Contents

Page

Preface ..... *xi*

List of Figures ..... *xxi*

PART I

CHAPTER 1
Sociology – The Discipline

Modernity and Social Change in Europe and Emergence of Sociology 4

Scope of the Subject of Sociology 9

Sociology and Other Social Sciences 11

Sociology and Economics 11

Sociology and Psychology 13

Sociology and History 14

Sociology and Political Science 14

Sociology and Anthropology 15

Sociology and Common Sense 16

Question Bank 18

CHAPTER 2
Sociology as Science

Science, Scientific Method and Critique 21

Major Theoretical Strands in Research Methodology 24

Positivism and its Critique 25

Fact, Value and Objectivity 28

Non-Positivist Methodologies 32

Interpretivist Sociology 33

Phenomenology 34

Symbolic Interactionism 35

Ethnomethodology 38

Question Bank 40

Scanned by CamScanner

CHAPTER 3
Research Methods

Significance of Research Methodologies 42
Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods 44
Techniques of Data Collection 46
Ethnography, Participant Observation and Field Study 47
Focus Group Technique 49
Case Study 50
Content Analysis 50
Projective Techniques 51
Interview 52
Questionnaire 53
Survey 54
Schedule 55
Biographical or Life History Research 56
Historic Analysis or Documentry Research 56
Variables 56
Sampling 57
Probability Sampling 57
Non-Probability Sampling 59
Hypothesis 60
Reliability and Validity 62
Reliability 62
Validity 62
Question Bank 64

CHAPTER 4
Social Thinkers

Functionalism 66
Conflict Perspective 67
Marx – Historical Materialism, Mode of Production, Alienation, Class Struggle 68
Historical Materialism 68
Mode of Production 72
Marx on Individual 74
Alienation 74
Class and Society 78
Durkheim – Division of Labour, Social Fact, Suicide, Religion and Society 82
Social Facts 83
Division of Labour 86
Suicide 90
Religion and Society 93

Scanned by CamScanner

Max Weber – Social Action, Ideal Types, Authority, Bureaucracy, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism 96
Social Action 97
Ideal Types 99
Authority 101
Bureaucracy 103
Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism 104
Parsons – Social System, Pattern Variables 108
Social Action 108
Social System 109
Pattern Variables 114
Merton – Latent and Manifest Functions, Conformity and Deviance, Reference Groups 115
Latent and Manifest Functions 117
Middle Range Theories 117
Conformity and Deviance or Merton's Strain Theory 118
Reference Group 121
Mead – Self and Identity 123
Self and Identity 123
Self 125
I and Me 127
Question Bank 129

CHAPTER 5
Stratification and Mobility

Inequality and Equality 133
Hierarchy 135
Poverty 136
Exclusion 139
Deprivation 141
Theories of Stratification – Structural Functionalist View 142
Theories of Stratification – Marxian View 143
Theories of Stratification – Weber's Trinitarian View 144
Dimensions – Social Stratification of Class, Status Groups, Gender, Ethnicity and Race 146
Social Stratification of Class 146
Social Stratification of Status Groups 148
Social Stratification of Gender 148
Social Stratification of Race 150
Social Stratification of Ethnicity 152
Social Mobility 153
Social Mobility – Open and Closed Systems 154

Scanned by CamScanner

Sources and Causes of Mobility 155
Types of Mobility 158
Question Bank 159

CHAPTER 6
Work and Economic Life

Social Organisation of Work in Different Types of Societies – Slave, Feudal, Industrial/ Capitalist 163
Social Determinants of Economic Development 167
Industrialisation and Social Change 167
Formal and Informal Organisation of Work 168
Labour and Society 171
Question Bank 173

CHAPTER 7
Politics and Society

Sociological Theories of Power and Power Elite 175
Classical Elite Theory 177
Pluralist Thesis of Power or Community Power Thesis 180
Bureaucracy 181
Pressure Group and Interest Groups 183
Political Parties 185
Concept of Nation, State and Citizenship 187
Nation and Nationalism 187
State 189
Citizenship 192
Democracy 193
Civil Society 194
Ideology 197
Collective Action 198
Protest 198
Agitation 199
Social Movements 199
Leadership in a Social Movement 203
Ideology and Social Movement 203
Old and New Social Movements 204
Millenarian Movement 205
Revolution 206
Question Bank 207

Scanned by CamScanner

CHAPTER 8
Religion and Society

Sociological Theories of Religion 211
Types of Religious Practices: Animism 215
Types of Religious Practices: Monism and Pluralism 216
Types of Religious Practices: Sects and Cult 217
Religion in Modern Society: Religion and Science 221
Religion in Modern Society: Secu larisation and Secularism 223
Religion in Modern Society: Fundamentalism and Religious Revivalism 226
Fundamentalism and Communalism 229
Question Bank 230

CHAPTER 9
Systems of Kinship

Family, Household and Marriage 233
Family 233
Types and Forms of Family 242
Isolated Nuclear Family of Parsons 243
Household 243
Marriage and Its Types 244
Lineage and Descent 248
Lineage 248
Descent 248
Patriarchy and Sexual Division of Labour 250
Contemporary Trends in Kinship Patterns, Family and Marriage 252
Question Bank 254

CHAPTER 10
Social Change in Modern Society

Sociological Theories of Social Change 257
Linear Theories of Social Change 257
Cyclical Theories of Social Change 260
Structure Functionalist Theory of Social Change of Parsons 261
Post Modernist Perspective on Social Change 261
Development and Dependency 262
Agents of Social Change 264
Education and Social Change 266
Science, Technology and Social Change 268
Question Bank 269

Scanned by CamScanner

PART II

Section A – Introducing Indian Society

CHAPTER 11
Perspectives on Study of Indian Society

Indology 276
Indology of G S Ghurye 278
Structural Functionalist Tradition in India 280
Structure Functionalism of M N Srinivas 282
Sanskritisation 283
Westernisation 286
Marxist Sociology in India 288
Marxist Sociology of A R Desai 290
Question Bank 293

CHAPTER 12
Impact of Colonial Rule on Indian Society

Social Background of Indian Nationalism 295
Modernisation of Indian Tradition 298
Yogendra Singh on Modernisation of Indian Tradition 301
Protests and Movements during the Colonial Period 302
Social Reforms during Colonial Rule 304
Question Bank 306

Section B – Social Structure

CHAPTER 13
Rural and Agrarian Social Structure

Idea of Indian Village 308
Village Studies 310
Agrarian Social Structure – Evolution of Land Tenure System and Land Reforms 314
Question Bank 319

CHAPTER 14
Caste System

Caste – Origin Theories 323
G S Ghurye's Perspective on Caste System 324
M N Srinivas' Perspective on Caste System 326

Scanned by CamScanner

Andre Beteille's Perspective on Caste System 330
Dipankar Gupta's Perspective on Caste System 332
Features of Caste System 333
Untouchability – Forms 335
Untouchability – Perspectives 337
Perspective of Gandhi 338
Perspective of Ambedkar 339
State and Non-State Steps Towards Abolition of Caste and Tribal Discrimination 340
Mobility in Caste System 341
Caste and Class Nexus 343
Caste and Politics 344
Caste among Other Religions 346
Caste: Change and Continuity 347
Question Bank 350

CHAPTER 15
Tribal Communities in India

Features of Tribal Groups 353
Definitional Problems 354
Geographical Spread of Tribes 357
Colonial Policies and Tribes 359
Issues of Tribal Integration and Autonomy 360
Question Bank 363

CHAPTER 16
Social Classes in India

Agrarian Class Structure or Agrarian Social Structure in India 366
Agrarian Classes in Pre-British India 366
Agrarian Classes in British India 367
Agrarian Classes in Post-Independence India 367
Industrial Class Structure 372
Middle Class in India 373
Urban Class Structure 375
Question Bank 376

Scanned by CamScanner

CHAPTER 17
System of Kinship in India

Lineage and Descent in India 379
Types of Kinship Systems 380
Family and Marriage in India 381
Family 381
Marriage 386
Household Dimension of Family 387
Patriarchy, Entitlements and Sexual Division of Labour 390
Regional Variations in Kinship in India 391
Question Bank 395

CHAPTER 18
Religion and Society

Religious Communities in India 397
Problems of Religious Minorities 398
Question Bank 400

Section C – Social Change in India

CHAPTER 19
Vision of Social Change in India

Great Tradition and Little Tradition 402
Idea of Development, Planning and Mixed Economy 403
Constitution, Law and Social Change 405
Education and Social Change 406
Question Bank 408

CHAPTER 20
Rural and Agrarian Transformation in India

Programs of Rural Development 411
Community Development Program 413
Cooperatives 414
Poverty Alleviation Schemes 416
Green Revolution and Social Change 418
Changing Mode of Production in Indian Agriculture 421

Scanned by CamScanner

Problems of Rural Labour – Including Bondage and Migration 423
Bonded Labour 423
Migration of Rural Labour 424
Question Bank 426

CHAPTER 21
Industrialisation and Urbanisation in India

Evolution of Modern Industry in India 428
Growth of Urban Settlements in India 431
Working Class in India – Structure, Growth and Mobilisation 437
Informal Sector 440
Child Labour 442
Slums and Deprivation in Urban Areas 444
Question Bank 446

CHAPTER 22
Politics and Society

Nation, Democracy, Citizenship, Political Parties and Pressure Groups 449
Social and Political Elite 451
Regionalism and Decentralisation of Power 451
Secularisation 455
Question Bank 457

CHAPTER 23
Social Movements in Modern India

Nature of Social Movement in India 459
Peasants and Farmers Movements 459
Women's Movement 464
Women's Movement in Pre-Independence Period 464
Women's Movements in Post-Independence Era 466
Backward Classes and Dalit Movements 468
Northern Backward Class Movement vs Southern Backward Class Movement 471
Dalit Movements 473
Satyashodhak Samaj 476
SNDP Movement 476
Self-Respect Movement 477

Scanned by CamScanner

Environmental Movements 478
Ethnicity and Identity Movements 480
Question Bank 484

CHAPTER 24
Population Dynamics

Population Size, Growth, Composition and Distribution 487
Components of Population Growth – Birth, Mortality and Migration 490
Birth Rate 490
Fertility 491
Mortality or Death Rate 493
Migration 494
Population Policy and Family Planning 497
Emerging Issues: Ageing 499
Emerging Issues: Sex Ratio 502
Emerging Issues: Child and Infant Mortality 504
Emerging Issues: Reproductive Health 505
Question Bank 506

CHAPTER 25
Challenges of Social Transformation

Crisis of Development – Displacement, Environmental Problems and Sustainability 509
Poverty, Deprivation and Inequalities 511
Violence against Women 512
Caste Conflicts 514
Ethnic Conflicts 515
Communalism 518
Religious Revivalism 520
Illiteracy and Disparities in Education 521
Question Bank 523

Subject Index 525

Scanned by CamScanner

List of Figures

	Page
Fig. 1.1 Paradigm of Evolution of Sociology	7
Fig. 1.2 Reasons of French Revolution	8
Fig. 1.3 Relation of Sociology with Other Social Sciences	11
Fig. 1.4 Sociology and Common Sense	17
Fig. 2.1 Elements of Scientific Methods	23
Fig. 2.2 Perspectives in Research Methodologies	24
Fig. 2.4 Dimensions of Positivism	25
Fig. 2.3 Auguste Comte	25
Fig. 2.5 Evolution of Non-Positivist Approach	27
Fig. 2.6 Dilution of Objectivity in Social Research	30
Fig. 3.1 Research Methods	42
Fig. 3.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods on a Graphical Scale	45
Fig. 3.3 Rorschach Inkblot Test	51
Fig. 3.4 Types of Probability Sampling	58
Fig. 3.5 Testing of Hypothesis	61
Fig. 3.6 Reliability and Validity	63
Fig. 4.1 Karl Marx	68
Fig. 4.2 Marx's Systemic View	70
Fig. 4.3 Components of Marx's Systemic View	71
Fig. 4.4 Class Polarisation	78
Fig. 4.5 Emile Durkheim	82
Fig. 4.6 Division of Labour and Solidarity	86
Fig. 4.7 Types of Suicide according to Durkheim	92
Fig. 4.8 Max Weber	97
Fig. 4.9 Talcott Parsons	108
Fig. 4.10 Parson's Social Action	109
Fig. 4.11 Parsons' Action Systems	111
Fig. 4.12 Cybernetic Hierarchy of Control	113
Fig. 4.13 Robert Merton	115
Fig. 4.14 Deviance and the Adaptive Responses	119
Fig. 4.15 Reference Groups	122

Scanned by CamScanner

Fig. 4.16 Herbert Mead 123
Fig. 4.17 Mead's Concept of 'I and Me' 128

Fig. 5.1 Process of Stratification 132
Fig. 5.2 Factors Affecting Social Mobility 156

Fig. 7.1 Five Bases of Power (French and Raven) 176
Fig. 7.2 Classical Elite Theory 177
Fig. 7.3 200
Fig. 7.4 Life Cycle of a Social Movement 200
Fig. 7.5 Aberle's Classification of Social Movements 202

Fig. 8.1 Roy Wallis on Religious Institutions 221

Fig. 9.1 McIver and Page Defined Family in Terms of Various Features 234
Fig. 9.2 Functions of Family 235
Fig. 9.3 Structure of Family 238

Fig. 10.1 Sorokin's Classification of Society 260
Fig. 10.2 World Systems Model 263

Fig. 11.1 G S Ghurye 278
Fig. 11.2 M N Srinivas 282

Fig. 12.1 Factors contributing to growth of Nationalism 296
Fig. 12.2 Modernisation of Tradition 302
Fig. 12.3 Protests and Movements during the colonial period 303
Fig. 12.4 Forces of Social Reforms 305

Fig. 13.1 Idea of Indian Village 308
Fig. 13.2 Agrarian Social Structure 315

Fig. 14.1 Basic Structure of Caste System 322

Fig. 15.1 Graph Comparing Social Indicators of Tribes with General Population 353
Fig. 15.2 Geographical Distribution of Tribes in India 358

Fig. 17.1 Household Dimension of Family in terms of Fission and Fusion 388
Fig. 17.2 Irawati Karve's Classification of Regional Kinship Variations 393

Scanned by CamScanner

Fig. 19.1 Robert Redfield's Concept of Social Change 402

Fig. 20.1 Approaches for Rural Development Programmes 411
Fig. 21.1 Growth of Urban Population in India 432
Fig. 21.2 Facets of Urban Areas 434

Fig. 23.1 Chronology of Peasant Movements in India 459

Fig. 24.1 Population Pyramid based on 2011 Census 487
Fig. 24.2 Decadal Population Growth Rates in India 488
Fig. 24.3 Birth and Death Rates in India over the Years 493
Fig. 24.4 Factors Promoting Migration 495

Fig. 25.1 Chronology of Wage Employment Schemes in India 511
Fig. 25.2 Aspects of Violence Against Women 513

Scanned by CamScanner

Part – I

- Chapter 1
  Sociology – The Discipline
- Chapter 2
  Sociology as Science
- Chapter 3
  Research Methods
- Chapter 4
  Social Thinkers
- Chapter 5
  Stratification and Mobility
- Chapter 6
  Work and Economic Life
- Chapter 7
  Politics and Society
- Chapter 8
  Religion and Society
- Chapter 9
  Systems of Kinship
- Chapter 10
  Social Change in Modern Society

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Sociology – The Discipline

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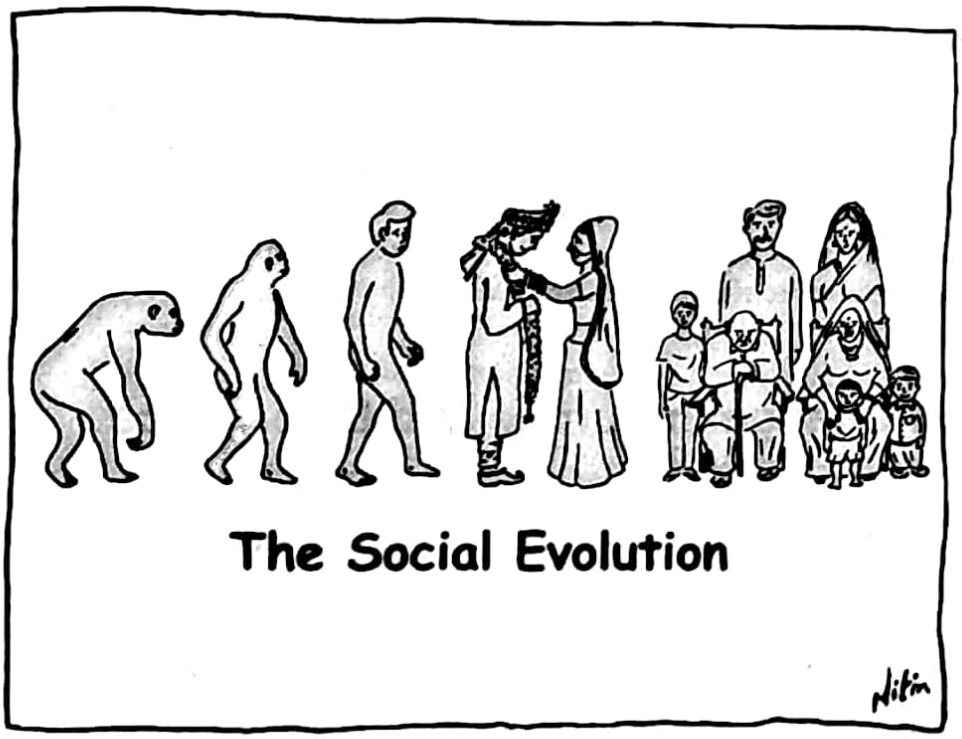

The Social Evolution

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Learn the meaning and scope of Sociology
2. Know about the evolution of Sociology as a discipline
3. Study the paradigm of evolution of Sociological thoughts
4. Understand the comparative analysis of Sociology with other disciplines

The word Sociology has both Latin and Greek origins. The word comes from a Latin word *socius* meaning *companion* and the suffix *logy* meaning *the study of* has Greek origins. Sociology, in its simplest meaning, is the study of society and the social institutions. Sociology evolved as a nascent discipline with the profound influence of natural sciences. Darwinian hypothesis had a telling effect on the early sociological postulates. Some British sociologists even viewed human society in a similar evolutionary fashion as that of organic evolution of the living beings. This also influenced many linear evolutionary theories and perspectives later. Ideology of science, modernism and rational thought was hard to ignore in those times and as a result, instead of being passive students, earlier sociologists also lavishly indulged in grand theoretical speculations. Early sociologists even tried to maintain distance from other social sciences by contending that Sociology alone is a true science of society. Some claimed that it is the most sophisticated of all sciences and hence, shall arrive and be discovered at the end of all sciences. Social institutions were viewed in terms of their roles and functionalities and driven by some fundamental rules. Counter currents within discipline also started to flow at the same time and all these claims were soon to be tested on the anvil of legitimacy.

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Sociology is about society, its constituent institutions, their inter-relationship and the actors. In other words, it is about you and me in our social surroundings. Sociologists study the patterns in social interactions. When you and I do such studies as part of our routine lives, we also assume the role of sociologists. This is the reason that Sociology is termed as a commonsensical discipline, though one may debate over it and this debate is covered in the later part of the book. Commonsensical or not, there is little disagreement over the fact that Sociology, as a discipline, is easy to grasp as it deals with what we actually do and see on a daily basis. As a discipline, it just provides a vantage point from where we can see ourselves and our surroundings in an analytically superior way. The view one gets depends upon the vantage point that one has chosen. This is the reason for which we find numerous explanations of the same phenomenon in Sociology and, hence, often a debate over consensus as well. This is also the beauty of the discipline as it provides space for all as long as there is some rationale behind their argument. For this reason, the sociological thought was a part of human existence right from the day when human beings developed a thinking brain. It is only the formal discipline which emerged later on, at a time in history which is termed by the social scientists as Modernity.

Modernity and Social Change in Europe and Emergence of Sociology

What was the first sociological thought in the human history? The question is difficult to answer as curious human mind always had a desire to know more about its social surroundings since time immemorial. Thus, sociological reasoning pre-dates the foundation of the discipline itself. Long before the formal establishment of the discipline in Europe, sociological deliberations were made in various treatises like *Republic* of Plato, *De Officiis* of Cicero and *Arthashastra* of Kautilya. It was only in the 19th Century when such thoughts were systematised in form of a discipline. But even this was not a sudden development and it was preceded by a series of events which precipitated the emergence of the new discipline.

Roots of such developments can be traced to the Late Medieval period of Europe. Before the Enlightenment Period, old Europe was traditional and inward looking. This period in the Europe was referred to as *The Dark Ages* due to prevalence of multiple social evils, ignorance and feudal structures. This period also considerably lacked new ideas and innovations in social and scientific fields. It was followed by a distinctively new era of ideas and material developments which gained popularity as *The Renaissance* which literally means the rebirth or the re-awakening. This re-awakening was about the golden old traditions, thoughts and culture.

THE DARK AGES

The term is used to denote that period of the European history which is between the fall of the Roman Empire in 5th Century and before the arrival of the Renaissance in 15th Century. In popular terms, it is also considered same as the medieval period. It was a period that is considered to have witnessed a decline in literary activities including decline of the history writing tradition, general demographic decline, limited architectural activity and lukewarm material and cultural achievements. Despite its negative connotations, the period did witness definite progress in various realms of social life in many parts of the world, and for this reason, the terms has significantly fallen into disfavour with many sociologists.

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Renaissance was a cultural movement which began in Italy in the 14th Century and is considered as the bridge between the Dark Ages or the medieval history and modern times. It put man and humanism at the centre of all activities and it harked back to the so called classical golden period of the European history. It's most profound impact was in the realm of fine arts and literature, but it also stimulated thoughts about human existence. It was during this period that some profound questions were raised about the human existence in the then contemporary society. These questions provided a fertile ground for the later sociological thoughts as well.

Renaissance is also said to have given birth to another important ideological paradigm in the human history, the ideology of *Modernism* and hence, led to the dawn of the *Modernity* in Europe. The term *Modernity* is derived from the Latin word *modernus* which itself is derived from *modo* meaning *just now* or *current*. By this definition, Modernity is a relative term which denotes the new practices as compared to the old. But in sociological and historical sense, it denotes a specific period in which Europe saw significant cultural and intellectual upheaval which laid the foundation of the contemporary modern world. According to Marshall Berman, in his *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity, 2010,* Modernity was not only about some new liberal ideas and practices, but was also about the existential experience of the conditions that they produce even today, and their ongoing impact on human culture, institutions and politics. Some scholars were so deeply influenced by this new ideology that they saw it as a panacea to the then existing social deformities.

