point that a caste becomes dominant in a locality due to its attributes as discussed above. But dominance is no longer a purely local phenomenon.

The caste may or may not have attributes of dominance in a particular locality or village; nevertheless it can contribute to be a dominant caste, if the same caste occupies a dominant position in that wider region. In such a case, the network or relationship and friendship ties of the members of locally unimportant caste with the dominant relatives of that region, makes them dominant**.**

2.3.7. Religion and Society

Srinivas' work *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952) led him to formulate the concept of Brahminization to represent the process of the imitation of life-ways and ritual practices of Brahmins by the lower-caste Hindus. The concept was used as an explanatory device to interpret changes observed in the ritual practices and life-ways of the lower castes through intensive and careful field study. The notion of Brahminization, however, had implicit possibilities of further abstraction into a higher level concept, 'Sanskritization'.

Srinivas achieved this through enlarging the meaning of Sanskritization and by distinguishing it from the other concept of Westernization, using both the terms in a systematic manner so as to explain the processes of social change in India. This conceptual scheme, though referring mainly to the processes of cultural imitation, has a built-in structural notion, that of hierarchy and inequality of privilege and power, since the imitation is always by the castes or categories placed lower in social and economic status.

In *Religion and Society*, Srinivas was concerned with the spread of Hinduism. He talked about "Sanskritic Hinduism' and its values. Related to this was the notion of 'sanskritization' which Srinivas employed "to describe the process of the penetration of sanskritic values into the remote parts in India. Imitation of the way of life of the topmost, twice-born castes was said to be the principle mechanism by which the lower castes sought to raise their own social status".

2.3.8. Critical Appraisal

i.   Although Srinivas has talked about the economic and technological development, he has not focused of the lower segment of society.

ii. His ideas on Sanskritization and Dominant caste has made him closer to Hindutva ideology of cultural nationalism.

iii. The two processes of social change, Sanskritization and Westernization are regarded as "limited processes in modern India and it is not possible to understand one without reference to the other."

2.4. S. C. DUBE

2.4.1. Life Sketch of S.C. Dube

S.C. Dube is renowned for his work on Indian villages and for his documentation and analysis of processes of social change. S.C. Dube was also deeply concerned with the status of the social

sciences in India. He believed that Indian social sciences suffered from a crisis of commitment, generating materials irrelevant to the national purpose. He strongly believed in relevant and purposive research by social scientists on pressing social issues. At the same time, he commended the potential usefulness of the social sciences in public policy formulation and national development in the light of their strong diagnostic and analytical techniques and their capacity for testing hypotheses on the ground through the methodology of ethnographic fieldwork.

2.4.2. Methodological approach of S.C. Dube

Dube has mostly focused his writings on India's changing villages. His later writings also maintained the same insight into India's social reality, gained from a macro-perspective, while simultaneously demanding precision in theoretical formulations and empirical verification of these propositions. Dube has always advocated for the interdisciplinary orientation and a promoter of research interest. So he had always looked at things in a different perspective, which reflects his multidimensional personality. Dube proposed a more comprehensive frame of reference for the study of 'complex cultures' to understand Indian reality. He applied deductive-positivistic rather than inductive-inferential approach, based on null situation like 'no change in modern India' or 'India's unchanging villages'.

Dube's interest in rural studies grew steadily, largely because of the acceptance of the Community Development Programme (CDP) by the Government of India. This brought a shift from 'structure' to 'change' in India's villages.

2.4.3. Works & Writings

Dube has various contributions including the themes of tribes, rural life, community development, modernization, management of change and tradition. He has basically focused on the aspects of Indian Society and Culture. His major contribution includes the themes of

a. Tribal Society

b. Village Study

c. Modernization and Development

d. Community Development Programme

e. Indian Society

f. Political Sociology

The various scholarly writings of Dube include:

a. India's Changing Villages (1958)

b. Understanding Society (1977)

c. Modernization and Development: The search for Alternative Paradigm (1988)

d. Contemporary India and its Modernization

e. Indian Society (2005)

2.4.4. Village Study

Dube has conducted his studies on various Indian villages from a structural- functional perspective. While conducting his studies on these villages he views that study of Indian villages can be studied from various elements through which the village community is organized. According to Dube "No village in India is completely autonomous and independent, for it is always one unit in a wider social system and is a part of an organized political society. An individual is not the member of a village community alone, he also belongs to a caste, religious

group or a tribe with a wider territorial spread and comprises several villages. Those units have their own organization, authority and sanctions."

In his study on *Shamirpet* village at Hyderabad, Dube has basically focused on the functioning of the Villages in India. He founded that the economic system of the rural India is mostly caste based. Thre are caste's functional specialization, interdependence and also low occupational mobility. His study derived the three major types of religious services and festivals observed in the village. They are family ceremonies, village familial and communal festivals and the Muslims and Hindus interaction with each other during festivals.

Dube had classified the society based on their standard of living into four categories that are: rich, well-to-do, average and poor. It was based on various aspects of living like household possession, clothing, ornament etc.

2.4.5. Society: Continuity and Change

There are multiple factors that bring change in the society. The state compulsion has been instrumental in bringing about little and cultural change in the village community. But the factors of utility, convenience and availability have played a more important role in bringing several new elements into the life of the community.

The changes are also found with the organizations too which includes the family, caste system etc. The attitude and condition of the family has changed bringing the consequent changes too. Within the family the bonds of kinship have is also declining with time. Even the structure of joint family system is getting replaced with the nuclear family. Extended families have become a rare idea. In caste system the occupational pattern, position and the taboos have also been changed. Apart from the occupation and various taboos there is a major change in the

caste system i.e the change in the endogamy practices in marriage, as inter-caste marriages are also taking place. Similarly there are also the changes found in the village system where the traditional membership pattern, the social control mechanism has also changed.

There is a strong influence of city which has brought about adjustment and modifications in several spheres, but the need of balancing different extremes in the organization of the community has so far prevented any drastic structural change in village communities.

2.4.6. Modernization:

Modernization is a complex social process and Dube focuses on the sociological perspective of these changes. He has mainly emphasized on the obstacles in the way of modernization, such as ill-balanced changes and rigid social norms etc.

In his book Contemporary India and its Modernization (1974), Dube has mostly discussed about bureaucracy, leadership, education, planning and secularism to analyze critically the success and failures of modernization. Modern Society is a rational and scientific. Dube identifies several components for constructing an adequate national framework for modernization. These are as follows:

1. The cohesive bonds of society must be strengthened. This can be done by encouraging consciously planned inter-regional and inter-ethnic interdependence, by secularizing political and economic participation, and by working for increasing acceptance of the legitimacy of the established authority.

2. Social restraint and social discipline are important. These depend partly on the credibility of the established authority and partly on the latter's capacity to deal effectively with economic trends of different types. Everyone from highest to lowest must be subjected equally to the

norms of restraint and discipline. Differential application of these norms causes distrust and often leads to an ambivalent attitude to authority.

3. The need for expertise, both in policy making and implementation, cannot be overemphasized. The administrative structures should be visualized as a series of independent and interpenetrating but specialized and differentiated roles. These considerations apply equally to the political sector.

4. The reward system should be structured that it encourages excellence of performance and curbs inefficiency and corruption. The cannons of public morality should be applied with equal rigor to politicians, to bureaucrats and in fact everyone else.

2.4.7. Development:

Dube in his book "Modernization and Development: A search for Alternative Paradigm" (1988), has divided the growth and diversification or specification of the concept of development into four phases.

1. Development essentially meant economic development and economists focused their attention exclusively on economic growth.

2. The relationship between economic development and social change was more keenly realized and its consequences emphasized. Economic development and technological change was hindered by institutional factors. Thus, modification in the institutional framework of society and alternatives in the attitudes and values were to be contemplated to facilitate and accelerate the process of economic development. This revolution gave birth to modernization paradigm.

3. It was a reactive and responsive phase. It was born out of a strong reaction in the inadequate paradigm of development and modernization and responded positively to more successful praxis of development.

4. It is the reflexive phase. One has to understand the world order and also the national orders. Both have to be altered if human social survival is too ensured.

2.4.8. Critical Appraisal

i. Dube's idea on classification of society based on their standard of living is not applicable for all societies.

2.5. CONCLUSION

The chapter has made an attempt for understanding Indian Society from a Structural- Functional perspective. While understanding the Indian Society it was a made an attempt through various studies Indian villages reflecting both the structural and the fictional aspects of Indian Villages. Both the scholars have made the effort to make it clear that Indian Villages are structurally and functionally reflected as a whole.

2.6.   KEYWORDS

Structure, Function, Modernization, Sanskritization, Dominant Caste

2.7.   SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the Structural- Functional Perspective? Briefly explain M.N.Srinivas ideas on Indian Villages through this perspective.

2. Explain Srinivas ideas on Sanskritization.

3. Discuss the major contribution of M.N.Srinivas on Dominant Caste.

4. How does S.C. Dube locate the changes in traditional village system of India?

5. Explain Dubes ideas on Village study for understanding Indian Society.

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UNIT-III

MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

3.1. Marxist Perspective: Meaning and Definition

Marxism aims at providing a scientific study of society from a class angle. The Marxist thinkers in India believe that the emergence of Indian society and its unique institutions could be best examined from the Marxian perspective than any other approach since the only reality is that of material phenomenon that determines everything else. The material mode of production forms the basic structure of any society and the socio-cultural domain of social relationships and institutions constitute the 'superstructure'. D.D. Kosambi was one of the well known Marxist historians who tried to employ the Marxian dialectical method to analyze 'materialism' of Indian social system. He argued that human beings cannot live without 'bread' or food. An aggregate of human beings become society only when the people develop the most essential relations, viz., the relations developed through production and mutual exchange of commodities. Kinship is not as essential as production relations are. The nature of interaction of people with natural surroundings depends on the techniques of production. Surplus depends on the means of production and the distribution of surplus among various members is a matter for the relations of production. What matters is who owns the tools of production and controls the distribution of surplus. Marxists believe that society is held together by bonds of production. For Kosambi, history is the 'presentation in chronological order of successive developments in the means and relations of production'. He argued that materialistic analysis provides a systematic understanding of Indian culture and society. In the Marxian approach, the main task is to identify the successive developments in the means and relations of production that truly mirror the life of people at any stage in history. Kosambi proposed a general theory of history founded on

dialectical materialism and undertook what he called 'purely materialistic reconstruction of history and stages of societal development' in India. Study of religion, superstition, rituals and myths may be undertaken to examine the underlying means and relations of production, for they form ideological superstructure. Study of superstructure sometimes reveals the changes occurring in the base. However, he emphasized that economic considerations are important even in the explanation of religions. He argued that the productive base as a source of explanation rather than emphasizing the superstructure to understand the social reality.

3.2. Scholars of Marxist Perspective

The study of Indian Society from Marxian Perspective has been done by scholars like D.P. Mukherjee, M.N. Dutta, D. D. Kosambi, A. R. Desai, P.C. Joshi and others. Among all the scholars of Marxist perspective the scholars whose work has been very significant are A.R. Desai, D.P. Mukherjee and Ramkrishna Mukherjee. They have adopted the dialectical- historical approach for studying Indian Society.

3.3. A. R. DESAI

3.3.1. Life Sketch of A. R. Desai:

A.R Desai was born on April 16, 1915 at Nadiad in Gujarat and died in 1994 at Baroda. He consistently advocated and applied dialectical-historical model in his sociological studies. He closely studied the works of Marx and Engels and the writings of Trotsky. He may be regarded as one of the pioneers in introducing the modern Marxist approach to empirical investigations involving bibliographical and field research. He rejects any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities. It is essentially a secular phenomenon. He finds it in family, village and other social institutions. He also does not find the origin of tradition in

western culture. He considers that the emerging contradictions in the Indian process of social transformation arise mainly from the growing nexus among the capitalist bourgeoisie, the rural petty-bourgeoisie and a state apparatus all drawn from similar social roots.

Desai was also one among the students of Dr . Ghurye at the Bombay University who later got the privilege of serving it as the Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology. He was one of the founding members of the "Indian Sociological Society" and a life member. He had the opportunity of serving the society as its president between 1978 and 1980. He is known to the academic circle of India as one of the renowned rural and urban sociologists and also a political sociologist.

Desai's ideological commitment made him to stand at a distance from the team of sociologists of his generation. He was so much impressed by the Marxist Approach, that he took every opportunity to popularize it. "Relevance of the Marxist Approach to the Study of Indian Society", was the topic of the presidential talk delivered by him in the annual conference of Indian Sociological Society held at Meerut in November 1980. This reveals his basic ideological commitment.