Modernity became synonymous with a period which was marked by questioning of tradition, the prioritisation of individualism over the collectivity, freedom of ideas, equality in all spheres of life, promotion of scientific and technological progress, rationalisation of institutions and ideas and finally, a movement from feudalism (or agrarianism) toward capitalism and the market economy, industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation. In the political sphere, it also saw the development of the modern concepts like that of the contemporary nation-state and its constituent institutions like representative democracy, modern bureaucracy and, as per Michel Foucault, even birth of new forms of surveillance.

In this period, the old beliefs were liberally questioned and rationality emerged as a new *religion*. Rousseau, Montesquieu, etc. talked of modern political ideas while Adam Smith, Ricardo and J S Mill talked of a new economic order. All these had a common thread which is rationality of human thoughts. Further, new order started to replace the old order and it created considerable social upheaval and disturbance in society. In this background emerged the earliest sociological thoughts in minds of likes of Hegel, Comte and Spencer. They were mainly western but with global consequences.

Other events that took place were both discrete and continuous. As industries started to replace home-based production, new forms of economic relations emerged. Industrial working also significantly altered other social institutions like family, kinship and household. Another event was a discrete event in the form of French Revolution. This was a never before event in the history of political arena and it disrupted the old feudal order. At the same time, it also attracted sharp counter-reactions from the conservative forces. As a result, the French society was shaken to its core and social scientists had a new task at the hand to explain the upheavals in the society. It was at this juncture that a need was felt to device new means to understand the society. This was the spark which gave birth to the discipline of Sociology.

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Evolution of Modern Sociological Thought

France	**Montesquieu** (1689–1755) **Rousseau** (1712–78)	**Saint Simon** (1760–1825)	**Comt** (1798–1857)	**Tocqueville** (1805–59)	**Durkheim** (1858–1917)	**Althusser** (1918–90)	**Baudrillard** (1929–2007)
Germany	**Kant** (1724–1804)	**Hegel** (1720–1831)	**Feuerbach** (1804–72)	**Marx** (1818–83)	**Weber** (1864–1920) **Dilthey** (1833–1911)	**Horkheimer** (1895–1973) **Schutz** (1899–1959)	**Habermas** (1929–) **Frankfurt School** (1923–)
Italy						**Pareto** (1848–1923)	**Mosca** (1858–1941)
Britain	**Adam Smith** (1723–1790)	**Ricardo** (1772–1823)			**Spencer** (1820–1903)		**Giddens** (1938–)
USA				**Mead** (1863–1931) **Chicago School** (1920s–40s) **Mills** (1916–62)	**Sorokin** (1889–1968) **Parsons** (1902–79)	**Merton** (1910–2003) **Dahrendorf** (1929–2009) **Wallerstein** (1930–)	**Garfinkel** (1929–) **Berger** (1929–)
India					**Ghurye** (1893–1983) **D P Mukharjee** (1894–1961)	**Dumont** (1911–98) **A R Desai** (1915–94)	**Beteille** (1934–) **Srinivas** (1916–99)

But, the story of the birth of the discipline of Sociology is not so simple and to understand the overall circumstances in which it was born, many developments have to be juxtaposed together with a host of other factors which together created an environment conducive for its birth. This new and distinct way of studying society can be understood better if we look back historically at the bigger picture, which is linked with the dawn of Modernity and includes intellectual ideas, material context and political development within which, Sociology was born and later grew. These are broadly classified as –

I. Intellectual Ideas

The Enlightenment, as a European intellectual movement, especially in the late 17th and 18th Centuries, led by Montesquieu and Rousseau, emphasised upon reason and individualism. It had a great influence on emergence of Sociology, though an indirect one. As Irving Zeitlin puts it in his *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, 1996*, that – '*Early Sociology developed as a reaction to enlightenment.*' Early Sociology has been a mix of enlightenment and counter-enlightenment ideas. Enlightenment thesis puts individual at centre stage, on the other hand, for counter-enlightenment proponents, society was the most important unit of analysis. Apart from this dialectic, enlightenment ideas of rationalism, empiricism, and change-orientation also affected early sociological thought. In fact, the earliest form of sociological investigation,

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(i.e., Positivist Sociology, which is discussed later) had much to do with the enlightenment ideas of rationality and scientific investigation.

BOTTOMORE ON INTELLECTUAL STREAMS IN SOCIOLOGY

According to T B Bottomore, the main intellectual streams that particularly influenced the emergence of Sociology are – political philosophy given by likes of Montesquieu, Rousseau, etc., philosophy of history, theory of organic evolution given by Darwin, movements for social and political reform like French Revolution and development of method of social survey.

Darwin's idea about organic evolution was another dominant influence on early sociological thought and many of the early social thinkers started to believe that society too evolves in a similar fashion as the organisms do. They were also convinced that progress in knowledge of society on lines of natural sciences promised the solution to all social ills. For example, Auguste Comte, the French scholar, considered to be the founder of Sociology, believed that Sociology would contribute to the welfare of humanity and it has to be approached as a scientific discipline. These ideas reached a very mature state in France which ultimately became the birth place of Sociology and Alexis de Tocqueville, Claude Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte (a disciple of Saint Simon), Spencer and Emile Durkheim became the face of French Sociology with their seminal formative work. Comte was the first to use the term Sociology and he believed that study of Sociology would be scientific. He developed his scientific view of the discipline in form of *Positivism*, or *positive philosophy*. He developed *social physics* initially, and in 1839, he called it 'Sociology'.

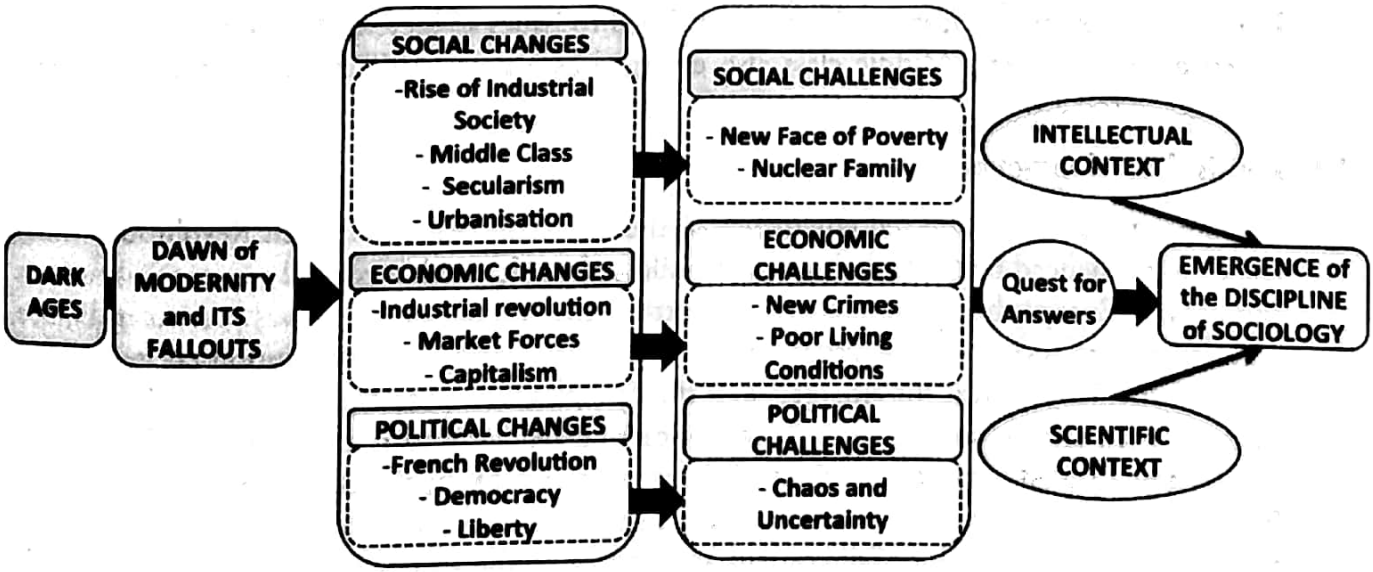

Fig. 1.1 Paradigm of Evolution of Sociology

II. Material and social developments

Material developments are understood in the form of arrival of Industrial Revolution and growth of capitalism. Industrial Revolution gave birth to factory system of production, led to emergence of middle class and dismantling of feudal estates. These developments not only had certain positive outcomes, but they also had negative fallout.

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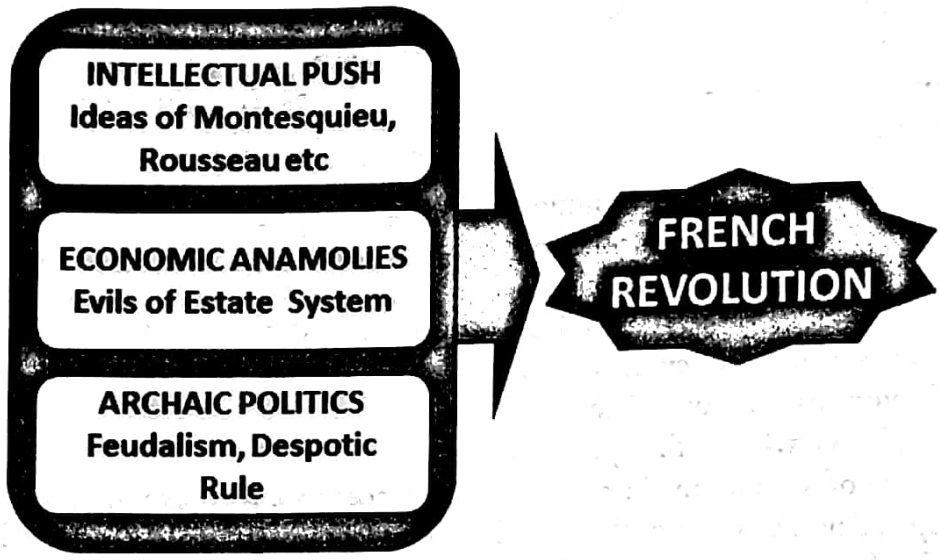

Fig. 1.2 Reasons of French Revolution

In the economic sphere, though there were cities earlier as well, the industrial cities gave birth to a completely new kind of urban world. Factory system replaced the home based production. The period was marked by the soot and grime of factories, by overcrowded slums of the new industrial working class, degradation of labour, bad sanitation, general squalor and new forms of poverty. Workers were forced to work in dehumanising conditions under the new factory system. New forms of crime including petty thefts also emerged.

In the social sphere, nuclear family emerged. It led to issues of increased incidence of domestic violence, breakups, etc. Middle class also emerged as a new structural class and led to new cleavages in society.

III. Political developments

The biggest event that affected emergence of the discipline was the French Revolution which itself was influenced by the Enlightenment philosophy. Although a general context was present throughout Europe, but an immediate context for the rise of Sociology was present in France with its unique socio-political situation. The upheaval that French Revolution created served as the immediate context for emergence of the discipline. Prior to the Revolution, France was trapped in an archaic socio-economic condition and feudalism was a hallmark of this society. Society was divided into *estates* – three of them viz. the nobility, the clergy and the commoner. It was a highly distorted system in which the first two estates ruled the roost at the expense of the commoner. It bred a lot of discontent and tension in the society and ultimately, the French Revolution provided the environment which led to replacement of old feudal system with a new one. Ideals of democracy, liberty and fraternity, given by the intellectuals like Montesquieu and Rousseau, became the new watch words. But they didn't come easily and the old system resisted stiffly. As a result of these churnings, a tussle between the old and the new ensued that created a condition of great uncertainty. The revolution was so disruptive that it affected all the spheres of life and a general sense of anarchy and insecurity became rampant. In this situation, the early social thinkers sought to find the answers to the questions posed by the French Revolution. Intellectuals like Saint Simon, Auguste Comte, Spencer and Durkheim provided the early ideas

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which laid the formal foundation of the discipline. They made a bid to understand the cause of these new events and their consequences for society. As discussed earlier, it was Comte who called the new set of thoughts as Sociology for the first time. Spencer followed the footsteps of Comte and gave the idea of *social evolution* similar to biological evolution. Efforts of Durkheim led to the establishment of Sociology as the first department in France and Europe. Thus, despite a general impetus being present in Europe, Sociology emerged as a distinct discipline in France in the backdrop of French Revolution.

Thus, Modernity had an impact on social, economic and political lives of people. Initially, Modernity was seen as positive, but its negative fallout also soon became too apparent. Modernity posed challenges which led to the growth of new intellectual ideas which were precipitated by new material conditions and a new political order. The questions which were posed were not answered by the hitherto existing disciplines and a new *science of society* was sought and what emerged was known as – Sociology. Due to its specific context of origin, it was also argued that Sociology was the *science of the new industrial society.* According to John Harriss, in his *The Second Great Transformation? Capitalism at the End of the Twentieth Century 2000,* Sociology emerged as a discipline which arose in direct response to the social problems posed by Modernity. Thus, western Sociology emerged as an attempt to make sense of Modernity and its fallouts.

The young discipline required a subject matter, perspectives and methods. Popularity of natural sciences influenced the new discipline in these aspects. New methods were explored which were scientific and rational. Instead of metaphysical speculations, the early social thinkers turned to new evidence based and empirical method of social investigation. *Social Survey* was the first such tool that was used by the early sociologists. *State of Poor* Report was the first scientific survey which came up in Europe and it highlighted that poverty is not natural, but a social phenomenon. Factual base was provided by the pre-existing historical records and in fact, historical studies had a pronounced influence on the writings of many early thinkers. In this context, early perspectives were provided by Comte, Spencer and Durkheim. Durkheim's contribution among these proved pioneering and his evolutionary and functionalist view of Sociology became one of the founding thoughts of the nascent discipline.

Modernity and its impact on human existence has also been studied from different viewpoints. Critical theorists (a group of neo-Marxists belonging to the Frankfurt School, which was developed in Germany in the 1930s in an attempt to modify Marxism) such as Theodor Adorno and Zygmunt Bauman assert that modernity represents a departure from the core principles of the philosophy of Enlightenment towards nefarious processes of alienation, such as commodity fetishism. In the current context, modernity is understood in completely different terms. Shmuel Eisenstadt, in his *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities, 2003,* asserts that the Modernity, even in the past, did not have a single definition and has multiple meanings and interpretations. Modernity is, thus, a plural condition and it liberates modernity from being an exclusively Western European culture concept to a much broader concept. On the basis of this new understanding, sociologists have also tried to explore the impacts of multiple modernities on the evolution of the discipline of Sociology and no longer limit themselves to one single model of evolution of sociological thought.

Scope of the Subject of Sociology

Sociology is a systematic study of society and it studies human society as an interconnected whole and how society and the individuals interact with each other. A sociologist is interested in the general study of social behaviour of groups, large or small, and lays special emphasis upon understanding of social

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life in its everyday form. *General* study also implies that other social science disciplines deal with more specific areas, while Sociology takes a broad view. Sociology seeks to study the society and to analyse it in terms of the social relations that have a pattern. Sociology seeks to explore how and why societies emerge, persist and then change. In brief, its scope includes study of social groups, social institutions and social processes.

The scope of sociological study is extremely wide. It can focus its analysis on interactions between individuals such as that of a shopkeeper with a customer, between two friends or family members. Going further, it may analyse national and international issues as well in a systematic manner. So, what defines the discipline of Sociology and its scope is therefore not just what it studies, (i.e., family, trade unions or villages) but how it studies a chosen field. Further, scope of Sociology is more in the direction of analysis of social problems and Social Systems and not in normative suggestion of solutions for these social problems.

This has also been interpreted differently by different scholars. Some view its scope in the form of *social action* while others view it in the form of *social facts*. Early sociologists had two prime concerns – a scientific analysis of society and to lay the principles of social evolution. According to Durkheim, scope of sociologists is to study *social facts* in society. Social facts should be studied in a similar way as natural scientists study natural things. According to Radcliffe Brown, who adopted an anthropological-functional approach, the subject matter lies in *structures* or patterns of social inter-relations which can be studied by field work. According to Marx, scope of Sociology is to study the dynamics of forces and relations of production. Weber on the other hand defines scope of Sociology in terms of study of *social action*. Parsons defines scope of Sociology as study of *Action Systems*.

Hence, scope of Sociology was defined differently by different scholars during different times. During the evolutionary phases of the discipline, sociologists tried to understand society in terms of *macro* units like religion and the influence of natural sciences was apparent. Comte divided the scope of Sociology as – social statics or stability and social dynamics or change. Later on, Herbert Spencer put an evolutionary perspective and termed society an organism and widened its scope.

After 1880s, Sociology was established in various departments in Europe. First such department was established by Durkheim in France. This led to wide academic discourse in a systematic manner and its scope was expanded. Durkheim divided scope as social morphology, social physiology and general Sociology. Max Weber soon introduced *micro view* in Sociology. During this period, there were two predominant schools which were micro or formal school and macro or synthetic school. Formal school considered scope as limited and emphasised more on understanding rather than predicting. It aimed, according to Max Weber, at an interpretative understanding of the society. Macro school aimed at studying society in totality.

A critical perspective was also added to the scope led by Marxian sociologists, but the apparent failure of the European working class to overthrow capitalism, rise of Nazism and Fascism, corruption within Soviet and its allies posed great dilemma over relevance of Marxian theories. It led to the development of Neo-Marxists which also includes Frankfurt School or Critical School led by Horkheimer and Adorno, who tried to include a cultural perspective into Marxist thoughts and also included cultural studies in the scope of Sociology.

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Later, starting from 1940s, new ideas emerged and micro and macro views were combined. For example, – Talcott Parsons combined the study of social action and Social System in Sociology. Similarly, Merton combined psychological and structural aspects of society which is best exemplified in his theory of anomie. American sociological traditions felt threatened by Marxist ideology and they instead turned to Weber, Simmel and Durkheim. Hence, they saw the scope of Sociology more on functional lines.

Feminist Sociology emerged during 1960s as a radical alternative and offered distinctive gender based explanations. It emphasised centrality of gender in social change. According to them, social reality is viewed differently by the two sexes.

Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault laid foundation of *post structuralism*. Foucault analysed the emergence of modern institutions like prisons, hospitals and schools as a sign of increasing surveillance and discipline in society. More recently, post-modernists have further expanded the scope and have tried to make it inter-disciplinary as well. New issues like health, ageing, demographic issues, cybernetics, and information technology are also coming under the scope of Sociology. Sociology has grown more inter-disciplinary than ever, widening its scope in a never before manner. According to French author Jean Baudrillard, mass media has reversed the Marxist idea that society is dominated by economic structure, rather it will now be increasingly controlled by the signs and images which are a creation of mass media.

Sociology and Other Social Sciences

Sociology has a peculiar origin with a desire to have a close affinity to natural sciences, but this claim was always contested. As a result, it is often compared to other social sciences – sometimes to gauge its claim of a science, sometimes to find the areas of overlap with other social sciences. Disciplines like history, anthropology, ethics and political sciences are of special interest as they have impacted the sociological discourse significantly over a period of time. Some of these, and their relationship with Sociology, are discussed below.

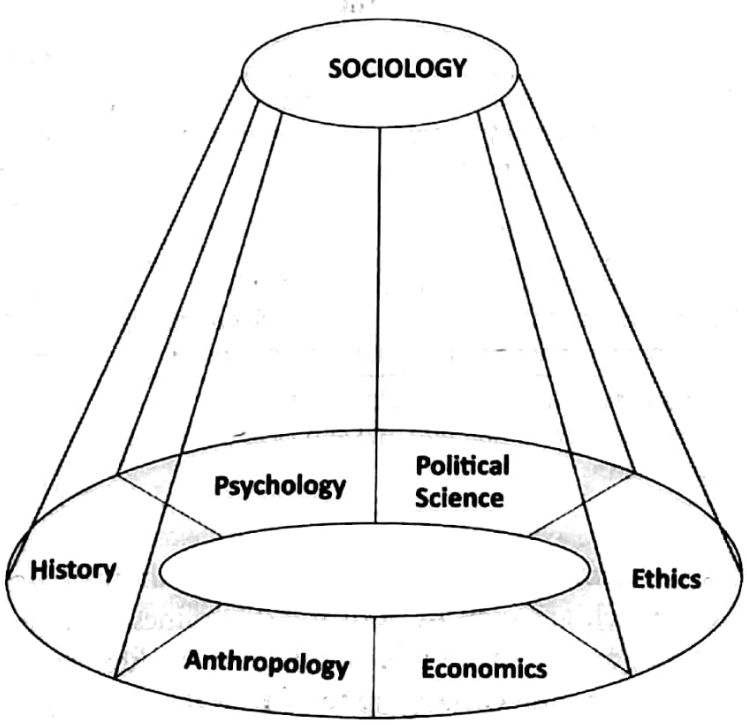

Fig. 1.3 Relation of Sociology with Other Social Sciences

Sociology and Economics

Economics is the study of production in society while Sociology studies all the aspects of society. Economics, according to Alfred Marshall, investigates how man earns and spends money.

An economic activity is also a social activity and production involves social relations as well. Methods of earning money are also

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guided by social norms and values. Theft and robbery can never be legitimate means of earning money. Consumption behaviour is also affected by social and cultural values. However, classical economic calculations sometimes exclude various social costs and benefits which economists themselves recognise as *externalities*. Pierre Bourdieu rightly said that a true economist takes into consideration even the costs of externalities like suicide and pollution. As a result, Sociologists have a more nuanced approach of studying the economic institutions which otherwise sound similar. For example, the capitalist mode of production of different countries is viewed differently. Indian capitalism is viewed as compulsive capitalism while Japanese capitalism is viewed as nationalist capitalism.

In classical Sociology, one extreme position has been adopted by the Marxists. According to them, the understanding of the super structure consisting of various social institutions can never be complete unless seen in the context of economic substructure. Thus, economic behaviour of man is viewed as a key to understand the social behaviour of man.

Durkheim rejected the classical economic theory of division of labour and offered a sociological explanation. He tried to give social explanations a priority over economic explanations and according to him, at a macro level, economic activities happen in an autonomous manner, guided by the needs of the society.