3.3.2. Methodological approach of Desai

Desai's sociological vision stands out for its differences with Indian social anthropology of the 1960s and 1970s. When the other Indian sociologists were concentrating on analyzing the micro (the village), Desai's sociology studied the macro and the meso Capitalism, nationalism, classes, agrarian structure, the state and peasant movements among other things. Desai's Marxist socio

logy used the historical method to give specific meaning to the Marxist notion of structure and the various elements in its constitution in India such as feudalism, capitalism, the relationship between class and nation, peasants and working class, the post – colonial state and the rights of the deprived. Desai framed an interdisciplinary sociology in which there was very little differences between sociology and social science which used the method of participant observation and fieldwork to understand Indian social structure and capture the processes of change.

A.R.Desai is one among the Indian Sociologists who have constantly advocated and applied dialectical historical model in his sociological studies. Desai closely studied the works of Marx and Engel's. He is regarded as one of the pioneers of the modern Marxist approach to empirical investigations involving bibliographical and field research. Desai has consistently applied Marxist methods in his treatment of Indian social structure and its processes. He rejects any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities. He finds that the dominant sociological approaches in India are basically non-Marxist, and Marxist approach has been rejected on the pretext of being dogmatic, value-loaded and deterministic in nature. The relevant approach according to Desai, is the Marxist approach as it could help to study the government policies, the well his caste and class system into state apparatus and India's political economy.

3.3.3. Works & Writings

A. R Desai has applied his in Marxist perspective to understand the diverse aspects of Indian social reality. The main works are:

- The Social Background of Indian Nationalism

- Rural Sociology in India

- Slums and Urbanization in India

- State and Society in India

- Peasant Struggle in India

- Rural India in Transition

- India's Path of development Desai also developed the field of political sociology in 1960s.He studied Indian society from Marxian perspective and also used history fruitfully.

3.3.4. Transformation of Indian Society

The transformation of India Society from feudal economy to capitalist economy was the result of the British conquest of India. The capitalist path of development was adopted by the Britishers in the political and economic policies at the levels of trade, industry and finance. With the introduction of new economic reforms there was the disruption of the old economic system in India. The old land relations and artisans got replaced with the new land relations and modern industries. There was the emergence of the Zamindars as the private owner of the lands. Even new class groups also emerged with this shift in the economic system which included the group like agricultural labourers, tenants, merchants etc. The new land revenue system, commercialization of agriculture, fragmentation of land etc. also led to the transformation of Indian Village. This has also resulted in the polarization of classes in agrarian areas, poverty in rural areas and exploitation of classes by the land owners. Similarly, in urban society, there were capitalist industrial working class, petty traders, professional class of doctors, lawyers, engineers etc.

The introduction of railways, postal services, uniform laws, also brought the qualitative changes in the Indian Society. Even though Britishers had the exploitative mechanisms still it resulted in the unification of the Indian Society. Infact all the infrastructural development lead to the development of Indian Nationalism leading to nationalist freedom movement.

3.3.5. Social Background of Indian Nationalism

Desai had studied various movements of Indian Society like rural and urban, caste and class structure, social mobility and other through the Marxist approach in general and the historical-dialectical materialism in particular. He has also discussed that the traditional background of Indian Nationalism was the byproduct of material conditions created by the Britishers through the processes of industrialization and modernization, and this did not exist in Pre-British India. Desai holds the view that if economic relations are closely associated with the traditions than the change in economic condition brings the consequent changes in the traditions. So there was also the disintegration in traditional caste system of Indian Society due to the new social and material conditions like industries, economic growth, education etc.

Both the books of Desai "Social Background of Indian Nationalism" (1948) and "Recent Trends in Indian Nationalism" (1960) reflected on the development of capitalism in India. According to Desai the state formed in post-Independence period is a capitalist state. Here the administration plays a dual role of protecting the propertied classes and suppressing the struggles of the exploited classes.

3.3.6. Relevance of Marxist Approach

Desai views that Marxist paradigm is the most relevant framework that can help in comprehending properly the transformation that is taking place in the Indian Society and its various sub-systems. The Marxist approach helps one to raise relevant questions to conduct the researches in the right direction, enables to formulate adequate hypothesis, assists to evolve proper concepts, adopt and combine research techniques and can help one to locate central tendencies of transformation with its major implications. The Marxist approach is to understand any society and change in it. According to Marx "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or by anything one likes". Men begin to distinguish themselves when they produce the means of subsistence. Because in producing the means of subsistence they produce the material life.

The Marxist approach demands from everyone to understand social reality, to be clear about the nature of means of production, the techno- economic division of labor and social relations of production. Marxist approach considers property relations as crucial because they shape the purpose, nature, direction and objectives underlying the production. In Marxist approach "History is a shank" of all well conducted studies of man and society. It demands that a specific society should be studied as a changing system comprised of contradictory forces some of which sustain and others which change that society. In short, the Marxist approach gives central importance to property structure in analyzing any society. It provides historical location and specification of all social phenomenona. The Marxist approach, in contrast to other sociological approach exhibits one distinguishing feature i.e. the importance given to the "mode of production of material life".

3.3.7. Critical Appraisal

i.   Desai's approach for understanding Indian Society from the economic dimension is not always the best way to understand the society.

ii. Desai's approach of understanding Indian Society is not empirical based.

3.4.   D. P. MUKHERJEE

3.4.1. Life Sketch of D. P. Mukherjee

D.P. Mukherjee was one of the founding fathers of sociology in India. He had made an attempt to analyze Indian history from the dialectical perspective of Karl Marx. He was one among those who laid the foundations of Indian sociology on a firm footing. Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee was popularly known in the academic circle as D. P. only. He was born on 5th October 1894 in a middle Class Bengali family that had comparatively a long tradition of intellectual achievements. D. P. was in close touch with the views and thought of the famous Bengali writers and poets such as Bankimchandra Chaterji, Ravindarnath Tagore. Dhurjali Prasad Mukheree was born on 5 October, 1894 in a Brahmin, middle class family that had a long tradition of intellectual pursuits. After his 'Entrance' examination he opted for the social instead of the natural of biological sciences, the latter being preferred by the brightest students of those days. D. P. Opted for a career in teaching which began at Bangabasi College, Calcutta. He also began to write and publish in both Bengali and English, and soon acquired a reputation as a brilliant young man with broad intellectual interests and sound critical judgement. D. P. Mukherjee joined the University of Luknow as a lecturer in economics and sociology in 1922 at the invitation of Radhakamal Mukerjee. Mukerjee himself had graduated from presidency college, Calcutta, with

Honors in History and Literature, and then specialized (M. A., Ph. D) in economics. He became the Professor and Head of the Department at Luknow University in 1921, in Economic and Sociology. D. P. Mukherjee's reputation as a teacher was not confined to the students of Economics and Sociology, but was generally acknowledged at the University level. His lectures on the history of economic and social thought, and on historical sociology, were particularly appreciated during those days. His intellectual influence was felt even outside the university campus. He was delivering lectures and writing articles for newspapers on a wide variety of topics such as graphic, arts, music, cinema, literature and politics.

3.4.2. Methodological approach of Mukherjee

Dhurijati Prasad Mukherjee was perhaps the most popular of the pioneers in Indian Sociology. He came to sociology more as a social philosopher. However, he ended up more as an advocate of empiricism, involving spiritual feelings. He was deeply interested in understanding the nature and meaning of Indian social reality in the Indian tradition. He was equally interested in finding out the ways of how to change it for promoting welfare of the common people by adapting the forces of modernity to the specificity of Indian tradition. He was acknowledge to be a Marxist. It implied that he followed Marxism as a method of analysis. His dialectical analysis of Indian history suggested that tradition and modernity colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism could be seen as dialectically interacting with each other in contemporary India. Dhurjati Prasad Mukherji contributed the perspective of Marxian Sociology in India. He was tolerant of Western ideas, concepts and analytical categories. He viewed that there is a need for an indigenous sociology and social anthropology. He preferred to call himself 'Marxologist' rather than 'Marxist' and attempted a dialectical interpretation of the encounter between the

Indian tradition and modernity which unleashed many forces of cultural contradiction during the colonial era. He focused more on the historical specificity of Indias cultural and social transformation which was characterized less by the "Class struggle" and more by value assimilating and cultural synthesis that resulted from the encounter between tradition and modernity. Concerning Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji approach to the understanding of Indian Society, culture and change, two points needs to be stressed.

1. First he was very much against maintaining rigid barriers between one social science discipline   and another.

2. Shared historical perspective in their studies.

3.4.3. Personality

According to Mukherjee to understand individual in social science theories as an abstract individual is a narrow concept. So it is better to understand the individual through a holistic approach or through the psycho-sociological approach. So the 'synthesis of the double process of individuality and the socialization of the uniqueness of individual life, this perfect unity' is called as personality (Mukherjee, 1924).

DP while defining personality has made a distinction between the ideas of *Purusha* from the western notion of individual. The relationship of purusha and society free of the tension or the relationship between individual and group is the key element of understanding Indian Society in terms of tradition.

He has also analyzed the concept of 'knowledge' and 'knower'. Knowledge according to Mukherjee is not mere 'matter-of-factness', but ultimately, after taking the empirical datum and the scientific method for its study into account, philosophic. He has emphasized on the

importance of comparative cultural perspectives and the historical situatedness of social reality. So every systematic body of knowledge needs to include all these aspects. Even he has also stressed on the role of reason as an intellectual ability to deduce or infer as the primary source of knowledge.

An attempt has been made for understanding the notions of progress, equality, social forces and social control. So Mukherjee has rejected the evolutionist notion of progress as a natural phenomenon and stressed on the element of purpose in the life of human beings. D.P. Mukherjee defines progress as a problem covering the whole field of human endeavour. It has a direction in time. It has various means and tactics of development. Fundamentally, it is a problem of balance of values. So far as human values arise only in contact with human consciousness at its different levels, the problem of progress has unique reference to the changing individual living in a particular region at a particular time in association with other individuals who share with him certain common customs, beliefs, traditions and possibly a common treatment.

So it can be concluded from the above definition of progress that 'modernization' was the special form of progress bringing the people of third world to the second half of the 20th century.

3.4.4. Modern Indian Culture

D.P. Mukherjee in his "Modern Indian Culture: A Sociological Study" has revealed British rule as the real turning point for the Indian Society. He has always visualized India as peaceful and progressive. India is born out of the union of various elements, culture etc. According to him the national movement in India was anti-intellectual in nature, but it has helped in generating idealism and commitment among the people. It was found that politics has ruined our culture. Mukherjee believes that modernization as a process can never be achieved by the mere imitation.

Rather modernization is a process of expansion, elevation, revitalization of traditional values and cultural patterns. Tradition is a principle of continuity providing the freedom to choose from different alternatives.

While discussing about the process of modernization Mukherjee has also defined the meaning of tradition. The sanskrtitic meaning of tradition is *Parampara*. Mukherjee has classified Indian Tradition into three types viz. primary, secondary, tertiary. The primary traditions are the primitive and authentic to Indian culture. Secondary tradition emerged with the arrival of Muslims in India. Even till the time of Britishers there was no synthesis of traditions among the Hindus and Muslims. The tertiary tradition reflected the differences among various traditions in India. Traditions are supposed to have a source like scriptures, or statements or mythical heroes etc. It is said that tradition performs the act of conserving though not necessarily conservative. He says that tradition do change on the basis of three principles Sruti, Smriti and Anubhava. Among these three principles it is the Anubhava or the personal experience is most important. Due to this changing dimension of tradition there is always the need of adjustment in Indian Tradition. So Mukherjee has articulated that the Indians will not vanish like the primitive tribes due to the impact of western culture. Infact Indian culture is very flexible in nature which can assimilate various cultures within it. It is the "knowledge of traditions which also shows the way to break them with the least social cost".

Mukherjees ideas on tradition and modernity replicate a dialectical relationship between the two. He has argued that traditions are central to the understanding of Indian Society. The contradiction between tradition and modernity therefore ends up in two ways. Those are Conflict and Synthesis. Indian Society according him is also the result of the interaction between tradition

and modernity. Thus Mukherjee's thinking oscillates between orthodox Marxism and a traditionalistic point of view.

3.4.5. Making of Indian History

Analyzing the history of India, D.P. Mukherjee has followed the ideas of Karl Marx. Unlike Marx, Mukherjee has also perceived the role of Britishers as a crucial factor behind the history of India. But Marx has only focused only on the positive consequences of British rule, where as mukherjee has emphasized on both the positive and negative consequences of British rule. Thus some Marxists have claimed on their side despite his denials that he was a Marxist; he jestingly claimed to be only a 'Marxologist'.

While discussing the history of India D.P. Mukherjee has emphasized on two key words; 'specificity' and 'crisis'. The former points to the importance of the encounter of traditions and the latter to its consequences. Tradition in Marxist view is "the comparative obduracy of a culture-patter" According to Mukherjee this Marxist approach needs to be grounded in the specificity of Indian history as Marx focuses on Capitalism as the dominant institution of western society during that time. And it has also pointed out the crisis of contradictory class interest of the capitalist society.