Economics	Sociology
Its scope is narrow and specific.	It has wider scope as it studies all the aspects of human activity.
Economists would lay emphasis on relationship between pure economic variables like relationship of price and supply, money flows and input-output.	Sociology would study the production enterprise as a social organisation. The supply of labour as affected by values and preferences, influences of education on economic behaviour and role of caste system in economic development.
Traditional economists seek to understand economic activity in a broader framework of ownership of and relationship to means of production.	On the other hand, sociologists have criticised the economic theory as being reductionist in nature and according to them the economists' conception of man ignores the role of various social factors which influence the economic behaviour.
It is more systematised and is more scientific. Economic theorists try to give laws which can predict the economic phenomenon with a fair accuracy.	Sociology, unlike economics, usually does not provide technical solutions. But it encourages a critical perspective.
Scope of building theory and laws is more in economics. Law of demand and supply is universal in application.	Sociological laws are less universal in nature as there is little consensus in Sociology itself over the perspective which should be used.

In recent times, there are many studies like those of Strachey, Galbraith, Gunnar Myrdal and Raymond Aron which are used in both the disciplines. A branch of Sociology called *economic Sociology* deals with the social aspects of economic life. Other emerging concepts like *gender budgeting and feminist economics* are also coming up to address the emerging social relations.

Thus, Sociology and Economics meet in a number of areas. There are two factors that contributed for this convergence. Economists are no longer interested only in market mechanisms but also in economic growth, national product and national income, and development in underdeveloped regions. In all

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these areas, the economist has to either necessarily collaborate with the sociologist or he himself has to become a sociologist. Economists increasingly use sociological research to formulate new theories and policies. Sociologists on the other hand study the impact of such theories.

According to Pierre Bourdieu – '*A true economic science would look at all the costs of the economy – not only at the costs that corporations are concerned with, but also at crimes, suicides, and so on.*' So, economic calculations can never leave social calculations.

Further, Sociology learns a lot from Economics which offers precise terminologies. Yet economists' predictive abilities often suffer precisely because of their neglect of individual behaviour, cultural norms and institutional resistance which sociologists study.

Sociology and Psychology

Psychology is often defined as the *science of behaviour* and Sociology as the *science of society*. Sociology studies the Social Systems while Psychology studies mental systems. Today, there is hardly any doubt that Sociology has largely moved away from its early association with natural sciences, but Psychology continues to maintain its closeness with the natural sciences. It still uses methods of hypothesis testing via repeatable experiments. However, unlike Sociology, Psychology is not so well equipped to deal with the collectivity of the actors.

On the relation between the two disciplines, there are two extreme views – J S Mill sought to establish primacy of Psychology over all other social sciences and believed that all laws are derived from the laws of mind. Similarly, Sigmund Freud also gave more importance to inheritance over the environment and implied that Sociology is merely an extension of social Psychology. Durkheim on the other hand made a radical distinction between the phenomena studied by Sociology and Psychology respectively. His study of *Suicide* even tended to ignore psychological disposition while taking into account social phenomenon.

Most sociologists, however, have adopted various intermediate positions. According to Ginsberg, many sociological generalisations can be more firmly established by relating them to general psychological laws. German scholars like Weber came to believe that sociological explanations can be further enriched if an attempt is made to understand social behaviour in terms of underlying meanings. According to Girth and Mills, some concepts like *role* are meeting point of the two where social structure and individual character meet.

Psychology	Sociology
It is the study of *personality*.	It is the study of *individual as well as of society.*
It is the science of man's experience and behaviour and its subject matter includes – basic instincts, sympathy, suggestions, imitations and passions.	It is the science of study of social institutions and their inter-relationships and its subject matters includes family, individual, religions, power and social change.
Its scope is limited and focused on man's mental activities and his basic behaviour.	Sociology is a general study of society and has a wider scope.
It is more scientific and has more scope of experimentation and there are even psychological laboratories which are used.	It has multiple perspectives and its claim of scientific discipline is contested within the discipline itself.

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Some attempts have been made to bring the two disciplines together. One of the most valuable works is of Gerth and Mills. According to them, the study of social psychology is interplay between individual character and social structure as human behaviour is not purely driven by instincts. Social psychology serves as a bridge between Psychology and Sociology, maintain a primary interest in the individual but concern itself with the way in which the individual behaves in social groups, collectively with other individuals.

Sociology and History

History and Sociology have a very close relation. According to G E Howard – '*History is past Sociology, Sociology is present history.*' Philosophy and History are considered as the mother of all social sciences. Karl Marx and Durkheim pioneered the use of historical data in their sociological discourse. Karl Marx's historical materialism is pivoted around historical evolution of modes of productions. Weber's *Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* also uses a historical particular ideal type and Pitirim Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics* makes ample use of historical inferences.

History	Sociology
Historians almost as a rule study the past.	Sociologists are more interested in the contemporary or recent past and present.
Earlier, historians were content to delineate the actual events, to establish how things actually happened.	In Sociology the focus was to establish casual relationships.
History studies concrete details with an objective discussion of real events.	Sociology is more likely to categorise and generalise the particular events from the concrete reality.
History is descriptive.	Sociology has normative elements too.
History looks at events from the framework of time.	Sociology looks at events and institutions from the perspective of nature of relations involved.

The interaction between two disciplines can be found in their subject matter. Subject matter of Sociology and History overlap to a considerable extent. The historian frequently provides the material which sociologist uses. With the help of history, Sociology can get crucial information about the past.

According to Radcliffe Brown – '*Sociology is nomothetic, while history is idiographic.*' The historian describes unique events, while the sociologist derives generalisations. But now a days, history is not only concerned with *which and what events*, but also *how* of events. This emphasis on *cause and effect* has brought the two disciplines closer. The line for demarcation between History and Sociology is becoming increasingly blurred as History is also no longer purely descriptive.

Sociology and Political Science

The two distinct disciplines of social science, Sociology and Political Science do converge often as the subject matter is men and the convergence is on the increase. A beginning was made with the works of Marx. According to him, political institutions and behaviour are closely linked with the economic system and social classes.

Provoked by this thinking, some thinkers by the end of the 19th Century pursued the matter in detail with studies of political parties, elite, voting behaviour, bureaucracy and political ideologies, as in the political Sociology of Michels, Marx, Weber and Pareto. Another development occurred in America

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and is known as the behavioural approach to political phenomena. This was initiated by the University of Chicago in the 1930s.

Political science	Sociology
Conventional Political Science restricted itself mainly to the study of state and power.	Sociology has a wider scope and is devoted to the study of all aspects of society.
Subject matter of Political Science is more codified.	Sociology is more open ended in its approach.
Political Science primarily tends to turn attention towards the processes *within* the government and its relations with people.	Sociology stresses the interrelationships between sets of institutions including government.

Political Science provides laws which affect welfare of masses; Sociology provides data and basis for these laws and policies. Social considerations like caste, kinship and demography play an important role in political decisions and especially in elections.

The forces at work and the changes that are taking place in peasant, tribal or caste societies belong more to the sphere of Sociology and Anthropology rather than to that of the Political Science. Sociological studies have also been conducted in membership of political organisations, voting behaviour, casteism, process of decision making in organisations, sociological reasons for support of political parties, the role of gender in politics, etc. which involves a blend of Political Science and sociological thinking. Social policies of government often rely on sociological studies.

Political system also affects social institutions. As we cannot choose who our parents will be, we cannot choose what nationality we will have. Organisation of family is also impacted by the political system. China, once strictly enforced two children norm and Indian government also tries to influence family through family planning, population policy and so on. American state promotes values of openness and freedom in family, Pakistan on the other hand, advocates religious code.

There is a renewal of interest in Marxist sociological ideas among political scientists because of revolutions like Arab Spring in developing countries.

Sociology and Anthropology

Sociology and Anthropology had quite different origins. While the Western intellectuals of Sociology had a ready context closer to home when Modernism, French Revolution and Industrialisation arrived, on the other hand, anthropologists had to discover their own context by venturing out to (the so called) primitive inhabitations. Anthropology also borrowed ideas from pre-historic Archaeology.

Classical Western notions of these two disciplines view Sociology as a study of industrialised society, while Anthropology as study of primitive society. However, today the distinction between *Industrialised* and *others* have blurred and this definition is also not applicable in a plural society like India where this *other* is found every next door according to Srinivas.

In the earlier periods of their growth, the two disciplines grew up in close cooperation with each other in terms of the concepts used, areas of interest and their methods of study. This can be seen in the works of founders which cannot easily be assigned exclusively to either of the disciplines.

The early convergence was followed by a period of extreme divergence in terms of their universe of study, areas of interest, methods of study and even the concepts employed.

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In spite of the obvious differences between the two in the 19th Century, as stated above, there has been a good deal of convergence in modern times. Both Anthropology and Sociology study the same subject matter, i.e., man. Time and cultural elements are the only aspects that separate them.

Anthropology	Sociology
Anthropology has taken birth from curiosity of Western scholars in primitive societies in non-Western countries.	Sociology originated from philosophy of history, political thought and positive sciences in the light of challenges posed by modernity.
Anthropologists describe and analyse in clinically neutral terms because they can place themselves as outsiders without being involved in values.	The methods employed by sociologists are loaded with values, and hence, their conclusions are tinged with ethical considerations.
Social Anthropology tended to study society (simple societies) in all their aspects, as a whole. Social anthropologists tend to closely study small societies which are relatively unchanging and lacking in historical records.	Sociologists often study parts of an existing society like family or processes such as social mobility.
Anthropologists generally live in the community that they study in order to observe and record what they see. Their analysis is essentially qualitative.	Sociologists often rely on statistics and questionnaires and their analysis is often formal and quantitative as well, at times.
Anthropology also studies physical aspects related to evolution and biology.	Sociology mainly focuses upon cultural and social aspects.

The small units of study which the anthropologists require are fast disappearing. Placed in such a situation, both anthropologists and sociologists are concerned with the process of economic growth and social changes. Both the disciplines are equally useful in studying the African and Asian societies which are changing under the impact of the West. It is no longer the prerogative of sociologists to study advanced societies.

The works of Talcott Parsons and R K Merton are attempts towards an adaptation of functionalist approach to study industrial societies and William Whyte has adopted Participant Observation for the study of modern industrial society. Thus, the disciplines are increasingly converging towards each other.

Sociology and Common Sense

Common Sense is defined as *routine knowledge that people have of their everyday world and activities.* Common sense explanations are generally based on what may be called *naturalistic* and/or individualistic explanation based on *taken for granted knowledge.* Sociology has its tryst with common sense since long and it has been accused of being no more than common sense right from its birth.

The problem is not that common sense knowledge is necessarily false, but that it is unexamined, unreflected and taken for granted. For this prime reason, Sociology is distinguished from common sense on various grounds –

I. Common sense generally takes cues from what appears on surface, Sociology on the other hand looks for inter-connections and root causes which may not be apparent. A sociologist works like a sceptic, and Sociology as a science of organised scepticism, looking beyond what meets the eye. Explanations for religion and suicide by Durkheim are the best examples of such

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sociological outlook. While religion says *God created man*, Durkheim said *Man created god/ religion*. According to Peter Berger – '*The fascination of Sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see, in a new light, the very world in which we have lived our lives.*'

II. Sociology uses reason and logic, common sense uses conjectures and stereotypical beliefs. Common sense views are often based upon images that get reinforced through tradition. Sociological knowledge, on the other hand, challenges these traditions and stereotypes. While traditional social role of woman is explained through explanations like biological factors, ritual sense, Sociology affords us a different view that such roles may have other basis like patriarchy. Further, Sociology is not bound by a single perspective.

III. Common sense is based upon assumptions while Sociology is based upon evidences. Sociological knowledge is based upon thorough research and the resulting outcomes may be contrary to common sense.

IV. Empirical testing has no place in common sense knowledge, while sociological research may have empirical orientation. Common sense knowledge is often individualistic and naturalistic.

V. Sociological knowledge is objective, common sense is intuitive. Common sense knowledge on the same subject may not be coherent also. For example – *Birds of a feather flock together* and *opposites attract* are sayings which convey opposite meanings.

VI. Sociological knowledge results into generalisation and even theory building. Common sense knowledge, on the other hand, may be very personal and two persons may draw different conclusion from the same event based on their own common sense.

VII. Sociological knowledge is change oriented, while common sense promotes status quoism.

VIII. Common sense is unreflective since it does not question its own origin, while sociological knowledge is subjected to unending debates and discourse.

IX. Sociology has a body of concepts, methods and data, no matter how loosely coordinated, but common sense is more or less based on personal judgments.

Poverty, from commonsensical point of view, is viewed as a result of indolent behaviour, while a sociologist may view it in terms of structural inequalities and disabilities. Thus, like every star gazer is not an astronomer, every commonsensical observation about society is not a sociological observation. So, it is the way of looking at things which distinguishes Sociology and common sense.

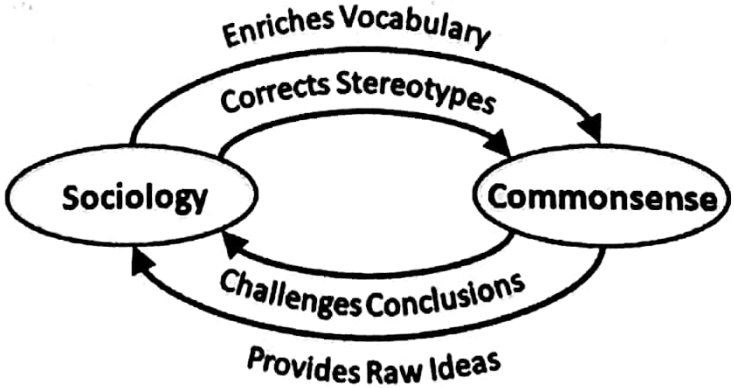

Fig. 1.4 Sociology and Common Sense

However, there are a few similarities and complementarities also between the two. Firstly, concepts in Sociology are framed by taking into consideration the commonsensical knowledge. Common sense helps sociologists in hypothesis building. Secondly, common sense provides raw material for sociological investigations. Sociology tends to answer questions generated from common sense knowledge. For example, common sense views on gender are widely studied in Sociology. Common

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sense also helps Sociology by challenging its conclusions and thereby enriching the discipline. According to Anthony Giddens, sometimes sociological knowledge also itself becomes a part of common sense knowledge. For example – sociological research into marital breakdown has led people to believe that marriage is a risky proposition.

Till about 17th Century, common sense and science were not seen in mutually exclusive terms. This belief was strengthened by likes of Moore and Reid who argued that common sense and science are together used to expand man's understanding of truth. According to Hegel, all philosophy gradually develops from the ordinary day-to-day consciousness and daily lived experience and hence, every ordinary person is also a social theorist.

As *Scientific Method* gained momentum in social sciences, method was seen as imperative in any social investigation. Durkheim out-rightly rejected the role of common sense in sociological analysis and he termed it as deceptive, unrealistic, un-testified and speculative. According to him – '*Common sense perceptions are prejudices which can mar the scientific study of social world.*' Marxists on the other hand consider it as ideological with limited understanding of the world.

However, *Scientific Method* in Sociology is out rightly rejected by phenomenologist like Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann and Alfred Schutz. Post-modernists also claim that sociological knowledge is no superior to common sense as there is no such thing as *complete gospel* and sociological principles are equally uncertain as common sense. According to Goffman, this is the knowledge that people use to make judgments and navigate their way around the world. According to some ethnomethodologists and phenomenologists, though the words used by the people in everyday speech are not subject to rigorous definition and there are no set criteria for establishing what other people mean or are talking about, people manage, well enough, with this seemingly unsystematic body of knowledge called common sense. Hence, Sociology follows a false path when it tries to ape the sciences and should instead content itself with the more everyday credentials of common-sense knowledge.

From another perspective, Gramsci identified common sense thought with the masses and theoretical thought with the elite. Thus, sociologists' perception towards common sense changed over time as the discipline evolved. Earlier, when it was close to philosophy, common sense was seen as complementary. When discipline moved closer to Positivism, common sense was almost discarded. Anti-Positivist on the other hand again tried to give importance to common sense. So, relationship between the two is dynamic and even mutually reinforcing at times.

Question Bank

1. What is Sociology? How it is different from other social sciences?
2. Sociology is a by-product of modernism. Comment.
3. Sociology is of recent origins, but the study of society is not. Elaborate the statement.
4. Modernity posed difficult questions to which Sociology provided answers. Elaborate.
5. The foundation which was laid by Comte was shaken soon by Weber and Marx. Elaborate this statement in light of limitation of the concept of *Sociology as a true science.*

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6. Scope of Sociology is dynamic and ever evolving. Justify your answer with the help of illustrations.
7. Sociology is study of social systems, Psychology is the study of mental systems. Elaborate. Are the two disciplines mutually exclusive?
8. Sociology without history is rootless and history without Sociology is fruitless. Analyse this statement.
9. Economists have a narrow view of division of labour, but sociologists look beyond production. Examine the statement in light of contribution of Durkheim to the concept of division of labour.
10. Political Science is the study of power relations, but Sociology looks beyond that as well. Illustrate with the help of a few examples.
11. While Sociology is the study of modern societies, Anthropology is the study of primitive societies. Analyse the validity of the statement.
12. Sociology and common sense converge at some points, but diverge more often. Evaluate this statement.
13. Renaissance provided the touchstone on which many of the modern social sciences, including Sociology, grew. Comment.
14. What role did Enlightenment ideology play in the emergence of Sociology?
15. What role did Industrialisation play in transforming family and occupation in Western Europe?
16. Though ideas were present already, French Revolution provided an immediate context for the emergence of Sociology as a discipline. Comment.

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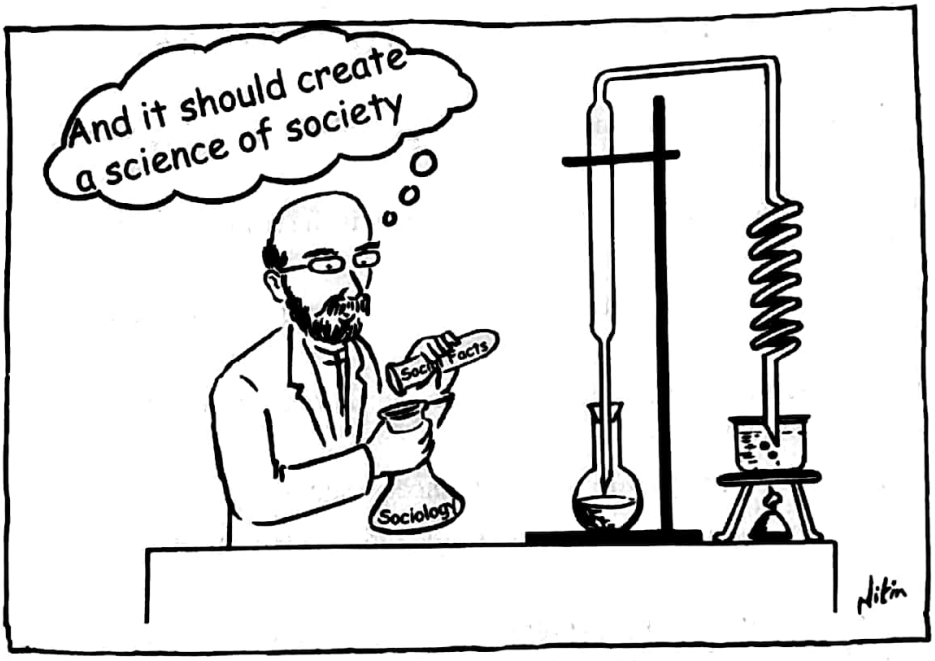
2 Sociology As Science



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Analyse the claim of Sociology as a Science
2. Understand Scientific Method and its critique
3. Know about fact, value and objectivity
4. Explain other theoretical strands in research methodologies like non-positivist methodologies

Tryst of Sociology with *science* started even before the birth of the discipline. Early social thinkers took great pride in adopting the scientific terms from natural sciences and infusing them into Sociology. Many catchy terms like *Social Statics*, *Social Dynamics* and *Mechanical Equilibrium* were introduced. This formative approach also reflected the stance of the fledgling discipline. Comte and Durkheim, who were the poster boys of the new discipline, aggressively vouched for inculcation of scientific temper into the new discipline. Comte termed the early Sociology as a positive discipline and Durkheim made no distinction between *natural facts* and *social facts*. However, this frenzy was halted by a new breed of sociologists who were at unease with the thought of humans beings treated as puppets, operated by scientific strings. How can thinking beings, with unlimited imagination, be bound by limited rules?

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Science, Scientific Method and Critique

Tryst of Sociology with Science and scientific method started with the origin of the discipline itself. Early scholars were greatly influenced by natural sciences and their impact on humanity. Comte initially called the new discipline as *social physics* which smacked of its obsession with science. Similarly, Herbert Spencer's *organismic analogy* was guided by similar influences of biological sciences and Darwinism. Early social scientists, like natural scientists, believed that true knowledge can be gained through sensory perceptions.

Definition of science is not a single one. Often it is related with a host of characteristics such as –

I. It is rooted in empiricism.
II. It is self-reflective and self-corrective as its conclusions are always open to scepticism.
III. It gives rational explanation of truth.
IV. It has objectivity in methods.
V. Its approach is based on facts and not speculations.
VI. It is universal in its application in time and space.

Science can be summed up as *use of systematic methods of empirical investigation, the analysis of data, theoretical thinking and the logical assessment of arguments to develop a body of knowledge about a particular subject matter.* This definition is closer to natural sciences than social sciences and early sociologists like Comte declared that Sociology is the last of the sciences to be discovered.

Sociology was also considered as a science by the early scholars as they argued that it has considerable *inter-subjective reliability*, i.e., the discipline has concepts which have universal meanings irrespective of who is the investigator. For example – meaning of family, religion convey the same meaning for every investigator. Durkheim also claimed that meaning of *social facts* remains same. Further, they claim that there is also a great degree of *objectivity* in the study of social phenomenon. According to Weber – '*Objectivity is possible through methods like – Verstehen and Ideal Types*' '. Early scholars further argued that Sociology is also *empirical* in its approach. Durkheim suggested *indirect experimentation* to prove empirical validity of social theories.

However, soon it was realised that Sociology cannot be developed on lines of natural science as it has many practical limitations. Major limitations are – difficulty of being empirical, inductive, and universal in application and finally difficulty in testing the results. Experimentation is the core of natural sciences, but it is rarely possible in case of social sciences. Sociology also doesn't have the luxury of controlled environments. A large part of human interactions cannot be quantified. Objectivity in social sciences is not possible as we deal with human minds which are difficult to decode. Weber was one of the early scholars to identify this difficulty and he argued that – '*There cannot be an objective science of society since social actions must be understood in terms of meanings that man attaches to them.*'

However, some other scholars argue that science is not merely a body of knowledge and even natural sciences suffer from their own limitations in terms of vagueness, unpredictability and problems of testability. Karl Popper argued that – *Science is not a body of knowledge, but a method of approaching* and Sociology also has key features of science viz. – perspectives, methods of study, subject matter, etc.