D.P. Mukherjee was also interested in studying this historical process of the relation between tradition and modernity. While studying this process Mukherjee says that this can be done by focusing first on tradition and then only focusing on the change. So to study such historical process, it should begin with social traditions to which the individuals have been born and then in which they have had their being. Studying the changing dimension Mukherjee says that, this change in tradition takes place due to both the internal and the external pressure. Here the

external pressure is mostly the economic part. The economic pressure is mostly about the change in the modes of production and in this the tradition survives by adjustments. So the capacity for adjustment is the measure of the vitality of tradition.

3.4.6. Modernization: Genuine or spurious?

The stand point of D.P. Mukherjee regarding modernization is that there is no genuine modernization through imitation. To him people could not abandon their cultural heritage and yet succeed in internalizing the historical experience of other peoples; they could only be ready to be taken over. The efforts of Raja Rammohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, who tried to make the main currents of western thought and action…run through the Indian bed to remove its choking weeds in order that the ancient stream might flow, was the best approach for modernization. Modernization emerges as a historical process which is at once an expansion, an elevation, a deepening and a revitalization-in short, a larger investment- of traditional values and cultural patterns, and not a total departure from them, resulting from the interplay of the traditional and the modern. From this perspective, tradition is not an obstacle rather it gives the freedom to choose between the alternatives and evolve a cultural pattern which can not but be a synthesis of old and the new. Modernity must, therefore, be defined in relation to and not denial of tradition. While discussing about the process of modernization D.P. Mukherjee has stressed the importance on the role of self- consciousness. It is the first condition, or form, of modernization. Individual needs to have the self- consciousness to accept the change in the traditional values and adopt the new values.

3.4.7. Critical Appraisal

The contribution of D. P. Mukherjee is mostly regarding the history of India but without much evidence. Even he has talked about the process of modernization only in comparison to tradition and has not reflected on the major features of the process. It has been criticized by various scholars that though Mukherjee has talked about the idea of synthesis as a way for modernization but he has failed to clearly examine the term and rigorously examine the process of synthesis.

3.5.   CONCLUSION

The current chapter has briefly dealt with the Marxist approach of studying Indian Society. Unlike Marx, A.R. Desai and D.P. Mukherjee has also followed his ideas and notion for analyzing the Indian Society. It has focused on various ideas and concepts of Marx being adopted by the scholars in understanding Indian Society in general and the processes of change in Indian Society in particular.

3.6.   KEYWORDS

Nationalism, Capitalism, Modernization, Personality, Dialectic, Synthesis

3.7.   SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

  i.   Explain the ideas of A.R. Desai on Transformation of Indian Society.

 ii.   Discuss the Social Background of Indian Nationalism as viewed by A.R. Desai.

iii.   Examine the relevance of Marxist approach in understanding Indian Society?

 iv.   What is personality? Discuss the notion of personality according to D.P. Mukherjee.

  v.   What is Modernization? Explain the process of Modernization in the words of D.P. Mukherjee.

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UNIT-IV
SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVE

4.1.   SUBALTERN: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Sub Altern Studies began its impressive career in England at the end of the 1970s, when conversations on subaltern themes among a small group of English and Indian historians led to a proposal to launch a new journal in India. But Subaltern Studies began in India, where writing about Subaltern Studies began in book reviews. And by 1986 an accumulation of writing inside and outside the project had established a distinctive school of research whose adherents came to be called as 'subalternists' or simply, 'subalterns.' In the 1990s Subaltern Studies became a hot topic in academic circles on several continents; a weapon, magnet, target, lightning rod, hitching post, icon, gold mine, and fortress for scholars ranging across disciplines from history to political science, anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, and cultural studies.

 The Subaltern Studies emerged in 1982 as a critique of two contending schools of the modern Indian history, namely that of the Cambridge and of the nationalist-Marxist historians. Both these schools, from a Subaltern perspective, constructed history of Indian nationalism as a story of achievement of a tiny elite group. Therefore, they "could not explain the contributions made by people on their own, that is, independent of the elite to the making and development of this nationalism". This necessitated the Subaltern Studies to inaugurate an "anti-elitist approach to history" in which "the subaltern groups were viewed as the subjects of history." Therefore, according to Vinay Lal, "Subaltern Studies, viewed as a collective enterprise, represents the most significant achievement of South Asian 'cultural studies'; it has effectively contested what were

until recently the dominant interpretations of Indian history, and more generally it has provided a framework within which to contest the dominant modes of knowledge."

The word 'subaltern' refers to the general attribute of subordination, which is expressed in terms of a caste, class, age, gender etc. It also includes the characteristics of defiance and submission. Literally it conveys the meaning 'view from below' or understanding from the bottom of society or the flow of knowledge from below. The subaltern approach tries to make a balance by highlighting the role of politics of the 'masses' as against the elite politics. This approach is not only focusing on peasant or tribal insurgents as object of history but also treats them as makers of their own history- endowed with a transformative consciousness of their own.

4.2.   SHOLARS OF SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVE

The subalternists always claim that they have unfolded the incapacity of nationalist and elitist historiography to incorporate the voices of the weak into the project of history re-writing. They have focused their attention on the circle of elite politics and have emphasized the insurrectionary activities and potential of the 'subaltern' classes to make these classes possessed self-conscious and coherent conception of resistance that was directed against rich peasants, urban traders or the colonial revenue administrators. The major scholars of the perspectives in India are David Hardiman, B.R. Ambedkar, Ranjit Guha and others.

4.3.   B.R. AMBEDKAR

4.3.1. Life Sketch of B.R. Ambedkar

Ambedkar born on 14th April 1891was the most towering figure among the Dalit leaders. In 1917 he joined the Baroda State Service after returning from his studies in the USA and the United Kingdom, as part of the terms of his scholarship agreement. He worked in the city of Baroda, the place of the ruling family of Gaikwad, which financed his studies abroad. He worked as secretary in the defense office of the Maharaja of Baroda State. Ambedkar worked for the protection of dalit rights and upliftment of the status of the Dalits. In 1924, he started legal practice in Bombay and founded the *Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha* (Depressed Class Institute) to uplift the Dalits. Henceforth, he started his movement and took the cause of the Dalits. He roused the dalit consciousness to fight for the eradication of dalit discrimination; to claim equality of treatment, status and opportunity; to equally enjoy all rights including civil, political, social and economic and respect for the dignity of persons. He was considered a crusader for the human rights of the Dalits in India.

Ambedkar was a great supporter of women's liberation. He blamed the verna system, which has not only subjugated Dalits but also women. He questioned *Manu Smriti* (Laws of Manu), the law book (Dharam-Shastra) of Brahminic Hinduism and attributed to Manu, the legendary first man and lawgiver. *Manu Smriti* prescribed the Dharma of each Hindu, stating the obligations attached to his or her social class and stage of life. It was hostile to the interest of lower caste people and women. It prohibited re-marriage of widows. He felt that *Manu Smriti* was solely responsible for the downfall of Hindu women. He encouraged the Dalits to embrace Buddhism to liberate their own selves from Hindu subjugation. Hence he fought for the right to choose ones' faith.

He adopted various means to safeguard dalit rights. Ambedkar launched a movement against dalit discrimination by creating public opinion through his writings in several periodicals such as *Mook Nayak, Vahishkrit Bharat*, *and Equality Janta*, which he started for the protection of dalit

rights. He also launched numerous movements. One of the memorable struggles of the Dalits was the Vaikkom Satyagraha in Travancore in Maharashtra, which asserted the right of the Dalits to worship in Hindu temples without hindrance. Ambedkar also fought for the rights of workers and peasants. In the late 1920s and especially in the 1930s when he had formed his Independent Labour Party, he took up the cause of tenants (from both the dalit Mahars and the caste Hindu Kunbis) in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. he demand for safeguards and protection of Scheduled Castes (earlier called Depressed Class) has a long history dating to Montague-Chelmsford Reform of 1919 during the British Raj period. Ambedkar had been closely involved in the struggle to give Scheduled Caste people solid statutory safeguard. He was a delegate at the Round Table Conference in London, where he asked for separate electorate for the Dalits. It is not a surprise that subsequently Ambedkar saw to it that the welfare of the Scheduled Caste people were guaranteed in the 1949 Constitution of India in the form of reservation in legislative, employment and educational fields. Ambedkar was a great champion of the dalit cause because he succeeded in turning the depressed class movement into a revolutionary movement throughout India.

4.3.2. Writings of B.R. Ambedkar

Ambedkar has made several major contributions in social sciences. His scholarly writings include:

i. The untouchables, Who are they?

ii. Who are the Shudras?

iii. States and Minorities

iv. Emancipation of the Untouchables

v. Annihilation of Caste

4.3.3. Understanding Dalit

In general terms Dalit refers to the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the Other Backward Classes (OBC). But in political sense, therm Dalit refers to the Scheduled Castes. This term was first used by the British in Government of India Act, 1935. They were generally considered as untouchables. So Mahatma Gandhi had replaced the term with 'Harijans' which means the man of God. According to Hindu Code of Conduct untouchables belongs to the lowest rank of hierarchy with different names like shudras, chandals, antyajas etc. Ambedkar's movement had led to the development of the term 'Dalit' which indicates a political and social; awareness. Ambedkar had adopted a different approach and phiolosophy for the emancipation of Scheduled Castes. Ambedkar wanted the liberation of dalits through creating an egalitarian society. But it was not possible in Hindu social structure, which was quite hierarchical in nature and placed the dalits at the bottom. So he asserted that the dalits should come forward and have to fight for themselves, for which Ambedkar provided them with the mantra of- educate, organize and agitate.

4.3.4. Subaltern approach of Ambedkar

The involvement of Ambedkar in the field of politics, created the new dimensions for social reforms. According to him unless and until the downtrodden do not fight for their rights and for themselves then no one could bring them out of their problems. Self-awakening, is the best way to remove the evils in society. Ambedkar in his subaltern approach used to preach that liberty can not be received as a gift rather it has to be fought for. Self-elevation is not achieved by the blessings of others but only by one's own struggle and deed. Ambedkar provided the mission and vision to the people who were lacking the courage within themselves.

According to Ambedkar in Hindu religion the Vedas, smritis and shastras were used as a tool to inflict severe punishment against the dalits or untouchables. So he viewed that these Vedas, smritis and shatras are just a system of rule, which deprived the untouchables from their basic needs and creates the discrimination in the society. So there is nothing wrong in destroying this religion and it is not even irreligious.

Another major aspect of Ambedkar's subaltern approach is the formulation of Indian nationalism. It included the national perception and aspirations of the downtrodden. Ambedkar's alternative form of nationalism, in opposition to the dominant discourse of Hindu nationalism as represented by Raja Rammohan Roy, B.G. Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee on the one hand and Communist- secular- socialist nationalism represented by M. N. Ror, R. P. Duta, T. Nagi Reddy and E. M.S. Namboodri on the other, are not only distinct but are also original. Whereas the Hindu nationalism on strengthening the Brahminical supremacy in the post-colonial India, the communist-secular nationalism, inspite of its endeavour to abolish class was myopic to the Dalit's tribulation as its ideologies also belonged to the upper castes like that of Hindu nationalism. Therefore, Ambedkar's 'Dalit-Bahujan- Samaj' formed an anti-hindu and anti-brahminical discourse of Indian nationalism. The main aim of this nationalism was to form a casteless and classless society where there will be no discrimination on the basis of birth and occupation.

4.3.5. Role in politics

B.R. Ambedkar was a representative figure of Indian Politics in the Gandhian era. Gandhi was the unchallenged leader of Indian National Congress; Jinnah represented the separatist Muslim forces and Ambedkar was the main spokesman of Depressed Classes in India. Both Gandhi and

Ambedkar were the champions of the Depressed Classes. Ambedkar had been born in an untouchable family and had suffered from humiliation on that account. By his exertions and perseverance he proved himself the unchallenged leader of the Depressed Classes in India as well as a statesman of national stature. Decades have passed since independence and Ambedkar's death. At the distance of time it is perhaps worthwhile to evaluate his role and personality in proper historical perspective. For most of his life Ambedkar worked outside the mainstream of national politics. He worked for the Depressed Classes' uplift within the political and constitutional framework of the imperialist era. He sincerely felt that being socially treated as an untouchable, he could not get a status of equality and dignity within the Congress politics which was dominated by Caste Hindu politicians. Mahatma Gandhi realized Ambedkar's mental state and said: "He is pronounced as belonging to the Depressed Classes and as being untouchable. Intellectually he is superior to thousands of intelligent and educated caste Hindus. His personal cleanliness was as high as that of any of us. Today he is an eminent lecturer in law. Tomorrow you may find him a Judge of the High Court. In other words there is no position in the Government of this country to which he may not aspire or rise and to which an orthodox Brahmin can rise." Ambedkar pointed out that though the Caste Hindu Congressmen adopted a radical stand in politics, in social matters they were traditionalists and upheld social inequality. Gandhi also felt that many Congressmen supported his anti-untouchability programme only out of political consideration and that they had no hearty support for this programme. Even though Ambedkar kept aloof from the political programme and activities of the National Congress, yet he cannot be branded as protégé of the British imperialism. He fearlessly criticized the failings of the British Government. He pointed out that the British Government supported the cause of Depressed Classes only out of ulterior political motives and gave undue weightage to the Hindu