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IDEOGRAPHIC APPROACH VS NOMOTHETIC APPROACH

Ideographic and nomothetic methods represent two different approaches to understanding social life. Nomothetic approach of studying a discipline is based on what Kant described as a tendency to generalise, and is typical for the natural sciences. It describes the effort to derive laws that explain objective phenomena in general. It applies research-supported general formulations to particular cases and uses deductive reasoning.

Ideographic research, on the other hand, is based on a tendency to specify, and is typical for the humanities, as these disciplines deal with human beings who have consciousness. This approach describes the effort to understand the meaning of contingent, unique, and often subjective phenomena. An ideographic method focuses on individual cases or events. Ethnographers, for example, observe the minute details of everyday life to construct an overall portrait. A nomothetic method, on the other hand, focuses on general statements that account for larger social patterns that form the context of single events or individual behavior and experience. Positivists tried to prove their approaches as nomothetic, while interpretivists denied such possibilities.

Scientific Method, in general, refers to any systematic, rational and objective set of steps to explore the truth or new knowledge or for investigating phenomena or correcting and integrating previous knowledge. It is generally associated with natural sciences and discovery of laws, which govern behaviour of matter which is at the heart of Scientific Method. According to George Lundberg – '*Scientific Method consists of at least three basic steps – systematic observation, classification and interpretation of data*'. Specifically, it is a series of steps like – starting with definition of the problem, hypothesis building, testing and so on. To be termed scientific, a method of inquiry must be based on empirical and measurable evidence subject to specific principles of reasoning. To establish cause and effect, Scientific Method in natural sciences employs laboratory experiments in a controlled environment in which variables can be changed, but such a luxury is hardly available to Sociology. However, the rationale behind adopting a Scientific Methodology in Sociology is to give a concrete shape to sociological concepts, so that they are understood in the same way by different people. Use of Scientific Method also ensures that the Sociology as a body of knowledge is systematised and is given a definite shape.

A Scientific Method has, in general, the following elements –

I. *Perspective and problem definition* – To start any investigation, one must have a basic idea of what one is looking for. A perspective provides direction to the research. It is a set of assumptions based on existing knowledge. For example – a same phenomenon can be either studied from Positivistic or Non-Positivistic perspective. It helps in better definition of the problem. According to Weber, at this stage, influence of some values might be unavoidable.

II. *Hypothesis formulation* – Hypothesis is an untested statement about a relationship between concepts. It states what we are looking for or what we are trying to prove. Once information is gathered, it is subjected to the test of generalisation. Generalisation makes things manageable and helps in predicting similar phenomenon. Prediction is afforded due to generalisation only.

III. *Information gathering using research methods and building causal explanations* – It involves gathering the relevant facts and information which will be used for generalisation. Various methods can be used for this like observation, surveys and interview.

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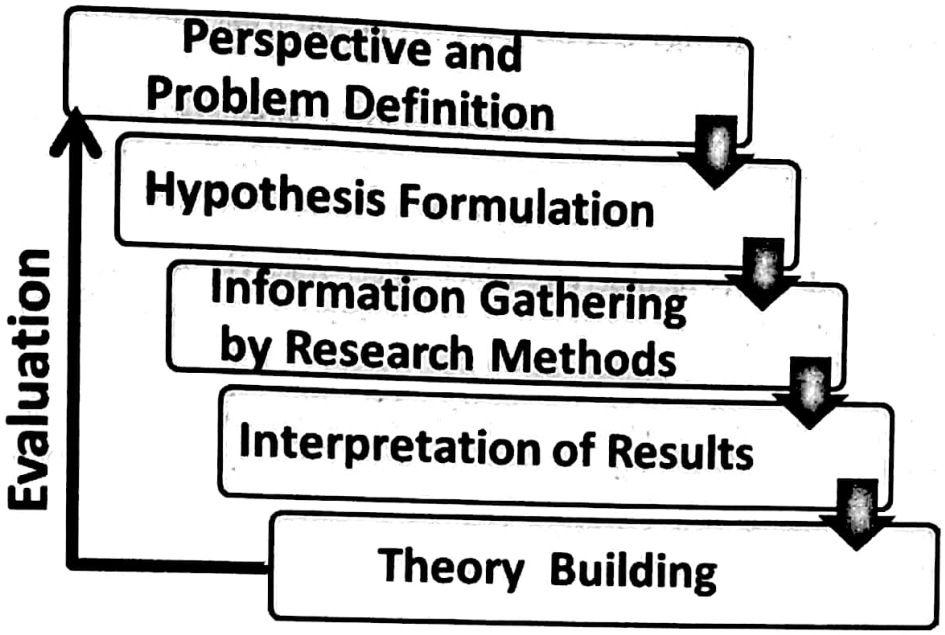

Fig. 2.1 Elements of Scientific Methods

IV. *Interpretation of results, analysis, comparison and classification* – To make information more intelligible, it has to be interpreted by the sociologists for the wider consumption. Comparison leads to building of typologies like *average types* and *Ideal Types*. Mechanical solidarity, organic solidarity and spirit of capitalism are such typologies generated by comparison.

V. *Theory* – Sociological theory is defined as a set of interrelated ideas that allow systematisation of knowledge of the social world. This knowledge is then used to explain the social world and make predictions about the future of the social world. When generalisations are found repeatedly true over time, i.e., empirical data repeatedly supports hypothesis, they result into theories or general laws.

Scientific Method became popular among sociologists in the 19th Century when early sociologists were obsessed with science, but later, it was contended that Scientific Method may not be very suitable for sociological investigations as Sociology deals with human beings who have consciousness and are not completely governed by external stimuli as matter in nature does. Scientific Methods, when used in Sociology, suffer from various shortcomings like observer bias, non-response bias and social desirability bias.

In the wake of these limitations, some sort of modified scientific methodology is used in Sociology. In Sociology, Scientific Method is not bound by the empirical nature of study, but is more concerned with methodology. Thus, Scientific Method in Sociology need not be construed in the same manner as Scientific Method of natural sciences.

Due to these limitations, Scientific Method and science is criticised, especially by Interpretivists, on the following grounds –

I. Karl Popper, in his *The Logic of Scientific Discovery, 1959,* argues that science and Scientific Method face problem of demarcation, i.e., what is scientific and what is not as there is

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subjectivity at times. He further says that all scientific principles are based on probability and not *finality*.

II. Due to its specific nature, *laboratory experiments* cannot be conducted in Sociology in a controlled environment. So, controlled experimentation is not possible in Sociology to establish *cause and effect* and hence, there cannot be a discovery of fixed universal laws.

III. There are value judgments of observers which affect research in Sociology. So, sociological research cannot have *objective facts* as the final outcome of the Scientific Method, if used in Sociology.

IV. Adorno indicates that science is suffocating and kills creativity. Science becomes the new religion and the blind faith in it negates human freedom, which is an integral part of social sciences.

V. J F Feyerbend contends that Scientific Method restricts the choices of the researcher and sociological research should be liberating and not constraining.

Major Theoretical Strands in Research Methodology

Research methodology is a wider term given to the entire process of research which includes specific approach and ideology, research methods (like questionnaire and samples), research design, data, assumptions and logics used in that process.

In Sociology, it is also guided by sociological researcher's conception of relation between man and society. In the earlier phases of the discipline, Positivism provided the theoretical backing to the research methodology. Later, other ideas from time to time added to this theoretical base. So, research methodology is enriched by different researchers like Positivists, functionalists, Interpretivists, critical, feminists, post-modernists and so on. While a Positivist researcher will lean more towards quantitative techniques, a Non-Positivist researcher will incline towards qualitative methods. More often than not, now a days, mixed methods are used. Finer aspects of these are dealt in upcoming topics.

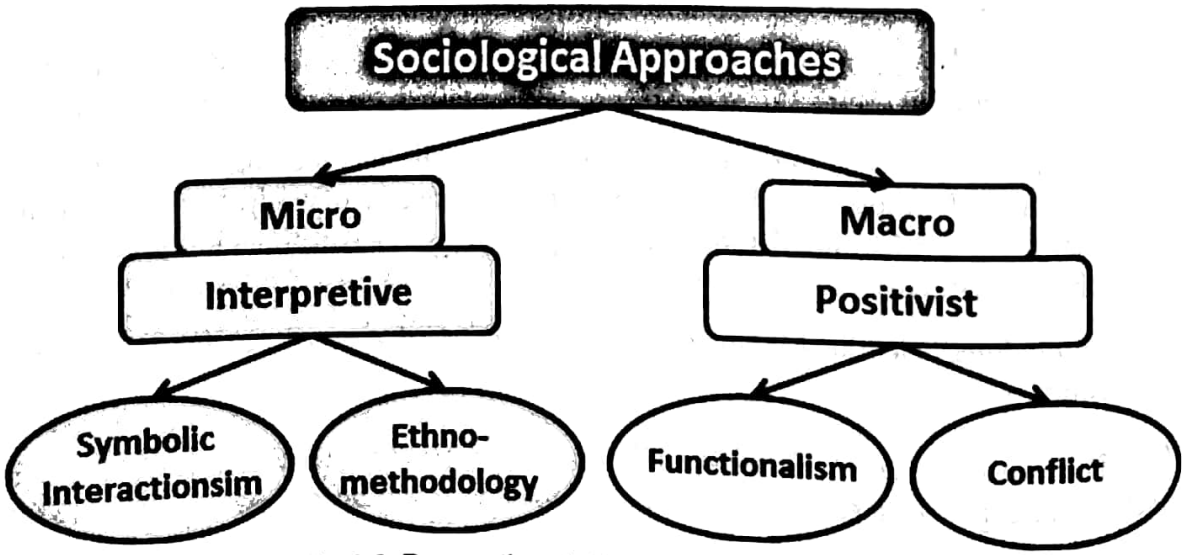

Fig. 2.2 Perspectives in Research Methodologies

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Positivism and its Critique

Early sociologists faced two fundamental questions about the future course of the discipline –

I. What should be the subject matter of the discipline?
II. What should be the methodology in Sociology?

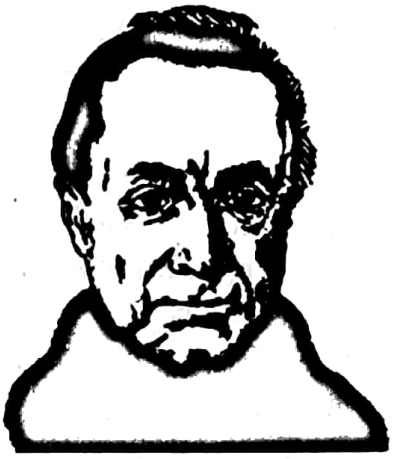

Fig. 2.3 Auguste Comte

Influenced by the prevailing atmosphere of rationalism and science, they too attempted to define the subject matter and the method in scientific and objective terms. Thus, early sociologists like Saint Simon, Comte, Spencer and Durkheim laid the foundation of Positivistic theory. They contended that society is also governed by certain fixed laws and hence, is predictable. They believed that application of methods and assumptions of natural sciences will lead to *positive science of society* and evolution of society follows invariable laws. According to this approach, behaviour of man can also be objectively measured and statements based on objective measures of cause and effect can be made leading to formulation of theories.

Positivism is an approach of studying Sociology as a discipline which aims at employing principles, similar to those in natural sciences. August Comte was the founder of this approach in Sociology. According to Saint Simon – *'Positivism was rooted in a science of society which is analogous to natural sciences'* and he published a six volume *Positive Philosophy, 1830-42* which enunciated the principles of the new disciplines for the first time.

Comte further concretised the conception of a Positivist discipline as *true knowledge is based upon thinking about physical and social world as a causal relationship between realities which we can observe either directly or indirectly.* He further stated that *the search for laws of society uses both reason as well as observation.* Positivism, thus, also aims at understanding the world as a sequence of *cause and effect.* According to Comte – *'Sociology is the last and the most sophisticated of all the sciences as it deals with all aspects of humanity and society'.* He even suggested four methods for the study of new discipline, viz. Observation, Experimentation, Historical and Comparative. He defined the scope of new positive social science as – *social dynamics,* dealing with social change and *social statics* dealing with the equilibrium and stability of Social System. Later, Durkheim laid down its further principles. Others like Spencer also emphasised on a positive science of society.

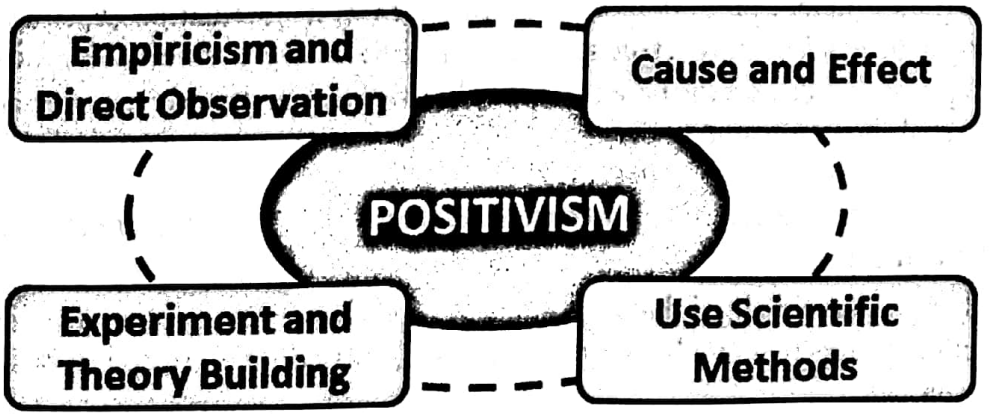

Fig. 2.4 Dimensions of Positivism

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Main features associated with Positivism are –

I. It lays particular emphasis on behaviour that can be *directly observed*. Factors like feelings and meanings which cannot be directly observed are not important.

II. It emphasised upon understanding *external realities* and rejected the study of internal aspects like meanings and motives. Durkheim called for studying *social facts'* as these are seen objectively in a similar manner by everyone.

III. It gave primacy to the discovery of *cause and effect* relationship while studying phenomenon.

IV. It stressed upon the use of *Scientific Methods* similar to those used in natural sciences. For example, Durkheim used statistical technique, similar to natural sciences, in his famous study of suicide.

V. It focused upon *empiricism* and rejected commonsensical speculations. Positivism, more accurately in fact, can also be called *empiricism.*

VI. Positivism also focused on formulation of *theories* and *universality* of laws and principles.

VII. Based upon the knowledge and theories, it also talked about *predictability* of social events. For example, Comte believed that he has discovered a law of social organisation which can predict future course of evolution of societies and he also mentioned the various stages in this process.

VIII. It emphasised upon using *deductive* approaches. It gave primacy to theorising in a similar fashion as natural sciences.

IX. Finally, Positivists argued that sociological knowledge should be *testable*. In fact, Positivists believed that *true knowledge is the one which can be tested.*

Thus, Positivism glorified the idea that human behaviour and working of society is predictable and like natural sciences, it can also be quantified in concrete terms. They tried to make Sociology a scientific discipline, different from other social sciences like History and Philosophy, which have subjectivity, speculations and value elements. Marxists and functionalists both invariably fall under the category of Positivists as they make deterministic and predictive statements about the social actors.

However, soon it was realised that Sociology cannot be developed as a purely Positivistic discipline. Primarily, it was because Sociology dealt with human element with a subjective conscience which cannot be deciphered totally by the objective methods.

Positivism has certain inherent limitations which resulted from its infatuation of natural sciences. The project of making a *social science* into a true science, similar to *natural sciences* soon proved troublesome as the Positivist approach failed on the parameters of objectivity, quantifiability, universal testability and inter-subjective reliability and came under the following major criticism –

I. Phenomenologists like Peter Berger contended that facts never fall from sky, but develop in a particular context.

II. Gradually, it was also realised that a deductive approach is less fruitful in Sociology and instead, an inductive approach would be more helpful as it is very difficult to collect facts about abstract phenomena.

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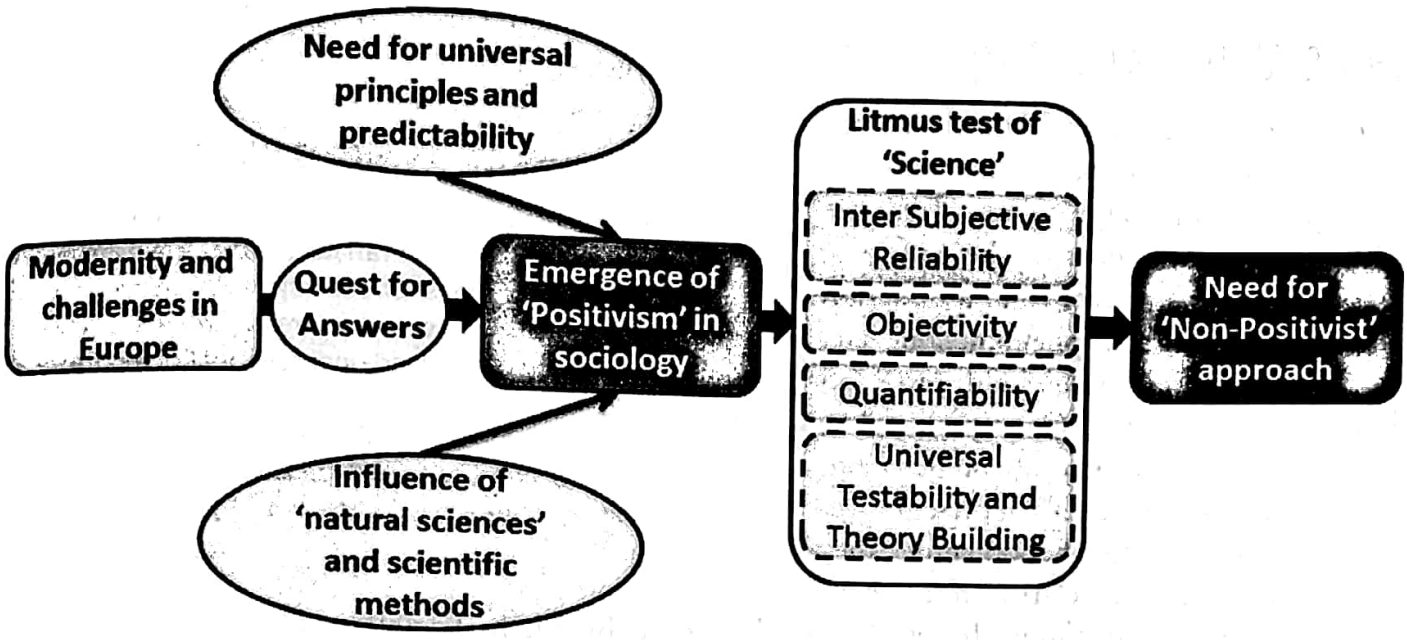

Fig. 2.5 Evolution of Non-Positivist Approach

III. Positivism was also considered a fundamental misunderstanding of reality. Later, Non-Positivists approaches favoured the study of phenomenon in terms of meanings attached by the actors. Weber talked about emphasising on social action and not on social facts. Alfred Schulz contends that humans construct their world through common sense, ethical values, assumptions and presumptions. So, a sociologist must respect these while undertaking research.

IV. Positivists were also criticised for their over-emphasis on universalism which is not possible in Sociology.

V. Scientific Methods also have their limited applicability in Sociology as there is subjectivity over their use. Investigative methods are often accused of being biased towards participants. Similarly, complete objectivity is also not possible.

VI. Adorno indicates that social life exists in layers. Positivists focus only on one or two layers. Sociologist must use critical mind to analyse multiple layers.

VII. Positivist's explanations are also difficult to test, contrary to their claim.

VIII. Possible fallout of over-emphasis on Positivist Sociology is emergence of *scientific social theories*, like racial-superiority, that have dangerous fallouts. Scientific Marxism led to great miseries in communist countries. Fascism led to mass murders of Jews on the back of scientific racial explanations by social scientists.

In short, in the words of Habermas, *Positivism loses sight of the actors reducing them to passive entities determined by natural forces*. As the actor in society is distinct, the critical theorists like Habermas would not accept the idea that the general laws of science can be applied without taking into account the autonomous human action.

However, one big achievement of Positivists was that, they freed social sciences from the clutches of religion and speculative philosophy and laid a solid foundation of a systematic investigation in society.

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Fact, Value and Objectivity

CORRELATION AND CAUSATION

One of the fundamental obstacles in objective analysis of relations between the social variables is that – researchers often mistake correlations for causations. Correlation only indicates the simultaneous occurrence of the events. Causation, on the other hand, indicates that one or more events actually cause occurrence of other event or events. For example, in Durkheim's theory, gender and suicide seems to be a correlation. But causation is established only after some degree of research and empirical evidence.

A discipline as a body of knowledge has certain basic components like – facts, concepts, theories and so on. They are like the building blocks of the edifice of the discipline. A *concept* is an abstraction representing objects, phenomenon, etc. For example, family, household, caste and kinships are concepts. Concepts are like proxies for the objects or phenomena and stand for them. They are like representatives of actual objects and phenomenon. They should be used to clarify researchers' thinking and, hence, should be precise and be agreed by all. In Sociology, like theories, there are also disagreements on the understanding of many concepts. Since concepts are abstract, they must be operationalised for a clear understanding and operational use. For example, *social status* is a concept, but it is generally operationalised by indicators like occupation and income.

Fact, value and objectivity are the terms which are of great debate and significance in Sociology. Some sociologists contend that Sociology as a discipline uses facts objectively, while others claim that values are inherent in any sociological investigation. This debate over facts and values and their true place in Sociology makes it important for us to analyse their meaning and put them in correct perspective vis-à-vis the discipline.

The word *fact* is derived from a Latin word *factum* which means *something made or done*. A fact is regarded as an empirically verifiable observation or state of affairs that can be agreed upon as real, definite and incontrovertible. It has its own independent existence. Facts can be perceived by our tactical and audio-visual senses in similar manner by each one of us. Facts remain the same in every situation and for all observers. Objective facts constitute the subject matter of natural sciences. Similar attempts were also made in Sociology by the likes of Durkheim who gave the concept of *social facts*. Positivists conceptualised the new discipline of Sociology lying on the bedrock of facts and empirical knowledge. According to Durkheim, social facts are the subject matter of the discipline. To make Sociology a science, attention should be paid only on factual analysis and not on subjective interpretations and individual perceptions. However, this over-emphasis on the use of the facts came under criticism. First of all, there is no agreement among sociologists themselves that which social facts are universal. For example, capitalism as a social fact in any Social System may be perceived differently by different scholars. Secondly, there is a great difficulty in defining and concretising the social facts. Unlike scientific facts, social facts change their shape and meaning as the context changes. So, it was argued that Sociology cannot be based on facts alone as human consciousness is intangible and cannot be measured against dry factual standards.

When observed, facts are systematised and their relation is expressed into a set of general statements that account for the causal relations between the observed facts. It is called a *theory*. It is a general statement or a set of statements which is as far as possible, established, tested and supported by reference to

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evidence. However, there is no agreement among the sociologists in what a theory is. Some contend that predictability of future events is an essential part of theory building. Interpretive strand contends that theory making in Sociology is futile and the task of a sociologist is to merely observe the facts.

Value in Sociology refers to subjective disposition arising out of experience, bias, preferences and beliefs. Values can be personal, cultural, temporal and situation specific and may not remain the same over a period of time. Values represent what one believes and not necessarily what actually is. They refer to socially accepted standards of desirability and undesirability. For an individual or a society, they define what is important, worthwhile and worth striving for. They guide our objectives, goals, means for such goals and our actions. According to functionalists, values are of society and not of individuals. Values are a medium of social control. Early sociologists called for keeping individual values aside while doing social research as it affects an objective evaluation. They also argued that incorporation of such values will make the discipline merely a speculator exercise. Values are also associated with ideological thinking. What is valuable for a communist may not hold worth for capitalists. Similarly, ideology of functionalists and conflict theorists will be at diverging ends. After early years, values were also accorded suitable importance by the Non-Positivists and other social researchers. It was later accepted that it is not possible to avoid them totally. Social research has to take into account the value component as well.

So, there is a distinction between fact and value and classical mainstream sociologists like Comte, Durkheim and Weber favoured this distinction for making Sociology a truly scientific discipline. For various reasons, some other scholars, on the other hand, have argued that the distinction between fact and value is impossible to maintain as Sociology doesn't deal with mechanical elements. They suggest that there can be a fact-value distinction, but no fact-value dichotomy as the two cannot be separated completely, even if they are conceptually different. Critical theorists argue that values in society are also the dominant values and hence, sociologists cannot concern themselves with facts alone, since Sociology itself has a commitment to specific value orientations. Further, while studying social action, sociologists are also interested in people's own reasons for action. For example, in the context of recent surge in terror incidents, sociologists try to understand why terrorists use violent means to achieve political ends and the answer also lies in the values apart from the facts. Howard Becker, in his, 1967 address *Whose side are we on?*, even argued that depriving social sciences of values will be akin to taking the very soul away from the disciplines. If sociologists will not promote social values, Sociology will be dominated by the values of the ruling class as there will be no force to resist ideological definitions of social reality. As a middle path, it is generally agreed that rather than aiming for complete value freedom, the sociologists should avoid a strong interest in the outcome of the research, so that unnecessary influence of values may be avoided. By this, logic, it is possible to retain objectivity and rationality in sociological research without completely doing away with values or making a clear distinction between facts and values.

Objectivity is an approach in which the attitude of an investigator is detached, unprejudiced, value free and free from biases. It focuses upon a goal or the object and avoids distractions. Values are the basis of biases and subjectivity and they flow from different preconceived notions like caste, gender, culture, class, religion and ideology. Robert Bierstedt defines it as – '*Objectivity means that conclusions arrived at as a result of inquiry and investigation are independent of the race, colour, creed, occupation, nationality, religion, moral preferences and political predisposition of the investigator.*' Hence, objectivity pre-supposes value neutrality and predictability about outcome. It is one of the pillars of *Scientific Method* and the core of Positivism.

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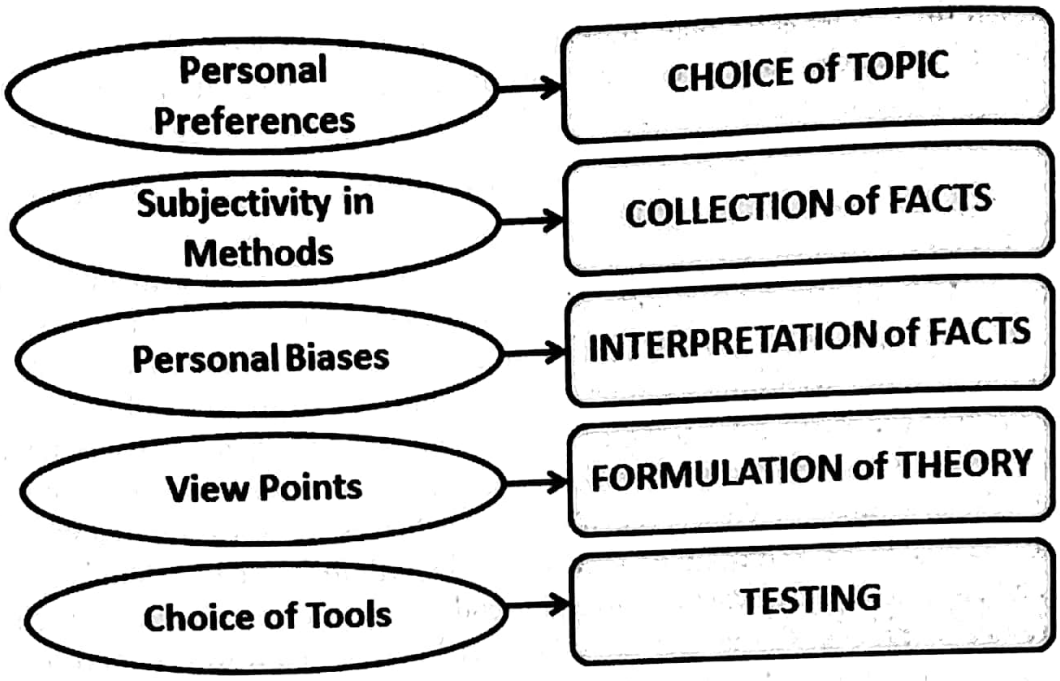

Fig. 2.6 Dilution of Objectivity in Social Research

Objectivity in social research can be improved by various Scientific Methods like – *double blind* in research. Use of Scientific Methods like Verstehen, training the researchers to adopt a value free approach, enlarging the samples and expanding the research in both temporal and spatial dimensions for wider acceptability. Results should be subjected to organised scepticism for greater acceptability. Sociologist can also view his or her work from an outsider's perspective by being reflexive. A reflexive sociologist documents all his or her activities so that there is an objective evaluation.

Objectivity in sociological research touches upon many dimensions of investigation and there are areas like *objectivity in methodology*, where objectivity is still desirable for credibility of outcome. Purely subjective investigation will lead to high inconsistency in results and will render sociological research unfruitful.

However, achieving an objective approach is fraught with difficulties. Since sociological investigation involves multiple stages, objectivity is required in all those stages. First of all, *choice of topic and problem definition* for sociological research should me made objectively. However, personal preferences play an important role here. For example, problem of defining scope of Sociology is treated differently by different scholars. Max Weber, in his *The Methodology of Social Sciences*, argued that values can be tolerated at this level, but there should be value neutrality in the later stages of the research. Secondly, in the *collection of facts* stage also, various methods like primary and secondary research pose issue of choice and many of them are highly subjective. Collection of facts also depends upon the ability of the investigator. For example – interviewing method suffers from problems of values of both the interviewer and the interviewee. Thirdly, *representation or interpretation of facts* can also be coloured by personal biases. For example –a particular set of phenomenon, say caste or class, may be viewed as functional by one scholar and dysfunctional by another Marxist scholar. Fourthly, *formulation of theories* is also

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coloured by various viewpoints and is not always supported by the facts. Durkheimian and Marxian theories attempt to explain the same phenomenon in opposite terms. Finally, *choice of testing tools to validate theories* is also subjective. Since social research cannot be done in a confined environment, like in a laboratory, there is always subjectivity in choosing appropriate testing environment.

MAX WEBER ON OBJECTIVITY AND VALUE NEUTRALITY IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Weber put forward a two-tiered approach to value-free social science. According to him, end purpose and its selection in the research may be affected by the values, but once it is decided, the process of research itself should not be contaminated by the values of the researcher. For example, in comparing different social systems like religious, political or social systems, it is difficult to choose one over the other without taking a value or end into consideration. Till this level, values are tolerable as the choice would necessarily be dictated by the analyst's values. Weber contends that nature cannot just hand us over facts, unfiltered by prior ideas. Our sets of concepts clearly shape the way we see the world. On the other hand, Weber believed that once a value, end, purpose, or perspective had been established, then a social scientist could conduct a value-free. Hence, according to Weber, it is difficult to discover *the complete truth* in social research, but this should not be an excuse to shun objectivity completely and it should be maintained in the social research process as far as possible. For Weber, formulation of Ideal Types exemplifies the extent of use of objectivity in research. Ideal Types are not perfect models, but typical heuristic devices. Though, the construction of Ideal Types may be affected by personal values of the researcher, but their careful and objective construction also ensures that they are usable for other researchers as well.

Proponents of objectivity earlier argued that Sociology should refrain from indulging into questions of *what ought to be*, but instead focus on explaining *what is*. However, given the nature of discipline which deals with humans having consciousness, complete objectivity is not possible. Further, it is also unjustifiable to ignore the reformist agenda which the earliest sociologists like Durkheim took in wake of the upheavals in the French society.

In late 19th Century, Non-Positivist ideas gained strength and it was argued that *complete objectivity was neither desirable nor achievable*. Dilthey was the first to turn the nascent Positivist approach, based on total objectivity in Sociology, on its head. According to him – *'A fact based approach explores only one dimension as it ignores cultural and ideological dimensions'*. Weber further criticised the fact based approach and laid down the fundamentals of an Interpretivist approach. As there are different ideologies and viewpoints in the study of Sociology, absolute objectivity is not possible. Moreover, a particular social problem can only be understood within a particular cultural context and ignoring this context may lead to faulty understanding of the problem. According to post-Positivist Elvin Gouldner, *Value neutrality is an Elusive Goal in Sociology* as investigators have to deal with multi-layered truths. Viewpoints and values are hence considered essential.

But, the mere fact that objectivity is difficult to achieve, doesn't call for its discard by investigators. Becoming over-sceptical about objectivity also tantamounts to becoming fatalistic in research. Shunning attempts of inculcating objectivity in Sociology is akin to operating in a sewer rather than a hospital, just because we cannot attain perfectly anti-septic conditions anywhere.

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Objectivity is not an end in itself and it is not a fixed principle. Meaning of objectivity today is not the same. It has undergone changes. Today, objectivity has to be thought of as a continuous and an ongoing process rather than an already achieved end result. So, despite conflicting perspectives in Sociology, objectivity can be maintained while adopting each one of them. Objectivity and value-neutrality are not one and the same thing, as values are part and parcel of human thinking and society. One can accept the prevailing values of the society and still remain objective in one's approach. Limitations to objectivity don't mean that it has to be completely abandoned in social research. Hammersley, in his *Methodology: Who Needs It? 2011*, argues that fallibility of knowledge is not an excuse to abandon search of knowledge and in Sociology, a workable model of objectivity can be devised to suit the needs of the discipline.

Non-Positivist Methodologies

When it was realised by the scholars that sociological issues cannot be addressed using fixed laws only, they turned from Positivism to non-Positivism. Positivists saw society as given and man as mere part of it and governed by its rules. Non-Positivists, on the other hand, considered man as an independent thinking being who can also influence society. They rejected the over-socialised conception of man. Non-Positivist methodologies, thus, tried to gauge what goes inside the mind of a man and how it affects society.

Even before the establishment of Sociology as a formal discipline, such ideas were prevalent during the late 18th Century, when German *idealist* school attempted to define social realty differently. Scholars like Dilthey and Rickert highlighted the difference between natural and social world. According to them, social world is based upon uniqueness of human society in terms of meaning, symbols and motives. The leader of German idealist school George Hegel argued, *Social phenomena are results of the ideas which are generated in the minds of individuals and these ideas are responsible for history*. This tradition was carried on and by the end of 19th Century, an alternate view to Positivism had strongly emerged which contained variety of thoughts and was collectively known as Non-Positivist methodology.

Positivists	Non-Positivists
They adopt primarily a *structural approach*.	They adopt primarily an *interactional approach*.
They have a *macro perspective*.	They have a *micro perspective*.
They have a *normative approach*.	They have an *individual centric approach*.
They take a *nomothetic* view of things.	They take a *idiographic* view of things.
They prefer *quantitative* tools of research and the prime focus is on *measurement* by taking an *experimental' approach*.	They prefer *qualitative* tools of research and the prime focus is on *understanding* via various *descriptive ethnographical methods*.
They provided *causal explanations* and generalised the conclusions.	They focused on describing the phenomenon.
Prime research techniques used are survey, questionnaires, etc.	They use techniques like Participant Observation and unstructured interview

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Weber was one of the pioneers of the Non-Positivist approach. Other early doyens were Mead, Herbert Blumer, Schutz, etc. Weber laid the foundation of Interpretivist methodology and Mead pioneered Symbolic Interactionism. Various Non-Positivist methods which emerged include – Symbolic Interactionism, Ideal Types and Verstehen of Weber, Phenomenology by Alfred Schutz in 1930s and Ethnomethodology by Harold Garfinkel in 1940s.

Various elements that run common to these methodologies are –

I. Non-Positivists study the internal processes represented through emotions, motives, aspirations and the individual's interpretation of social reality. For example – Ethnomethodology relies upon the everyday methods used by actors and their narratives.

II. Non-Positivists emphasised upon using qualitative methods and not the Scientific Methods similar to the ones used in natural sciences. Earlier, Non-Positivists like Weber and Mead emphasised upon the use of Scientific Methods, but later, Non-Positivists like Alfred Schutz and Garfinkel out-rightly rejected their use.

III. Non-Positivists also suggested the understanding of social reality and not prediction of events. They refrained from formulation of generalised universal theories. While Weber and Mead stressed upon cause and effect relations, Schutz eliminated such a possibility.

IV. Non-Positivists also highlighted impossibility of total objectivity and hence, were accommodative of subjectivity in research.

Some of the prominent Non-Positivist methodologies are mentioned below.

Interpretivist Sociology

It is an umbrella term for various streams like Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Symbolic Interactionism and so on. This approach was used for the first time by Max Weber in his book *Methodology of the Social Sciences, 1949* (posthumously). Weber was highly influenced by the idealists like Rickert and Dilthey. According to this approach, the task of Sociology is to interpret the meanings attached by individuals to their actions and understanding those meanings can only help in explaining cause and effect.

The basis of this approach is that *individual has a voluntary will and his thoughts cannot be understood simply in terms of external influence.* Human beings have a consciousness which cannot be predicted. This approach also came to be known as the voluntarist approach. Weber also proposed Scientific Methods for interpretative Sociology. Methods used by Weber included Verstehen, Ideal Type and comparative methods.

The approach of Weber later influenced the emergence of purely Non-Positivist approaches like Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology. Georg Simmel, a German sociologist, was another early doyen of this approach. In America, Chicago School, led by Louis Firth, Robert Park, Mead, etc. took this tradition forward.

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Phenomenology

It refers to a group of perspectives and is a distinctively European branch of Sociology, which emerged as an alternative to Positivism. It simply means study of phenomenon in society. According to Gabriella Farina, in her Some Reflections on the Phenomenological Method, 2014, – 'Phenomenology *is neither a doctrine, nor a philosophical school, but is merely a style of thought and method by which the investigator can have different experiences and results each time*'. Phenomenology was the most radical departure from Positivist approach and was perhaps the first pure Non-Positivist perspective in Sociology. It argued that subject matter of natural sciences and social sciences are fundamentally different – man has consciousness, material things don't and hence, methods of natural sciences cannot be applied on social sciences. Meanings don't have their own independent existence. Instead, they are constructed and reconstructed by the actors in the course of their social interaction. From a phenomenological perspective, the social world is a world of meanings and there is no objective reality which lies beyond the meaning of individual. Max Weber was a big influence on the development of this stream of Sociology.

Effort to develop it can be traced to the publication of Alfred Schutz's *The Phenomenology of the Social World* in 1932, though its philosophical base was initially developed by Edmund Husserl. Schutz was focally concerned with the way in which people grasp the consciousness of others while they live within their own stream of consciousness.

It describes how from a stream of undifferentiated experienced individuals develop their own subjective reality and meanings. Since meanings are constantly negotiated in an ongoing interaction process, it is not possible to establish a simple cause and effect relationship.

Much of Schutz's work focuses on an aspect of the social world which he termed as the *life-world*, or the world of everyday life. Phenomenology studies the everyday phenomena that happen in our social lives. Our *life world* or everyday world is an intersubjective world in which people create social reality and are constrained by the pre-existing social and cultural structures created by their predecessors. Schutz focused upon the dialectical relationship between the way people construct social reality and the stubborn external social and cultural reality that they inherit from those who preceded them in the social world. He was particularly interested in *typifications*, i.e., the way the phenomenon which is being experienced is classified according to previous experience. It helps in a quick understanding of reality and makes it more predictable.

Basic premise of Alfred Schutz was later more systematised by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their famous book *The Social Construction of Reality, 1967*. Phenomenologists reject a causal explanation, generalisation of theory and use of any specific methods. The social meanings of the phenomena keep on changing with time with changing individual's subjectivity. According to Phenomenologists, there is no reality beyond the subjectivity of individual. They say that in order to decipher the phenomena, the sociologists must immerse themselves into the areas of life they seek to investigate, rather than attempting to fit the data into predefined categories.

Phenomenology faded out due to its pure subjective nature and inability to deliver concrete concepts. Some contemporary sociologists criticise it for being nothing more than mere common sense and very narrow and speculative in nature.

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Symbolic Interactionism

Herbert Blumer, who was a student of Mead, coined the term Symbolic Interactionism in 1937, which originally flows from works of G H Mead, who wrote several essays that were instrumental in its development. John Dewey, Cooley and William Thomas were other influences. Chicago School played a significant role in its development for around 30 years, till 1950s. Its basic tenets were similar to Phenomenology, but it was distinctively American, unlike Phenomenology, which originated in Europe. It rejected both social and biological determinism and argued that man himself creates social reality by meanings created through interaction. It places a strong emphasis on symbols and language as core element of all human interactions.

Symbolic Interactionists have been affected by Weber's ideas on Verstehen, as well as by other ideas of Weber. Symbolic Interactionism was developed, in large part, out of Simmel's interest in action and interaction and Mead's interest in consciousness.

Mead understood the human behaviour, as governed by the internal processes, by which people interpret the whole world around them and give meanings to their lives. These meanings are reinforced and modified during the process of interaction. Symbolic Interaction, thus, stresses upon that social phenomenon which must be understood in terms of the interaction between the participating individuals. According to Mead, interactions are possible only through some symbols called *significant symbols* like language and gestures. Thus, Symbolic Interactionism springs from a concern for language and meanings. It directs our attention to the details of interpersonal interaction. Irving Goffman is also one of the most successful Symbolic Interactionists and made landmark contributions in his studies of mental asylums and the ways in which people present themselves in social encounters.

LOOKING-GLASS SELF

Symbolic Interaction was influenced by the view of Charles Horton Cooley that the sense of *self* is not self-generating, but it is developed through interaction with *significant others*. In our social interaction, other people act like a mirror or *looking-glass* in which we see ourselves. What other people think of us is like a mirror image of ourselves in society. A person compares his self-image to how others perceive him.

To Blumer, behaviourism and structural functionalism both tend to focus on factors (for example, external stimuli and norms) that cause human behaviour. As far as Blumer was concerned, both theories ignored the crucial process by which actors endow the forces acting on them and their own behaviours with meaning. Individuals in human society are not seen as units that are motivated by external or internal forces beyond their control, or within the confines of a more or less fixed structure. Rather, they are viewed as reflective or interacting units which comprise the societal entity.

Joel M Charon, in his Symbolic Interactionism: An Introduction, An Interpretation, An Integration, 2004, highlights five basic characteristics of Symbolic Interaction, which include the assumptions that human beings should be considered as social and thinking beings, humans perceive their environments subjectively and not objectively, cause of human actions lies in present and they are not passive to their environment. The crucial assumption that human beings possess the ability to think, differentiates Symbolic Interactionism from its behaviourist roots. The ability to think enables people to act reflectively rather than just behave unreflectively. The ability to think is embedded in the mind and mind is different from physiological brain. Mind is a result of socialisation process and it is not a thing, but is a process.

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People possess only a general capacity for thought. This capacity must be shaped and refined in the process of social interaction. Such a view leads the Symbolic Interactionist to focus on a specific form of social interaction, i.e., socialisation. The human ability to think is developed early in childhood socialisation and is refined during adult socialisation. Symbolic Interactionists have a view of the socialisation process that is different from that of most other sociologists. To Symbolic Interactionists, conventional sociologists are likely to see socialisation as simply a process by which people learn the things that they need to survive in society. To the Symbolic Interactionists, *socialisation is a more dynamic process that allows people to develop the ability to think, to develop in distinctively human ways.* Furthermore, socialisation is not simply a one-way process in which the actor receives information, but *is a dynamic process in which the actor shapes and adapts the information to his or her own needs.*

Interaction is the process in which the ability to think is both developed and expressed. All types of interaction, not just interaction during socialisation, refine our ability to think. In most interactions, actors must take account of others and decide if and how to fit their activities to others. However, not all interactions involve thinking. According to Blumer – '*Non-symbolic interactions don't require thinking, but symbolic Interactions require thinking.*'

Symbolic Interactionists conceive language as a vast system of symbols. Words are symbols because they are used to stand for things. Words make all other symbols possible. Acts, objects, and other words exist and have a meaning only because they have been and can be described through the use of words. Symbols are crucial in allowing people to act in distinctively human ways. Because of the symbol, the human being does not respond passively to a reality that imposes itself, but actively creates and re-creates the world acted in. In addition to this general utility, symbols in general and language in particular have a number of specific functions for the actor –

I. First, symbols enable people to deal with the material and social world by allowing them to name, categorise, and remember the objects they encounter there. In this way, people are able to order a world that otherwise would be confusing. Language allows people to name, categorise, and especially remember much more efficiently than they could with other kinds of symbols, such as pictorial images.

II. Second, symbols improve people's ability to perceive the environment. Instead of being flooded by a mass of indistinguishable stimuli, the actor can be alerted to some parts of the environment rather than others.

III. Third, symbols improve the ability to think. Although a set of pictorial symbols would allow limited ability to think, language greatly expands this ability.

IV. Fourth, symbols greatly increase the ability to solve various problems. Lower animals must use trial-and-error, but human beings can think through symbolically, a variety of alternative actions, before actually taking one. This ability reduces the chance of making costly mistakes.