conservatives. Ambedkar professed and proclaimed that the uplift of the Depressed Classes was the be all and end-all of his life. He did not show any eagerness to earn the reputation of a nationalist leader. This is why he fearlessly and frankly expressed his views for the cause of Depressed Classes and quarrelled with Congress and even Mahatma Gandhi. In September 1932, when Mahatma Gandhi announced his decision to fast unto death, protesting against the provision of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes in the British Prime Minister's Communal Award, and when practically the whole nation backed Gandhi's stand, Ambedkar criticized Gandhi and called his fast " a political stunt". Gandhi took Ambedkar's views seriously and finally agreed to reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes in joint electorates, which was embodied in the Poona Pact. Ambedkar was a social revolutionary. He endeavoured to rouse self-consciousness and self respect among the Depressed Classes. He advised them to be leonine heroes instead of remaining as innocent as goats. He aimed at eradicating social distinctions, based on caste and Varna, and establishing a social order, based on liberty, equality and fraternity. At the fag-end of his life he with his followers embraced Buddhism, as he considered Buddhism, to be a humanitarian religion, based on liberty, equality and fraternity. As Ambedkar worked outside the mainstream of Congress politics and also criticized the Congress, he was suspected by many to be a separatist and pro-British. But all along the remained a patriot. He used to say that patriotism was not the monopoly of Congress and that one could be patriotic without becoming a Congressman. He considered the uplift of the backward sections of the society to be more important than mere political emancipation of the country. Political freedom was meaningless without the elevation of the backward sections of the society. Mahatma Gandhi also held similar views as he thought of the concept of Swaraj in terms of the meanest of the countrymen. Swaraj without extinction of caste had no meaning for Ambedkar. Even though

Ambedkar had quarreled with Congress and Gandhi on certain basic issues, on the eve of independence he accepted the invitation of the Congress to join the Union Government and played his role in the building of the nation. As the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution he played the major role in hammering a new constitution. He took all care to enshrine the progressive ideas and ideals of the National Congress in the Constitution. Generally Ambedkar is known as the father of Indian Constitution. Dr. K.V.Rao has described him as the mother of the Constitution as he gave constitutional shape to the ideas of Congress rather than his own. He held the portfolio of Law in Jawaharlal Nehru's first Cabinet. Because of his differences with the Congress and Prime Minister Nehru, he resigned from the Union Government. Ambedkar is generally regarded as the great protagonist of reservation of seats in legislature and posts in Government. But towards the end of his life, when he embraced Buddhism with his followers, he advised the Scheduled Castes to stand on their own legs instead of depending on crutches. Ambedkar is a rare personality in the national life of India. He was an economist, a jurist, a social revolutionary, a constitution-maker, an able parliamentarian, an administrator, and above all a constructive statesman of extraordinary calibre. He had entered public life as a well equipped soldier with Ph.D from the Columbia University, D.Sc from London School of Economics and Bar-at-Law from Gray's Inn. Born as a "social leper" (as the untouchables were being treated in those days) Ambedkar could rise to the stature of a towering personality in the national politics through perseverance as well as a profound sense of self-respect and human justice.

4.3.6. Critical Appraisal

Ambedkar had talked about the exploitation of the untouchables or the dalits but this exploitation is not always the social dimension. There are also the other sources of exploitation like economic exploitation, cultural exploitation also which results in the marginalization of the dalits. While he acknowledged the possibility of diverse religious and moral standpoints that were reasonable he did not see them as equally predisposed towards freedom, equality and fraternity. Reservation for the SCs as a tool to bring equality can never be the only solution for the empowerment of the dalits.

4.4.   DAVID HARDIMAN

4.4.1.   Life Sketch of David Hardiman

David Hardiman was born in Rawalpindi in Pakistan in October 1947. He was brought up in England, studying at Sherborne School in Dorset, the London School of Economics. David Hardiman has studied and written on South Asian History since the late 1960s, and during this period has spent over a decade in all actually working in India. The main focus of his work has been on the on the colonial period in South Asian history, concentrating in particular on the effects of colonial rule on rural society, relationships of power at various levels, the Indian independence movement with a specific focus on the popular bases to Indian nationalism, and environmental and medical history.

In the late 1970s he became involved with a group of historians studying the social history of subordinate groups in South Asia. This led to the publication of a series of volume from 1981 onwards under the title Subaltern Studies. David Hardiman co-edited Volume VIII in this series and he continues to be a member of the editorial group of Subaltern Studies. The Gramscian term 'subaltern' - meaning 'subordinate group' - was chosen to emphasize the

centrality of relationships of domination and subordination in a society in which class divides had not developed as in the industrialized world. The project sought for a sharp break from the predominant colonialist and nationalist paradigms of South Asian historiography, both of which were seen to validate the history of elites - whether colonial rulers or nationalist leaders - over and above the history of subordinate groups. The project has generated an internationally recognized body of writing. Over time, the project has moved forward in many innovative ways.

David Hardiman's main contributions to the project have been in a number of areas. He has carried out a detailed examination of the Indian nationalist movement at the local level in Gujarat, Gandhi's home region - bringing out the disjuncture between the aims and agendas of the Gandhian leadership and local peasant activists. He has examined the power-structures of rural society, carrying out for example a detailed study of the hegemonic controls exercised by usurers and the limits to that hegemony, as seen in particular in revolts. He has also studied a movement of assertion by adivasis (tribal people) against liquor dealers who had been granted a monopoly right of supply by the British and who had enriched themselves at the expense of the adivasis. In this movement, which took place in 1922-23, a goddess was believed to have taken possession of spirit-mediums, who then commanded the people to give up liquor and boycott the dealers. In adjoining areas, the goddess was supposed to have commanded her devotees to put a stop to witchcraft, and in some cases, to give their allegiance to Gandhi. The popular memories, stories and songs that provide a particularly rich source material for South Asian history have informed all of this work. To this end, he has sought consistently to enhance archival material with information collected directly from the areas he has studied. This involved extensive tours and protracted periods living in villages, talking with people, attending their gatherings and

recording their stories and songs. He has utilized anthropological methods and learnt much from debates within the discipline regarding the role of the ethnographer, the limits to our knowledge and the dangers of advancing claims to speak 'for' the people. He has supported the call for a more historical approach within anthropology, providing through his writing one example as to how this may be achieved.