V. Fifth, the use of symbols allows actors to transcend time, space, and even their own personas. Through the use of symbols, actors can imagine what it was like to live in the past or what it might be like to live in the future.

VI. Sixth, symbols allow us to imagine even a metaphysical reality, such as heaven or hell.

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Symbolic Interactionists' primary concern is with the impact of meanings and symbols on human action and interaction. Meanings and symbols give human social action (which involves a single actor) and social interaction (which involves two or more actors engaged in a mutual social action) distinctive characteristics.

Based upon the preceding discussion, the basic principles of symbolic interaction can be summed up as –

I. Human beings, unlike lower animals, are endowed with the capacity for thought.
II. The capacity for thought is shaped by social interaction and not by the virtue of external force.
III. While Functionalists and Marxists focus on society as a whole, Interactionists focus on small scale interaction. They don't think that human action is in response to a system.
IV. In social interaction, people learn the meanings and the symbols that allow them to exercise their distinctively human capacity for thought.
V. Meanings and symbols allow people to carry on distinctively human actions and interactions.
VI. People are able to modify or alter the meanings and symbols that they use in action and interaction on the basis of their interpretation of the situation.

Popularly, the perspective was used by Arlie Hochschild, in her *The Managed Heart, 1983*, which is based on her study of Delta Airlines. She studied how the air hostesses manage their emotions to serve the passengers better. She terms this as *emotional labour*. She used Symbolic Interaction to understand an aspect of life, which looked very basic and which most think as being understood, and concludes that a very personal thing like emotion is also commoditised.

Like other Non-Positivist approaches, symbolic Interactionism is also accused of having a narrow micro focus and ignoring the bigger picture. As a result, it has also been criticised on various counts –

I. Firstly, it ignores certain common social facts like power, structure and their constraining influence on human actions and interactions.
II. Interactionists are accused of examining human interaction in a vacuum. They focus only on small face-to-face interaction and ignore the larger historical or social settings.
III. Some researchers have also argued that modern service industry requires manipulation of emotional labour as well and very personal symbols like *smile* are no longer voluntarily owned by individuals.
IV. According to Skidmore, Interactionists largely fail to explain *why people consistently choose to act in given ways in certain ways instead of all other possible ways*. In this way, they conveniently ignore the social constraints that are there.
V. Leon Shaskolsky also argues that symbolic Interactionism embodies American values of liberty, freedom and individuality and is biased by it and deliberately ignores the harsher reality of life.
VI. Marxists argue that meanings that are generated are not a result of interaction, but external force due to presence of class relationships.

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Ethnomethodology

The term has Greek roots and Ethnomethodology literally means the *lay methods* that people use on a daily basis to accomplish their everyday lives. People are viewed as rational, but they use *practical reasoning*, not formal logic, in accomplishing their everyday lives. Ethnomethodology was proposed by American sociologist Harold Garfinkel beginning in the late 1940s, but it was first systematised with the publication of his *Studies in Ethnomethodology* in 1967.

It has various common elements with European Phenomenology because Harold Garfinkel was a student of Alfred Schutz at the New School, who had a great influence on it. Garfinkel had previously studied under Talcott Parsons, and it was the fusion of Parsonsian and Schutzian ideas that helped in giving Ethnomethodology its distinctive orientation. Aaron Cicourel was another big influence.

Phenomenological sociologists tend to focus on what people think, Ethnomethodologists are more concerned with what people actually do.

It is defined as *the study of the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations by means of which the ordinary members of the society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves.* To put it another way, Ethnomethodology is concerned with the organisation of everyday life and it examines the methods and procedures that people use to construct and account for their social world. Like Phenomenologists, Ethnomethodologists also reject an objective view of reality and social order which starts from society and not an individual.

Like Durkheim, Garfinkel considers *social facts* to be the fundamental Sociological phenomenon. However, Garfinkel's social facts are very different from Durkheim's social facts. For Durkheim, social facts are external to and coerce the individuals. In contrast, Ethnomethodology treats the objectivity of social facts as the accomplishment of members.

There are two central ideas to Ethnomethodology –

I. Indexicality – It means that the sense of an object or the phenomenon is context specific. For example, a same question may elicit different responses in different situations like informal conversations and interview. Members make a sense of a phenomenon in the context of phenomenon.
II. Reflexivity – It refers to the fact that our sense of order is a result of conversational process. It is created in a talk. It is a reflective action and it is subjective interpretation of order. It implies that order doesn't exist on its own, but is created by the individuals. Individuals compare a particular instance to the underlying pattern and vice-versa to reinforce each other.

Garfinkel argues that mainstream Sociology, classical Sociology, to be precise, has depicted man as a *cultural dope* who simply acts out the standardised directives provided by the culture of his society. Instead, members give meanings to situations, construct their own world rather than being shaped by it. While Ethnomethodologists refuse to treat actors as cultural dopes, they do not believe that people are *almost endlessly reflexive, self-conscious and calculative.* Rather, following Alfred Schutz, they recognise that most often action is routine and relatively unreflective. In short, Ethnomethodologists are neither interested in micro structures nor macro structures; they are concerned with the artful practices that produce both the types of structures.

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CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

It is the empirical study of conversations by employing techniques drawn from Ethnomethodology. Conversation analysis examines details of naturally occurring conversations to reveal the organisational principles of talk and its role in the production and reproduction of social order. In this, all facets of conversation for meaning – from the smallest words like Umm and Ooo, to the timings of pauses, interruptions, etc. are also studied. In their early studies, Ethnomethodologists Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks were concerned to show how the orderliness of society is actively produced by the actions, especially during conversations, of participants. For example, in a day to day conversation, no one is in charge of the distribution of turns at talking. Still, most conversations are remarkably in order with a series of *turns* for each speaker. Conversations can be recorded and can be analysed over and over again. Conversation analysis has achieved many important things in Interpretivist Sociology. First, it has helped in uncovering a lot about the ways in which ordinary talk is structured, for example – with the help of recorded conversations, we now have a better understanding of how conversations are started and terminated, how topics are chosen or avoided, etc. Second, it has served as a methodological tool for sociologists by enhancing the quality of evidence and has also served as a tool for checking the validity of analysis. Third, this method has been able to throw light on institutional talk by comparing specialised forms of talk – courtroom interrogation, pilots' conversations with air-traffic control, calls to emergency services – with everyday talk. Many jobs are done mainly through talking – even being a family doctor is mostly a talk – so conversation analysis has contributed significantly to the work of Sociology. Like conversation analysis, *Discourse Analysis* is another similar technique.

Ethnomethodologists argue that social world is nothing more than the constructs, interpretations and accounts of its members. *Accounts* are the ways in which actors explain (describe, criticise, and idealise) specific situations. Ethnomethodologists devote a lot of attention to analyse people's accounts, as well as to the ways in which accounts are offered and accepted (or rejected) by others. This is one of the reasons that Ethnomethodologists are preoccupied with analysing conversations and *conversation analysis* is one of the important parts of the Ethnomethodology.

Extending the idea of accounts, Ethnomethodologists point out that sociologists, like everyone else, offer accounts. Thus, reports of sociological studies can be seen as accounts and analysed in the same way that all other accounts can be studied. A good deal of Sociology (indeed all social sciences) involves common sense interpretations. Ethnomethodologists can study the accounts of the sociologist in the same way that they can study the accounts of a layperson.

Early Ethnomethodological studies carried out by Garfinkel and his associates took place in casual, non-institutionalised settings such as the home. Later, there was a move towards studying everyday practices in a wide variety of institutional settings like courtrooms, hospitals and asylums..

Like other Interpretative sociologists, Ethnomethodologists are also criticised on a number of grounds –

I. They are criticised for taking a detached view of the members of society. According to Giddens, they seem to have no goals.

II. Alvin Gouldner says that they ignore the fact that interactions and reality are shaped by the differential power relations that exist in society.

III. According to Goldthorpe – '*It seems that what members don't recognise, doesn't exist for them and they remain insulated with that*'. This is, however, not true.

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The Non-Positivist methodologies also could not resolve the dilemma of objectivity and subjectivity. Weber and Mead also favoured objectivity. Non-Positivists could also not develop a single methodological principle leading to wide variations in Non-Positivist research and some even stressed on using quantitative methods. Non-Positivist methods also depended heavily on the ability of the interrogator and as a result, different explanations were given for same phenomenon. Non-Positivists ignored independent existence of social phenomenon and overlooked the fact that man is born in a pre-existing society.

Question Bank

1. What is Scientific Method? Why is it important in Sociology?
2. Making of Sociology as a science was an elusive goal that was given up soon. Please comment.
3. Positivism aimed at making Sociology a scientific discipline, but its aims were too ambitious. Elaborate.
4. What is the difference between Ideographic and Nomothetic methods? Illustrate with some examples from areas of social research?
5. Differentiate between objectivity and value neutrality?
6. Early positivists failed to make a distinction between facts and values. Comment.
7. Non-positivists methodologies are no more than common sense. Comment.
8. Ethnomethodologists use intuitive speculations and merely describe only those things that lie on the surface. Critically evaluate the validity or invalidity of this statement in light of the work of Garfinkel.
9. Symbolic Interactionism was founded by Mead and taken forward by Blumer. Elaborate.
10. Why Interactionists criticise positivist theory. How valid is their criticism?
11. How values affect social research? Are values totally undesirable in social research? What is the view of various thinkers on values?
12. What are problems related to objectivity in Sociology? Is absolute objectivity desirable in Sociology?
13. Conversational Analysis is sub-type of Ethnomethodology, but it has its own distinctive identity and approach. Elaborate.
14. Theory building is an important aspect of any settled discipline. Why is theory building a catchy issue in Sociology?
15. Delineate the contribution of Alfred Schutz towards Interpretative Sociology.
16. Theory and fact are two most points in Sociology. Explain.
17. Differentiate between and deductive and inductive approaches to scientific research.

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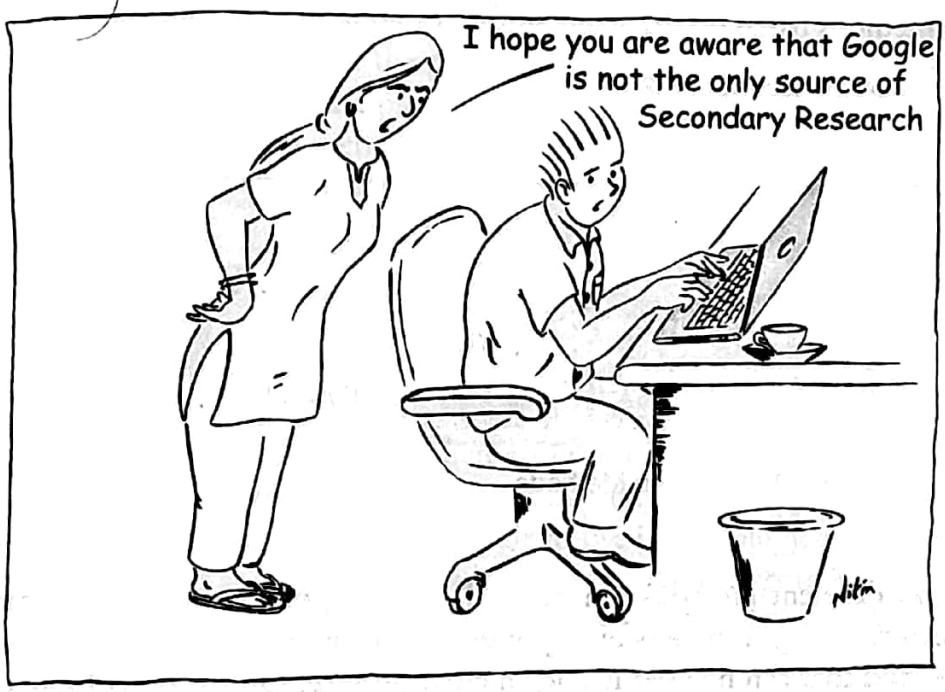
Research Methods

3



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the significance of research methodologies
2. Know about the types of research methods
3. Understand the significance of hypothesis formulation in sociological research
4. Explain the concept of reliability and validity

Every science is governed by some laws and rules which are discovered through research. Bearing this in mind, early Positivist sociologists also strived to discover such laws through several research methods. For example, Durkheim suggested the use of multi-variate analysis, similar to that used in statistics. Positivists harked on methods similar to those used in natural sciences, while Non-Positivists eschewed them. As needs of the discipline grew, research methods also became more vibrant. Simple data crunching was found inadequate for the discipline and hence, interactive methods like Participant Observation were called into picture. However, unlike the research methods used in natural sciences, these methods had their own limitations as well when they were applied in Sociological research. Natural sciences provide the luxury of discovering laws in controlled labs. In case of Sociology, whole society is a lab and hence, controlling variables are very difficult to conceive and administer. Despite such handicaps, research methods in Sociology have helped in lending more credibility to the discipline by systematising the concepts and by providing corroborative data and content.

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Significance of Research Methodologies

Use of research methodology is necessary in Sociology as it distinguishes sociological work from the layperson knowledge of society. Research work provides legitimacy and wider acceptance to the sociological work. Different methods are used for different purposes of the research like Positivist research or Interpretivist research. Research methods that are used in Sociology broadly fall in three categories –

I. Quantitative or qualitative methods based on nature of the data and information

II. Micro methods or macro methods based on the scope of the research

III. Methods based on primary data or secondary data

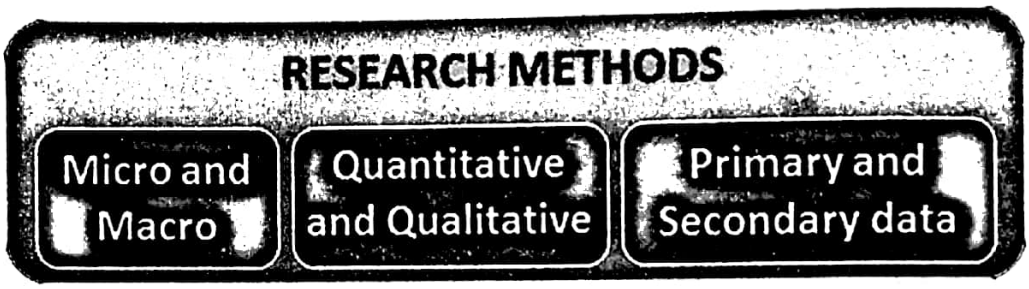

Fig. 3.1 Research Methods

Depending upon the requirement, different methods can be used. For example, survey research can be used in large scale research involving large numbers of respondents and investigators. It is the most common example of a *macro* method that can be used in such a circumstance. On the other hand, in the study of a particular group, a *micro* method like Participant Observation can be used.

A research design follows certain basic steps like – choice of topics, collection of facts, representation of facts, hypothesis making, testing and validation and so on. Further, research methodology or research design has following basic types –

I. *Exploratory Research Design* – It is used in the initial stages of the research to acquire some preliminary information. The main objective of the exploratory research is to fine tune the broad problem into a specific problem statement and generate possible hypotheses. It therefore, gives useful direction for further research. Thus, it is used to carry initial research to narrow down on possible alternatives.

   The general methods used in exploratory research are –

   a. Survey of existing literature
   b. Survey of experienced individuals
   c. Analysis of selected case studies

II. *Descriptive Research Design* – It is aimed at providing accurate descriptions of variables relevant to the problem under consideration, and is generally used for preliminary and explorative studies. It is the most frequently used research method. In comparison to an exploratory research study, descriptive study is more formal and less flexible. It may involve both qualitative and quantitative information and hence, can be used for both Positivist and Non-Positivist research. Participant

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observers like Radcliffe Brown employed such methods to describe the primitive communities. Some of the commonly used techniques under this category are –

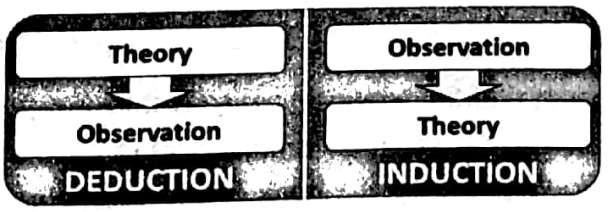
a. *Panel Research Design or Longitudinal Research* – Also known as longitudinal research, the panel design involves the continual or periodic information collection from a fixed panel or sample of respondents. The longitudinal analysis involves repeated measurements of the same variables to facilitate a variety of inferences to be drawn about the behaviour of the elements of the panel. Participant Observation and field studies use such methods.

b. *Cross Sectional Design* – The cross sectional study is aimed at taking a one-time stock of the situation or the phenomenon in which the decision maker is interested. Cross sectional designs give the picture of the situation at a given point of time. Opinion polls and market surveys use such kind of methods.

III. *Experimental Research Design* – In an experimental design, the researcher actively tries to change inputs like the situation, circumstances, or experience of participants (manipulation), which may lead to a change in behaviour or outcomes for the participants of the study. Its objective is to establish the causality between dependent and independent variable and test a hypothesis. The participants are ideally randomly assigned to different conditions, and variables of interest are measured. This is done to eliminate all extraneous variables. *Hawthorne Studies* of Elton Mayo are classic examples of such an experimental design. This is the method which is most often associated with natural sciences in which we change variables in a controlled environment and this design is the most difficult to use in Sociology. As a result, modified experimental designs are used as it is very difficult to have *control groups* in Sociology. This method is mostly used for Positivist research or quantitative research as this method aims at keeping prejudices and biases at bay while doing the research. Experimental research attempts to determine how and why something happens. Experimental research tests the way in which an independent variable (the factor that the researcher manipulates) affects a dependent variable (the factor that the researcher observes). Due to high objectivity, data obtained through such methodology are more reliable.

DEDUCTION AND INDUCTION

These are two epistemological approaches towards research in Sociology. Inductive research involves search for the pattern from a set of observations and ultimately concluding the outcomes as theories. On the contrary, the deductive research starts with the theory (derived through common sense, literature, etc.) itself and then moves towards observations. Inductive approach is taken when we know very less about the social issue at the hand. Hence, *exploratory research* is always inductive.



Deductive approach is used when there is already an existing knowledge base. *Confirmatory research* is generally deductive. Qualitative or Interpretivist sociologists more frequently use inductive reasoning where an investigator takes time to make repeated observations of the phenomena under study to get a better understanding of the phenomenon under observation. *Scientific Method* may use any of these two approaches for social research.

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A number of factors can affect the outcome of any type of experimental research. One is finding samples that are random and representative of the population being studied. Another is experimenter bias, in which the researcher's expectations about what should or should not happen in the study, sways the results. Yet another one is controlling of extraneous variables such as room temperature or noise level that may interfere with the results of the experiment. Only when the experimenter carefully controls the extraneous variables, can she or he draw valid conclusions about the effects of specific variables on other variables. Limitations associated with experimental method in Sociology are –

a. There is significant number of variables which has to be taken into account. A researcher may even not be aware of many of these and may learn about these only in hindsight. Merton's idea of Latent Functions illustrates effect of such variables on some other dependent variables.
b. People, unlike physical objects and animals, become aware of the presence of researchers and may behave differently. Hawthorne Effect (a conclusion drawn by Mayo in his famous behavioural experiment) exemplifies such phenomenon.
c. There are ethical considerations as well. Some aspects of human behaviour study might attract criticism. Increasing privacy concerns have further complicated social research experiments.

IV. *Comparative Method* – This research method is used to compare the social phenomenon to arrive at generalised conclusions. It is a method which is suggested as an alternative to the *experimental research* in Sociology, but is based on the similar set of principles. Facts from real social life are gathered and compared. According to Haralambos and Holborn, in their *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, 2013*, the comparative method is based on what has happened or is happening in society rather than upon situations artificially created by the researcher. It was more popular with the early sociologists. Durkheim was the first sociologist to discuss this method at length in his *The Rules of Sociological Method, 1895*. He regarded it as a method of Sociology to identify dependent and independent variables. Durkheim's study of suicide is a classic example of use of this methodology. Marx and Weber also used this method. Similarly, Ginsberg used this method in the study of primitive societies. If a particular social phenomenon is studied in different social contexts and the causes are found out, then a cause and effect relationship can be established. However, speculation is a necessary element of this method as one studies social phenomena which are not uniform in all circumstances. Further, one has to compare the whole society at times to study a single phenomenon and this method may not lead to very reliable results in such situations. Therefore, this method is often limited to smaller institutions.

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

Since there are multiple truths and multiple perspectives in Sociology, it is hardly surprising that there are also multiple research methods. There is no single unique road to sociological truth. It is futile to argue about the superiority or inferiority of different methods. It is more important to ask if the method chosen is the appropriate one for answering the question that is being asked. For example, if one is interested in finding out whether most Indian families are still *joint families*, then a census or survey may be the best method. However, if one wishes to compare the status of women in joint and nuclear families, then interviews, case studies or Participant Observation may all be appropriate methods.

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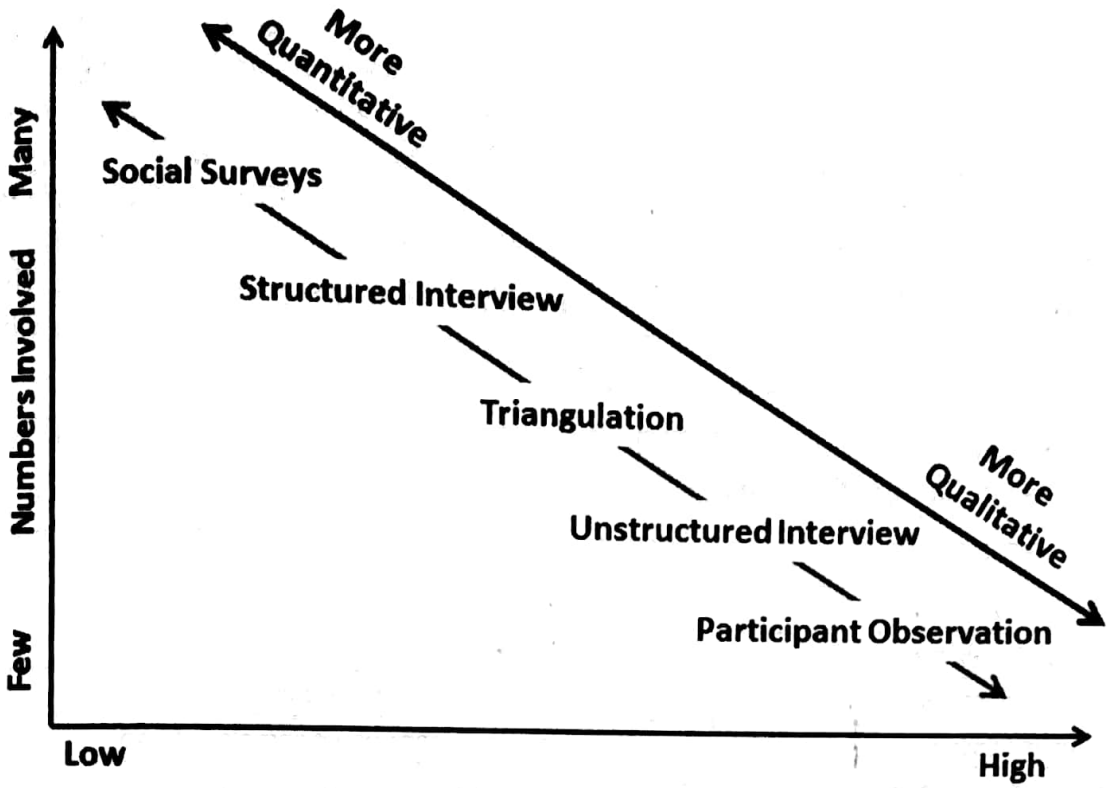

Fig. 3.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods on a Graphical Scale

Quantitative methods were given a prime focus by the early sociologists. Positivist perspectives guided the method in Sociology during its early years. Early Positivist were influenced by their orientation towards natural sciences and emphasised on quantitative methods. Quantitative methods employ a systematic, scientific investigation of quantitative properties of a phenomenon in order to develop different types of theories and they generate a quantifiable image of reality. So, Positivists and functionalists use this method more often. Durkheim was one of the earliest pioneers through his theory of suicide. *Process of measurement* is central to these methods as it provides a fundamental connection between empirical observation and an expression of quantitative relationship. Thus, measurable *data collection* is the primary aim. Quantitative data is easy to represent through tables, graphs, pie-charts, histograms, histograms and other curves. The drawbacks of quantitative research methods are many. Only questions that have simple answers can be asked and we have no way of benefiting from the questioner's observations of how the question is answered, i.e., what logic or argument is used in answering the question.

There can be various types of Quantitative Methods like – Statistics, Comparative Methods, Multivariate Analysis, Surveys, Structured Interviews, Close Ended Questionnaires and Sampling.

Quantitative Methods	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
a. Objectivity is higher.	a. Method becomes difficult as size of variables or population increases.
b. Easy measurement as expertise is not required.	b. Cannot be used for non-observable attributes.
c. Validity and reliability is easier to check.	
d. Less user bias and subject bias.	
e. Reproducibility is higher.	

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Qualitative Methods refer to examination, analysis and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationship to gain better understanding of symbols, motives and meanings. Qualitative methods emerged as a reaction to an excessive emphasis on Positivist research, and use of quantitative methods, which was considered unsuitable for understanding of social reality. Qualitative methods help in discovering underlying meanings, motives, patterns, symbols, etc. So, Interpretivists and Non-Positivists favour such methods. Weber pioneered Interpretivist approach and used Verstehen and Ideal Types while Mead pioneered Symbolic Interactionism. The basic assumption behind the use of such data is that human beings have subjective consciousness which is a non-measurable attribute through quantitative methods.

There can be various types of Qualitative Methods like – Observation Method, Unstructured Interview, Case Studies and Focus Group Discussion.

Quantitative Methods	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
a. Cheaper for smaller sample.	a. Requires expertise.
b. Give complete understanding of reality.	b. Trained investigator.
c. Data collection is flexible.	c. Difficult to use if sample is large.
d. They have helped in widening the scope of Sociology.	

Attempts were made to reconcile the differences between the two broad methods by finding a middle path. Hybrids like – *Socio logic* by Michel Mann in 1980s and *Triangulation Method* by Norman K Denzin have also been devised. Such mixed methods employ the best of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Content analysis, semi-structured interviews, etc. are some of the other methods which are also classified under such mixed methods.

TRIANGULATION

In social research, triangulation is defined as the mixing of methods, data, etc. In the wake of inadequacies of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and data, such a middle path is gaining more popularity in social research. Quantitative methods can describe large or general patterns in the area of sociological research while qualitative approaches can help to explain how individuals understand the patterns. Norman K Denizen was one of the pioneers of such methods and he identifies four types of triangulation in social research –

I. Data triangulation

II. Investigator triangulation involving multiple researchers in an investigation

III. Theory triangulation involving more than one theoretical scheme

IV. Methodological triangulation involves clubbing various methods. For example, survey data can be mixed with interview or Participant Observation.

Techniques of Data Collection

Techniques of data collection depend on various factors like whether the data required is quantitative or qualitative and whether the data required is primary data or secondary data or whether the approach

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is Positivist or Non-Positivist. Secondary data is that data which is already available as a result of previously done research. It is available in form of government surveys, reports, social studies by other researchers and so on. They provide an easy reference, especially when time is less or the target audience is the same. Durkheim employed such data from police stations for his study of suicide. However, such data is not always reliable as it may have been collected with a different purpose. Further, secondary data is also older. It may also be prone to errors which the researcher might not be aware of.

Various techniques are also classified accordingly. Some of them are – questionnaire, sampling, field studies, surveys, secondary research and so on. Some of them are mentioned below.

Ethnography, Participant Observation and Field Study

The three terms – ethnography, Participant Observation and field study have various elements in common and sometimes even used interchangeably. However, ethnography is a wider term and covers Participant Observation and field study as well. Judy Payne, in her *Key Concepts in Social Research, 2004*, defines Ethnography as *the production of highly detailed accounts of how people in social settings lead their lives, based on systematic and long term observation of, and conversation with, informants.* So, it is a study of life of the subjects in research. Malinowski is one of the pioneers of this approach in Sociology and it uses Participant Observation and field studies as its tools of investigation.

According to Pauline V Young – '*Observation is a systematic viewing along with consideration of seen phenomenon.* Rationale behind using observation method is that sociological investigator should become a part of social phenomenon (but may or may not involve himself or herself directly into the social phenomenon) he or she wishes to understand. For reliability of results, observation should be systematic and scientific in nature and hence, it is also called *scientific observation.* It is a method of qualitative research which is most predominantly used in interpretative Sociology.

Observation can be of various types like –

I. Structured and unstructured observation

II. Participant, quasi-participant and non-Participant Observation

III. Controlled and non-controlled observation

IV. Direct and indirect observation

Because distortion can be a serious limitation of surveys, observational research involves directly observing subjects' reactions, either in a laboratory (called laboratory observation) or in a natural setting (called naturalistic observation). Observational research reduces the possibility that subjects will not give totally honest accounts of the experiences, not take the study seriously, will fail to remember, or will feel embarrassed. Depending upon the issue at hand, the social phenomenon, various approaches to observations are taken. For example, in direct observation, the observer is a part of the settings, but doesn't interact. In this way, it is different from Participant Observation. In indirect observation, one may observe with the help of some intervening media like close circuit camera.

To further make observation more systematic and scientific, *report writing* is also preferred along with the observation as depending merely upon memory is unscientific and unreliable. However, there can be certain limitations to this. An observer cannot write a report in an emotionally charged environment

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like funeral rites. Report writing may also make subjects conscious. Now a days, audio and video recorders have made observation easier.

Three types of observation are classified on the basis of degree of participation of the observer –

I. *Participant Observation* – Certain degree of participation and observation is inherent in all sociological methods. The overall goal of *Participant Observation* or field work is to learn about the *whole way of life* of a community, target group, etc. and hence, researcher joins the everyday activity of those whom he or she wishes to study. Raymond Gold has distinguished four types of Participant Observations –

   a. Complete participation
   b. Participant as observer
   c. Observer as participant
   d. Complete observer

It is the inside perspective which is the greatest return on the substantial investment of time and effort that field work or Participant Observation demands.

To be successful, a participant observer must have high degree of acceptability among the subjects. Gaining trust is a difficult task and failure to do so leads the subjects to behave differently. Since the 1920s, Participant Observation or field work has been considered an integral part of sociological research and the principal method through which knowledge is produced.

Bronislaw Malinowski is widely believed to have established field work as the distinctive method of Social Anthropology. Initial anthropologists of Chicago School are considered pioneer of this method. Aaroon Cicourel's study of Juvenile Justice and William Whyte's study of an Italian American Gangster in Boston are classic landmark studies. Some other famous instances of field work include the following Radcliffe Brown on the Andaman Nicobar islands, Evans Pritchard on the Nuer in the Sudan, Franz Boas on various Native American tribes in the USA, Margaret Mead on Samoa, Clifford Geertz on Bali, etc.

In India, it became popular even before independence. An important way in which fieldwork methods had been used was in the form of village studies. Village studies were important because they provided Indian Sociology with a subject that was of great interest in newly independent India. The government was interested in developing rural India. Famous village studies of the 1950s by S C Dube, Majumdar and Srinivas laid the foundation of field study in independent India.

Major advantages of using Participant Observation are –

   a. It gives a detailed, in depth and holistic view of the events about a social phenomenon or institution which is not possible by any other method. According to Aaron Cicourel in his *The Social Organization of Juvenile Justice, 1976*, the actor's perception of objects and events cannot be extracted through the use of interview and questionnaire as they are essentially short in duration. Participant Observation provides an in depth view of the social phenomenon.
   b. Secondly, one can avoid any pre-conceived notions and can shape his or her research as the new information arrives. As a result, researchers are able to ask such questions which he or she wouldn't have otherwise asked. Researcher also gets an answer to those questions which he or she has not even asked.

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c. Participant Observation allows for the correction of initial impressions, which may often be mistaken or biased.

d. Participant Observation also permits the researcher to track changes in the subject of interest, and also to see the impact of different situations or contexts. For example, different aspects of social structure or culture may be brought out in a good harvest year and in a bad harvest year in a village community.

Participant Observation also suffers from numerous weaknesses. Its biggest limitation is the issue of validity. Validity of findings is very difficult to test as there is no hard data and results are in the form of observations only. It also fairs poorly on the count of reliability as same observations cannot be repeated again. According to William Whyte, approach of a researcher is unique to that researcher itself and cannot be replicated by any other researcher. According to William Whyte, the observer may develop sympathy for the group resulting in an emotional attachment with them. According to Nigel Fielding, the approach may also lead to several ethical issues especially while studying the vulnerable groups. Gaining trust of the target group can be difficult especially if the target group is like a criminal group, an asylum, a closed ethnic group and so on. After some time, the observer may get accustomed to the behaviour of the group and may fail to note the important details. It is time consuming and there is also a difficulty in balancing too much detachment and too much attachment. It is also very narrow in scope as focus area is too small. It also depends upon interpreter's ability.

The classic instances of field work like that of Malinowski, Evans Pritchard and countless others were made possible by the fact that the places and people where field work was done were part of the colonial empires ruled by the countries from where the Western anthropologists came. This is also the reason that early anthropologists were also accused of colonial bias.

To counter the weaknesses associated with this method, it has been suggested that more *dialogic* formats should be adopted, i.e., the respondents and people can be more directly involved and the work of the scholar can be translated into the language of the community, recording their responses and opinions.

II. *Quasi Participant Observation* – It is also based on principles of Participant Observation, but the degree of involvement is less and it uses best of both Participant Observation and non-Participant Observation.

III. *Non-Participant Observation* – In this, observation is detached. It is like eavesdropping. It has least bias. The observer keeps aloof and observes the subjects as they act. This facilitates proper and immediate recording of the incidents. Naturalistic observation is a form of non-Participant Observation. The researcher takes care to see that he exerts minimal impact on the situation being observed. It is, however, argued that the researcher's ability to understand the experiences of the culture may be inhibited if they observe without participating. However, modern surveillance techniques now provide that a researcher can conduct non-Participant Observation even from a distinct place and leaving minimal impact on the subjects.

Focus Group Technique

Focus group discussion is mainly used for Non-Positivist research. The focus group technique basically consists of bringing together a group of people to have an extensive, free flowing discussion relating to their experiences or opinion on a particular focus issue. In Sociology, Robert Merton popularised this

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method, which was earlier limited to marketing exercises only. It is like a group interview. Researcher may act like a moderator to direct the discussion in a desired direction of research. The moderator, who has a fairly standardised way of establishing a relaxed and congenial atmosphere, initiates the discussion and keeps it on the desired focus.

The usual procedure is to tape record the conversations and later analyse them. The purpose of the focus group design is exploratory, seeking to obtain opinions or experiences of respondents on a particular subject matter. The objectives of the focus group study are clearly specified, but there is no structure of the discussion pattern. In fact, a distinct effort is made to keep the discussion free flowing. It allows studying of participants in a more natural manner than in case of techniques like interviews. Due to its interactive nature, any misunderstanding can be clarified and validity of research findings can be increased. Fran Tonkiss, in her write-up in *Researching Society and Culture, 2012* has highlighted that internet has helped in making the reach of focus groups wider via online research chat rooms.

One pitfall in focus group discussion is that, if the moderator or researcher becomes too active, he may distract the group to respond as per his likings and expectations. Further, participants may also restrain themselves if moderator is too active. So, observer bias is significant in focus group exercise as compared to Participant Observation.

Case Study

It is a complete and detailed account of a single social phenomenon, in which, in depth details of an event are studied. This method is inspired from the legal and management case studies. This method considers all related aspects like – antecedents and consequents of an event in great detail and hence, offers a holistic treatment of the subject. Since this is the study of one single event, it lacks external validity. Robert K Yin, in his *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 2009*, identified five types of case studies – critical case study, unique case study, revelatory case study, longitudinal case study and representative case study. According to Tim May in his *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Research, 2011*, case studies emphasise on contextual nature of social life and to understand the society, it is necessary to understand the context and case studies help in understanding that context.

Particular situations and incidents like riots, disasters and conflicts are more appropriate for this method as they require an in-depth study. However, this method has a limitation that it has a poor scope of generalisation and cannot be applied even to similar events in future.

Content Analysis

It is a technique of research which is often used in interpretative sociological research. It is the analysis of the content of communication, which involves classifying contents in such a way as to bring out their basic structure. Content analysis or *textual analysis* is a methodology in Sociology for studying the content of communication. Earl R Babbie defines it as – *The study of recorded human*

SEMIOTICS

While content analysis primarily focuses upon the terms and the words used in spoken or written communication, semiotics deals with the understanding of signs in the communication. It can be used in combination with content analysis for a deeper interpretative understanding.

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communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws. It deals with the questions like – who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?

The term Content analysis is generally applied to the analysis of written communication, documents or visual material rather than interview data, but the same technique can be applied to the analysis of answers to open-ended questions in survey research. Researchers create a set of precisely defined categories which highlight the topic under study and then the content is classified as per the predefined categories. This technique produces quantitative data which can be processed by the computer and analysed statistically as well.

Uses of content analysis –

I. To make inferences about the antecedents of a communication

II. To describe and make inferences about characteristics of a communication

III. To make inferences about the effects of a communication.

However, content analysis is sometimes criticised as involving subjective judgments, which may create data that are quantifiable but not valid. Further, the output of content analysis is as good as the quality of the input documents used. So, the input documents should be carefully chosen. Further, content analysis can decipher only the manifested meanings of the communication and the latent meanings are ignored.

Projective Techniques

It is actually, a set of qualitative techniques used to measure attitude. To avoid the problem of social desirability, various indirect measures of attitudes have been used. Either people are unaware of what is being measured (which has ethical problems) or they are unable consciously to affect what is being measured. A projective test involves presenting a person with an ambiguous, (i.e., unclear) or incomplete stimulus (e.g. picture or words). The stimulus requires interpretation from the person and the person's attitude is inferred from their interpretation of the ambiguous or incomplete stimulus. This technique is more commonly used in social-psychological studies where individual perception based attitudes are to be studied.

Examples of projective techniques include –

I. Rorschach Inkblot Test – This is the most popular of them. In this, an ambiguous figure, like an inkblot is given to subjects for interpretation.

II. Thematic Apperception Test (or TAT) – Here, a person is presented with an ambiguous picture which they have to interpret.

III. Draw a Person Task – In this, an individual is instructed to draw a person,

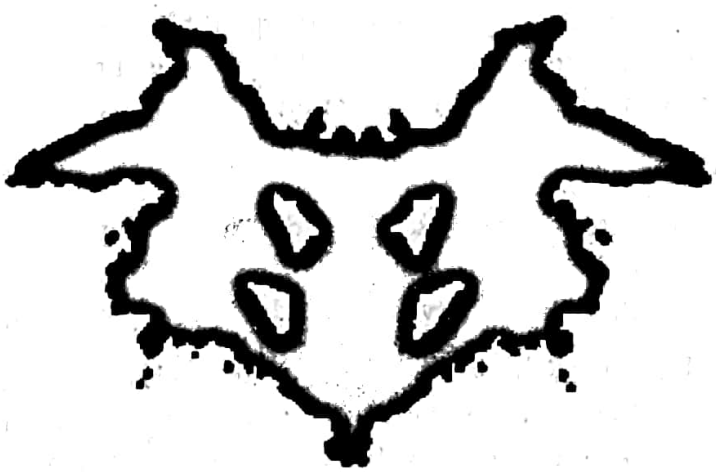

Fig. 3.3 Rorschach Inkblot Test

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an object, or a situation so that cognitive, interpersonal, or psychological functioning can be assessed. The test can be used to evaluate children and adolescents for a variety of purposes.

However, one of the major criticisms of these techniques is that they lack objectivity and are very dependent on the observer. Further, these methods are indirect ones and are likely to lead to different conclusions.

Interview

It is also one of the most widely used research methods in Sociology. An interview is basically a guided conversation between the researcher and the respondent. Interview is a technique in which there is a one to one interaction between the subject and the researcher. It may happen in various forms and types like – face-to-face, telephonic and group interview.

Interviews at the broadest level are of two types – structured and unstructured.

Structured Interviews	Unstructured Interviews
In structured interviews, the sequence of questions is pre-decided and the responses are recorded.	In unstructured interviews, there are no fixed questions and supplementary questions can be asked. In fact, the direction of interview depends upon supplementary questions that are asked.
Structured interviews are more suitable to elicit facts like age and sex data and hence, is suitable for quantitative/ Positivistic research.	Unstructured interviews are seen as being more appropriate for eliciting attitudes and opinions.
It standardises interview as much as possible. Structured interview also lead to more reliable information and are also more objective in their approach.	They are useful in situations which demand new information to deal with the problems which arise as the interview proceeds.
Structured interview also facilitates easy comparison of responses between different respondents.	Its chief advantage is the extreme flexibility of the format. Ambiguities in questions and answers can be clarified by both the interviewer and the respondent.

Chief advantage of the interview method is that, interviews in general are more flexible than other tools like questionnaires. In terms of flexibility, time consumption and quality of information, they lie in between questionnaires and Participant Observation. They can cover much larger samples as compared to Participant Observation. While Participant Observation gets information about present only, an interviewer can elicit information regarding past and future also.

However, interviews suffer from many limitations like –

I. Interviewer bias, responder bias, situation bias, etc. are some of the biases that seep into an interview. For example, Blacks, in an interview by a white interviewer may answer what they feel the white interviewer would like to hear and not what they actually feel.

II. Like Participant Observation, it also greatly suffers from problems of validity and reliability. Variation in context and change in interviewer can result in important changes in the information provided. According to Allan William Junior, status difference between interviewer and respondent greatly affects the degree to which a respondent opens up.

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III. One of the biggest limitations is the *social desirability bias*, from which, both interviews and questionnaires suffer. Respondents often make such answers which they think will present their best image.

IV. They are also narrow in their scope as only a limited number of respondents can be interviewed at a time.

V. Amount of information is also limited. There are some taken for granted assumptions that respondents often fail to reveal.

VI. Language is also another barrier. Individual accent, pronunciation, dialectics, etc. can also make the situation difficult for the respondent.

To counter some of the problems of the interviews, it is suggested that interviewers should remain non-directive, refrain from doling out opinions and judgments or expressions of approval or disapproval.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire has pre-set questions in a pre-set order and is an organised activity of information gathering. It can be either administrated by an interviewer face to face (as used by Goldthorpe and Lockwood in their affluent worker study), may be sent by post, or may be distributed during a large gathering or may be even posted online. When questionnaires are administered face to face, they have the advantage of being under an expert observation and hence, are more likely to be filled correctly on one hand and a risk of suffering from interviewer's bias on the other hand. It is the cheapest, fastest and relatively efficient method of obtaining large amounts of information.

Great care must be taken while designing a questionnaire and questions should not be changed when a survey etc. has already begun and covered some of the sample population. To overcome this problem, a pilot study should be conducted first. For example, in a survey by Gallop on the economic status in the USA in 1939, seeking response from people for three choices upper, middle and lower class – resulted in overwhelming response of *middle class* in excess of 88 per cent. When a similar survey was conducted again, with the *lower class* replaced with the *working class*, results changed dramatically.

A questionnaire can be of two types close ended and open ended. A close ended questionnaire has limited responses which are generally provided as multiple options to a question. Such type of questionnaire is more suitable to quantitative data collection and hence, to Positivist research. Open ended questionnaire, on the other hand, requires descriptive answers and allows the respondent to present his or her own views as well. But descriptive response may be difficult to classify and quantify and hence, may have low validity and reliability. A hybrid of the two can be used in the form of *semi-structured questionnaire*.

Some of the limitations associated with questionnaire technique are –

I. One of the major deficiency of questionnaires is that researcher often asks *leading questions* which may prompt the respondents to answer the questions in a way that researcher decides. Leading questions should be avoided.

II. A respondent may also like to project himself as morally or socially correct, while answering the questions leading to social desirability bias. A questionnaire should also avoid other similar traps as in case of an interview.

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III. Questionnaires, and hence surveys, also suffer from non-response bias of respondent. If a large number of respondents refuse to answer a questionnaire, the survey will be biased in favour of those who chose to answer the questionnaire.

IV. Postal questionnaires have poor return rate and hence, may not represent the sample population adequately and may suffer from response bias. For example, main response on health conditions in an area may come from only those who have health problems or had a bad experience at a government health centre.

V. Further, different members of different social groups may attach different values to the contents of the questions. For example, Kevin Clancey conducted a study regarding mental health and found different responses from different classes for the same set of questions. Lower classes had relatively higher chances of accepting the symptoms of mental illness.

VI. It is also argued that when a researcher decides which questions have to be asked, especially, in printed questionnaires, he has already decided what is important and hence, suffers from his own biases.

VII. It can also be not used when the target group is illiterate. Even if respondents consult someone else, they may be misdirected by the person who guides such a person.