From 1983 to 1989 he worked as a Research Fellow at the Centre for Social Studies, Surat in Gujarat, India. There was a strong emphasis there on the evaluation of government and NGO development projects, and, besides carrying on his historical research and writing, he became involved in a wide range of development-linked research projects. He often accompanied researchers on fieldwork, so as to learn about these many issues at first hand, and in some cases carried out his own independent research. This work made him aware in particular of the critical importance of environmental and health issues for the rural poor of South Asia. As a result of this experience he became involved in researching and writing on the history of the environment and the history of health and healing during the colonial period in India.

4.4.2. Writings of David Hardiman

Among various writings of David Hardiman the most scholarly writings include

1. The Quit India Movement in Gujarat (1980)

2. The Coming of the Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India (1987)

3. Peasant Resistance in India: 1858-1914 (1992)

4. Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranjit Guha (1994)

5. Feeding the Baniya: Peasants and Usurers in Western India (1996)

6. Gandhi in his Time and Ours (2003)

7. Histories for the Subordinated (2006)

4.4.3. Subaltern perspective of Hardiman

The Subaltern mode of narration can be treated as a reinstative mode where muted channels of history are voiced by facilitating the foregrounding of the hitherto unheard and the subordinated. Gaps in the narrative edifice that goes by the name of mainstream History of both the nationalist and the colonial variety are filled in by the mode of countering it by a meticulous interface of oral and archival sources. Hardiman enters his narrative premises with the declaration of being a facilitator rather than being a spokesperson; he does not "...advance any claim to speak for them, this they do for themselves... would like it to be of some value for people who have shown so much resilience in the face of continuing oppression". Hardiman advocates the need to "...emphasize the fact that Subaltern Studies focuses on the relationship between elite and subaltern as a historical process... the bonds between the dominant and subordinate are always strong, and often mirror each other... Their relationship is being ever modified through an ongoing process of mutual dialogue".

4.4.4. The Devi Movement

"The Coming of the Devi" is a study of a popular movement which arose amongst the Adivasis of South Gujarat in the 1920s. Central to the Devi movement was the movement against "liquor, meat and fish" supported by the moralistic and reformist order on both the colonial and nationalistic sides and resistance to the elite and exploitative Parsi liquor barons, while Hardiman's "work on the Devi movement" depicted the evolution of drinking from a traditional and customary practice amongst the subalterns to a regulated and highly taxed commodity, and the unsuccessful campaign by a considerate group of colonial officers to relax liquor laws and its continuous persistence through illegal practices like moonshining to the contemporary times.

Anti – Liquor movements were not only an attempt to reform the adivasis and initiate them into a rightful way of life, but also aimed at hitting at the resource base of the colonial government and dismantle the strong feudal and economic structure of the liquor barons. The Devi movement was a major movement against the colonial taxation policy as well as "on the Parsi liquor and toddy dealers. Parsis were subject to rigorous social boycott which destroyed their prestige. During the course of the movement, an influential element among them forged an alliance with the middle-class Gandhian nationalists of Gujrat...". However, Hardiman reveals that "contrary to expectations of the Congressmen and other high caste nationalists, prohibition did not bring about a significant decline" in the consumption of liquor and a social divide between the 'varjelas' (those who gave up drinking) and 'sarjelas' (those who went back to drink). In a movement for cultural revivalism, the adivasis opposed abstinence and championed a going back to the ways of the forefathers. Hardiman reveals that even during the Devi movement "there were many peasants who did not accept the need to change their habits".

4.4.5. Feeding the Baniya

It mostly reflects on the power exercised by the Usurers on the subaltern classes in rural India. It also has a strong political and cultural influence. It explores the relationship between peasants and Usurers which has been crucial to life in rural India. Hardiman attempts to understand how such a domain of power was forged; how, over the centuries, usurers managed to adapt their practice so effectively within succeeding state formations; and how the classes whom they exploited related to them and also resisted them. The Baniyas always have their own hegemony over the poor people of the village. As being the indebted peasantry feed the Baniya merchants

through their never ending demands for agrarian produce, enriching the usurers and themselves getting trapped in a cycle of poverty.

It also reveals the integration of a small-scale agrarian society with a larger capitalist economy. Hardiman investigated the deep meanings involved in the relationship between the villager and the moneylender. It is quite a puzzle that the villages even prefer to take the help from the usurers than taking the help from bank or any formal institution which provides loan at much cheaper rates and without much difficulty. While answering to this puzzle Hardiman says that moneylender was located in a complex web of domination exercised by the local dominant classes. The moneylender himself might not always be the dominating person, but he definitely was the front for the other dominant sections of local society. In so far that there was a society not sufficiently suffused with capitalist relations and institutions, the money lender provided the small-scale agrarian producer with adequate means to relate to the wider capitalist world. Thus it explores the relationship between the peasants and usurers in rural India in a rounded way, examining how states extended support to usurers, as well as how Baniyas exerted a power that was both economic and ideological.

4.4.6. Critical Appraisal

Though Hardiman has talked about the hegemonic role of the usurers but has not tried to give any solution to this circle of poverty created by them. Ban on alcoholism, meat is not only a task of the adivasis or the tribes rather it should have a wider aspect also.

4.5.   CONCLUSION

The present chapter has made an attempt for understanding the subaltern approach of understanding Indian Society. It is an approach which basically studies the subalterns or the dalits or the group those who are marginalized in the society. In understanding this two major scholars of this perspective are also been included within the chapter. Both Ambedkar and Hardiman have their own and different contributions for studying the subalterns of the Indian Society.

4.6.   KEYWORDS

Subalterns, dalits, untouchables, movement

4.7.   SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

a.   What is subaltern? Discuss the major contribution of Ambedkar on subaltern approach.

b.   Explain Ambedkar's role in Indian politics.

c.   Analyse the subaltern perspective of Hardiman.

d.   What is Devi movement as explained by Hardiman?

4.8.   FURTHER READINGS

➤ Shah, Ghanshyam (ed.) (2001), *Dalit Identity and Politics,* Sage Publications, New Delhi

➤ Hardiman, David (2006), *History for the Subordinated,* Permanent Black, New Delhi

➤ Nagla, B.K. (2008), *Indian Sociological Thought,* Rawat Publications, New Delhi