Survey

Survey is probably the best known and most widely used sociological method and is best suited for quantitative and Positivist research. When information is to be collected over a large set of population, techniques like focus group and Participant Observation cannot be used and survey is employed. Information collected through surveys can be analysed through use of statistical techniques, mathematical models and computer simulations.

As the word itself suggests, a survey is an attempt to provide an overview. It is a comprehensive or wide-ranging perspective on some subject, based on information obtained from a carefully chosen representative set of people. The survey questions may be asked and answered in various forms. Often, they are asked orally during personal visits by the investigator, sometimes through telephonic conversations and sometimes through printed material. Close ended questionnaires and structured interviews are most common tools of gathering information in a survey. Schedules can also be used. These days, online surveys are also popular.

In history of measurement in Sociology, Le Play is often considered father of modern social survey. He studied workers living with families in order to gather data on attitudes and beliefs, family budgets and family expenditures as ways to determine families' standards of living. Durkheim's survey on suicide was another pioneering effort.

A survey's main advantage as a method is that it allows us to generalise results for a large population while actually studying only a small portion of this population. Selection of sample size is one of the most crucial exercises in survey method and a sample should be representative of the larger population. A full survey should always be preceded by a *pilot survey* so that defects in design of questionnaire can be rectified within time. The bigger the sample the more chances it has of being truly representative

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the extreme case here is that of a census, which includes the entire population. Thus, a survey makes it possible to study large populations with a manageable investment of time, effort and money.

There are two principles that guide selection in a survey –

I. The first principle is that all the relevant sub-groups in the population should be recognised and represented in the sample. Most of the large populations are not homogenous – they belong to distinct sub-categories. This is called *stratification*. For example, when researching on attitudes towards religion, it would be important to include members of all religions.

II. The second principle of sample selection is that the selection of actual unit, i.e., person, village or household, should be based purely on chance. This is referred to as *randomisation*.

Surveys can be of various types –

I. On the basis of objective of survey, they can be either descriptive or analytical. Descriptive surveys provide a description of a given situation for example, poverty levels, analytical survey, on the other hand, aims to provide an explanation for example – cause of poverty.

II. On the basis of sampling technique employed, they can be simple random, stratified or cluster. Since it is not possible to survey the whole population, samples are used in surveys to administer questionnaires or for conducting structured interviews.

Ackroyd and Hughes classified mainly three types of surveys which are factual survey, attitude survey and explanatory survey. Success of a survey depends upon the quality of its data. If data is not valid, output of the survey is also affected. For example, one of the major criticisms of the survey on Suicide of Durkheim was its poor quality.

Like all research methods, survey also has its disadvantages –

I. Although it offers the possibility of wide coverage, this is at the cost of depth of coverage. Its results may provide only superficial information.

II. Since a large number of persons are involved in a survey, they may ask the survey questions differently and approach differently. Differences in the way questions are asked or answers are recorded could introduce errors into the survey. That is why the questionnaire for a survey which is sometimes called a *survey instrument* – has to be designed very carefully, since it will be handled by persons other than the researchers themselves, there is little chance of corrections or modifications in the course of its use.

In India, the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) conducts sample surveys every year on the levels of poverty and unemployment and other subjects. Census is another example of a decadal survey.

Schedule

It is similar to a questionnaire, but the main difference is that a schedule is filled by an enumerator who is specially appointed for this purpose. In a schedule, an enumerator asks the questions in a pro forma that is pre-defined. In this, questionnaire is only for internal consumption. The schedule is a standardised tool of observation or interview and it helps in collecting data in a fairly objective manner.

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It acts as a guideline for the researcher to collect all the information in a sequence and prevent loss of information on account of forgetfulness. Schedules are generally in form of tables and hence, analysis of the collected data is relatively easy. Schedules can be of various types like – interview schedule, ratings schedule, observation schedule and survey schedule.

Biographical or Life History Research

It is a pure sociological method which is in use since recent times only and it is like a case study on a single person and his life. It includes oral histories, autobiographies, narratives, interviews, etc. which are used to explore how individuals experience social life and periods of social change. It provides new insights to already existing knowledge as texts like life histories provide new voices. According to Rober Miller, it is a research method that collects and analyses a person's whole life or a part of a life, through means of in-depth and unstructured interviews etc. According to Jens O Zinn in *Introduction to Biographical Research, 2004*, the main aim of biographical research is to produce detailed descriptions of persons or *conceptualise structural types of actions* and to understand how persons and structures are interlinked. Life histories and other biographical material yield information which is written over periods of time and hence, a gradual and deep understanding develops with biographical research. A cross check is made by use of available letters, news reports and contemporary reports. However, this method is prone to suffer from biases and ideologies of writers who write biographies, narratives, etc.

Historic Analysis or Documentry Research

It is a method which provides sociologists a luxury to look into the past and connect the present with the past and provide a deeper perspective about current issues and problems. In order to understand the structure of present society, it needs to be linked to its past as well as present society is an outgrowth of past only. Various sources used in this method are government archives, historical records, historical works and personal diaries. Historical facts are collected to gain an insight into past events related to a phenomenon. It shows the social values and ideas upon which present social structures are based. However, in this method, collection of facts is a stupendous task and reliability is a big issue. Historical data cannot be subjected to experimentation and statistics cannot be used in this method. *Documentary research* is one particular type of historical analysis in which documents are used as a source. Government documents, memoirs, newspapers can be a source of such research.

Variables

Variables are those parameters whose value varies as situation changes and they are key elements of an experiment. The American sociologist Earl R Babbie, in his *The Practice of Social Research, 2009*, defines a variable as *a logical set of attributes*. Generally, there are two kinds of variables. In any research method, there are always some *dependent variables* and some *independent or fixed variables*. Value of dependent variables depends upon the value of independent variables and maybe some other dependent variables as well. Variables can also be further classified as – *experimental variables, measured variables, discrete variables and continuous variables*.

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In any study, generally measured variable is also a dependent variable. For example, in studying the educational level of an area, *education level* is a dependent variable, which depends on other variables like parental income, schools available, teachers' quality, cultural values and so on. Dependent variable in one situation can be independent variable in another research. For example, in determining the causes of unemployment, education can be an independent variable with unemployment as a dependent variable.

In any social experiment, the researcher needs to identify the variables and then establish which of them are dependent and which are independent. After that, inter-linkages between these variables have to be established. In natural sciences, establishing correlations between variables is easy in controlled experimental settings through use of various *controls*, i.e., changing the values of independent variables and observing effect of these on dependent variable. But in Sociology, direct controls are not available and instead methods of indirect experimentations are used.

Method used to establish and analyse the relationship between variables is known as *multivariate* or *variable analysis*. In Sociology, this was used earliest by Durkheim in his study of suicide in which he studied the effect of various independent variables like religion, gender and marital status etc. on dependent variable viz. suicide. Proper weightage has to be given to each variable according to its impact on outcome dependent variable. Other modern methods to establish correlation between variables are regression analysis, chi-square test, etc., but they are more statistically driven.

Sampling

Sampling is a process of selection of a limited number of items from a larger whole or universe of items. Sampling is used as a technique of data collection in Sociological research when the populations are large and it is either not economical or feasible to collect the data of the whole population. Hence, sampling provides a representative set of data which stands for whole of the population. Process of sampling requires defining population-set first from which samples will be chosen. After that, sample frame is specified and sampling method is specified. It is of primarily two types which are Probability Sampling and Non-probability Sampling.

Probability Sampling

In this sampling method, every element in the sample population has equal chance of being selected. It ensures equal representation as each item has equal chance of being selected.

It is of following types –

I. *Lottery or Simple Random Sampling* – In this, sampling units are either mixed or assumed to be pre-mixed and sample is selected by selecting the sample size. It is the simplest form of sampling with highest degree of randomness and hence, is a true probability sampling. Now a days, computer algorithms are used to make random sampling a truly probability sampling which also enhances representation.

II. *Systematic Random Sampling* – In this, absolute randomness is not there as sample is selected on the basis of some pre-defined criterion. For example, every tenth member of a population may be picked for a sampling exercise.

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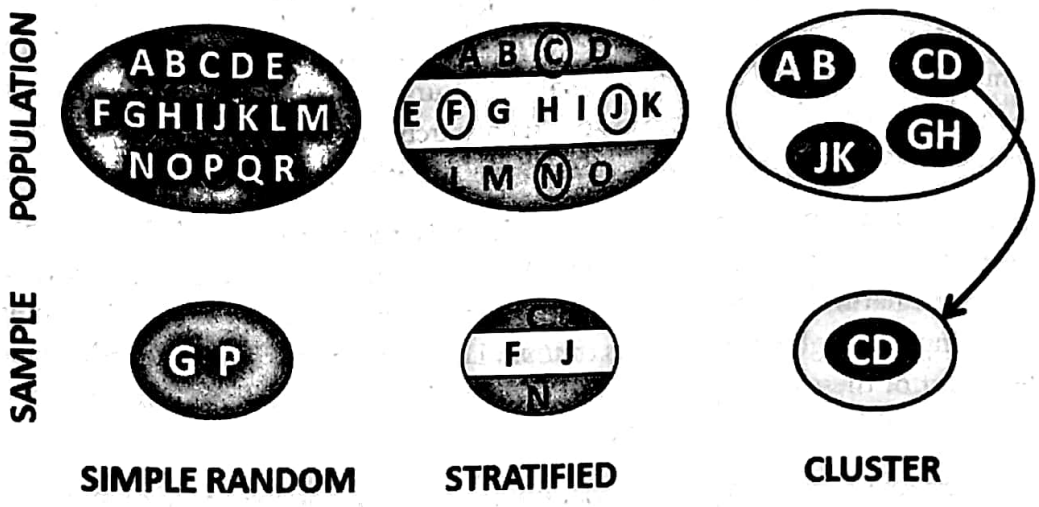

Fig. 3.4 Types of Probability Sampling

III. *Stratified Sampling* – It is basically a refined technique over random sampling. It leads to enhanced representation as no stratum of population is excluded. This type of sampling is used when the researcher wants to highlight specific subgroups within the population. Researchers also use stratified random sampling when they want to observe relationships between two or more subgroups. Stratified random samples generally require smaller sample sizes, which in turn can save a lot of time, money, and effort for the researchers. Sampling error is reduced, but it is a complex method and hence, run opposite to the philosophy of sampling. Some of the most common strata used in stratified random sampling are age, gender, religion, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, and nationality.

Stratified sampling has homogeneity in the stratum, but heterogeneity across the strata. Advantages of Stratified Sampling include a higher degree of precision and an enhanced representation. However, one main disadvantage of stratified random sampling is that it can be difficult to identify appropriate strata for a study. A second disadvantage is that it is more complex to organise and analyse the results compared to simple random sampling.

IV. *Cluster Sampling* – Cluster sampling may be used when it is either impossible or impractical to compile an exhaustive list of the elements that make up the target population. Clusters are either spatial (area based) or temporal (at different times). It can be multistage also as in the case of state level sampling followed by district level sampling, followed by block level sampling and so on. One advantage of cluster sampling is that it is cheap, quick, and easy. Instead of sampling the entire country while using simple random sampling, the researcher can instead allocate resources to the few randomly selected clusters when using cluster sampling. Second advantage of cluster sampling is that the researcher can have a larger sample size than if he or she were to use simple random sampling. As the researcher can take the sample from a number of clusters, he or she can select more subjects since they are more accessible. One main disadvantage of cluster sampling is that it is the least representative of the population out of all the types of probability samples. Second disadvantage of cluster sampling is that it can have a high sampling error. This is caused by the limited clusters included in the sample, which leaves a significant proportion of the population un-sampled. There is also *Multistage Sampling* in which, first the clusters are selected and then simple random sampling follows.

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Structured Sampling	Cluster Sampling
a. Its main objective is to enhance representation.	a. Its main objective is to reduce costs.
b. Population should be heterogeneous across the strata, but homogeneous in a stratum.	b. Population should be heterogeneous in clusters.

Non-Probability Sampling

In many research situations randomness or probability is not possible in sampling process. It can be either due to unavailability of data, constraints imposed or costs involved. Since they are not based on random selection, they cannot claim true representativeness of the larger population from which they are picked. In such situations, non-probability sampling is used. These are of various types but the most common of them are Convenience Sampling, Quota Sampling, Snowball Sampling, etc.

I. *Convenience Sampling or Accidental Sampling* – In this, sample is drawn from that part of population that is closest at hand. It is used when there are enough controls and reasons to believe that such samples will lead to correct inferences. For example, to understand the features of industrial classes, a researcher may go to industries that are most nearby and select a few employees who are known to him or easy to contact.

II. *Purposive Sampling* – It is that type of sampling in which a purpose is already there in the mind of the researcher and sample characteristics are pre-defined. For example – male population, between 40-50 years can be a target of a socio-economic survey. Quota Sampling and Snowball Sampling are essentially subtypes of Purposive Sampling.

   a. *Quota Sampling* – People are non-randomly selected by fixing some quota to facilitate representation of a particular group. According to Clive Seale, in his *Researching Society and Culture, 2012*, quota sampling is quicker and cheaper than simple random sampling and in some situations like election- day and sampling of voters; it is practically the only choice. There are primarily two types of quota sampling which are proportional quota sampling and non-proportional quota sampling. In proportional quota sampling, quota is defined before-hand in fixed terms say 40 per cent, 60 per cent, etc. in non-proportional sampling, only a *minimum quota* is specified. For example, if researcher knows that there are 40 per cent of females in a given population, the researcher may keep drawing samples till the desired quota of 40 per cent is not reached.

   b. *Snowball Sampling* – In this, the starting point is the pre-existing data of targeted sample. It works on the referral principle. It is useful when target population cannot be easily located. In this, one entity leads to information about other entities in a chain-reaction fashion. For example, in a survey of drug-addicts, one drug addict may lead to the information about the other.

Sampling process is also prone to errors due to various reasons like – faulty design, respondent bias, and researcher bias. Primarily, they are of two types –

I. *Sampling Errors* – The unavoidable margin of error in the results of a survey because it is based on information from only a small sample rather than the entire population. These are due to over coverage, under coverage, non-response and subject bias.

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II. *Non-sampling Error* – These are errors in sample survey results due to mistakes in the design or application of methods.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative statement, which formulates a precise and definite relation between two or more variables. It is an untested statement which awaits validation. Like other disciplines, Sociology also requires formulation of theories and hypothesis is the starting point of theorising. It states the objective of a research and tells what a researcher is looking for. It can also be defined as a conjecture or an educated guess based on previously accumulated knowledge about a given state of affairs, put in concrete terms, to provide the basis for empirical testing. According to Stebbing – '*Every hypothesis springs from the union of knowledge and sagacity.*'

Upon validation, a hypothesis may yield a theory, concept or generalisation etc. Hypothesis should reasonably show the interconnectedness between two or more variables. For example, a researcher observes that *number of marital breakdowns* goes up as one observes *rise in annual total family income* or *crime rates* are higher in *slums* than in other parts of urban areas. A hypothesis will aim at finding interconnectedness between the variables mentioned in the sentence.

Sources of a hypothesis are – existing theoretical propositions, common sense, existing base of knowledge etc. Hypothesis can be of various types like *inductive hypothesis, deductive hypothesis, research hypothesis, directional hypothesis and non-directional hypothesis.* Steps to formulate a hypothesis are not fixed and depend upon the methodology used by the researcher.

Pre-requisites for a good hypothesis are –

I. It should be simple in formulation. All variables should be clearly defined and their relationship with each other should also be defined.

II. It should be based on sound reasoning and ample preliminary information. It should not be a wild guess.

III. It shouldn't be based merely on moral judgments. Before formulating a hypothesis, a researcher must also be aware of the instruments available to measure the variables in a hypothesis.

IV. It should be specific and precise. It should be able to narrow down the scope of sociological investigation in manageable limits.

V. It should also direct the investigation on the right track. According to Northrop, *Function of a hypothesis is to direct our research.*

VI. It should also clarify the scope of enquiry.

VII. It should lead to discovery of general laws and principles and also exemplify the causal relationships between the various variables. It should explain the general phenomenon and not the exception.

VIII. It should be able to be tested and its testability should be in a time bound manner.

IX. It should also provide a framework for organising and summarising the results.

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Soundness of a hypothesis is measured by *testing* it. Testing validates the presumptions made in a hypothesis. It proves that the correlation shown in the statement of the hypothesis also bears an empirical validity, i.e., testing shows that facts and assertions are in coherence. To test a hypothesis, a social researcher makes two hypotheses which are called *Null Hypothesis* (denoted generally as H_0) and *Alternate Hypothesis* (denoted generally as H_1). The null hypothesis is the hypothesis that states that there is no relation between the two or more than two phenomena, whose relation is under investigation. The alternative hypothesis, as the name suggests, is the alternative to the null hypothesis and it states that there is some kind of relationship between the phenomena or variables under the observation. However, while testing the hypothesis, there can be erroneous results due to faulty acceptance of wrong results. There are two such errors –

I. *Type 1 Error* – It occurs when the researcher rejects a null hypothesis when it is actually true. The probability of committing a Type 1 error in statistical terms is called the *significance level.* This probability is also generally called *Alpha* in common social research parlance.

II. *Type 2 Error* – It is a type of which error occurs when the researcher fails to reject a null hypothesis that is false. The probability of committing a Type 2 error is called *Beta.* The probability of *not* committing a Type 2 error is called the *Power* of the test.

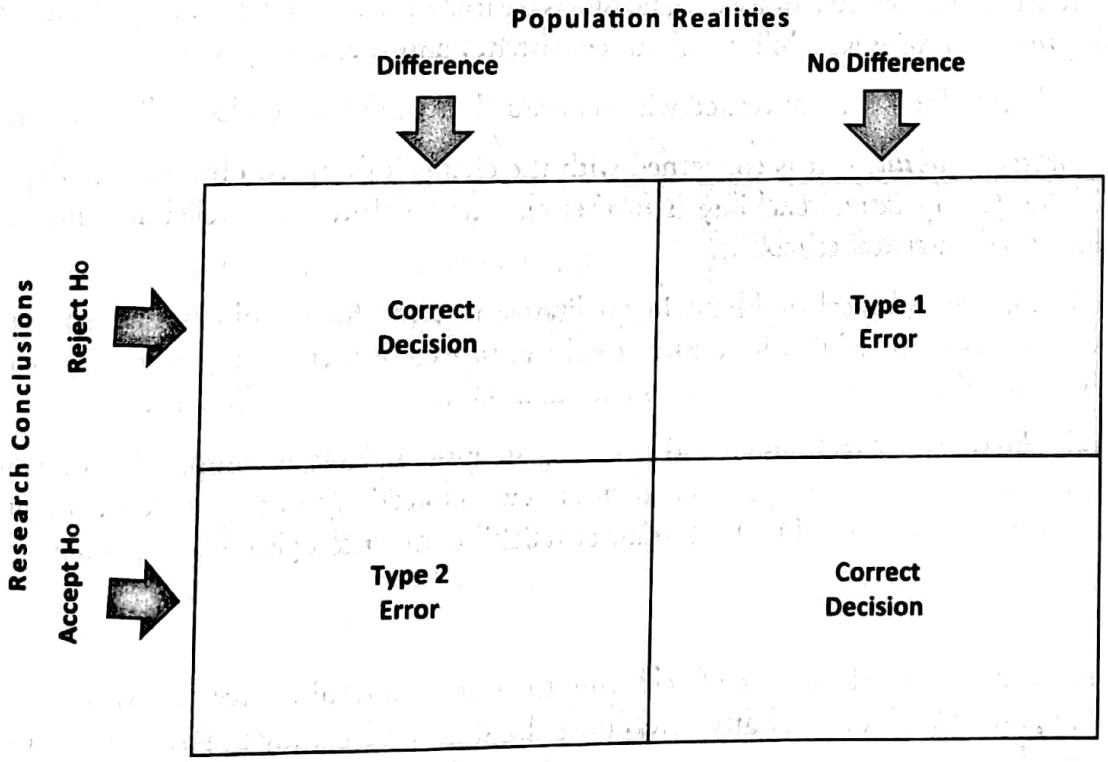

Fig. 3.5 Testing of Hypothesis

In Sociology, both the formulation and testing of a hypothesis are difficult tasks as form and quality of data of one researcher is often easily questioned by the other researcher. Similarly, it is very difficult to precisely define the null and alternate hypotheses in the absence of concrete parameters. For example, if a researcher wants to test the relationship between *marital breakdown* and *alcoholism*, the researcher can never be sure of the correlation, as both, in turn, depend upon a lot of other factors and are very personal in nature. In sociological research, various other factors may also affect a hypothesis testing

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like – subject effect in terms of passiveness of subject, placebo effect and observer effect like Hawthorne effect. According to Interpretivists, scientific hypothesis cannot be formulated in Sociology as they are likely to be contaminated by the values of investigators. Further, due to changing nature of individuals and social circumstances, they can also not provide generalised results or true cause and effect relations.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are the two important parameters that determine the correctness and effectiveness of an observation and hence, usefulness of a result. Reliability leads to repetition of the same result; validity is the degree of meeting the desired goal.

These are two major challenges in Sociology as outcomes of sociological research are not a result of a controlled experiment and a situation never remains the same. Different ideologies also guide research methodology and hence, different results will be produced every time. Reliability and validity are also two core concerns while adopting the Scientific Method in Sociology.

Reliability

When a researcher talks about reliability of data, one is basically concerned with the question – *Can the same result be produced again?* Reliability is about consistency and is of two types –

I. *Temporal reliability* – It is concerned with reproducibility of same results at different times.

II. *Comparative reliability* – It is concerned with the change of targets, observers, testing method and so on. Comparative reliability is further classified as Inter-item reliability, inter-observer reliability and Inter-test reliability.

Reliability raises many technical problems in qualitative research for sociologists as subjects change their mind as time passes. Reliability in research can be improved by inculcating objectivity in methods, approaches, etc. Standardisation of procedures and methods also increase reliability.

Some methods like statistical techniques and sampling are more reliable as compared to other methods like Participant Observation and open ended interview. Subjectivity due to style of the individual investigator and interference of values lead to lower reliability of sociological investigations.

Validity

Validity concerns itself with the degree of achieving the intended result. A result is valid, if it achieves what it was supposed to achieve. Validity determines the success of a study or research. It is difficult to achieve it in qualitative research as there are no fixed goals in terms of outcome. Validity is measured in terms of a desired output or goal. When such a goal is not fixed, there are problems in ascertaining the validity of a result.

Alan Bryman, in his *Social Research Methods, 2012*, classified four types of validity –

I. *Internal Validity* – It affirms the causal relationship.

II. *External Validity* – It pertains to generalised aspect and the degree to which the results apply to a larger population.

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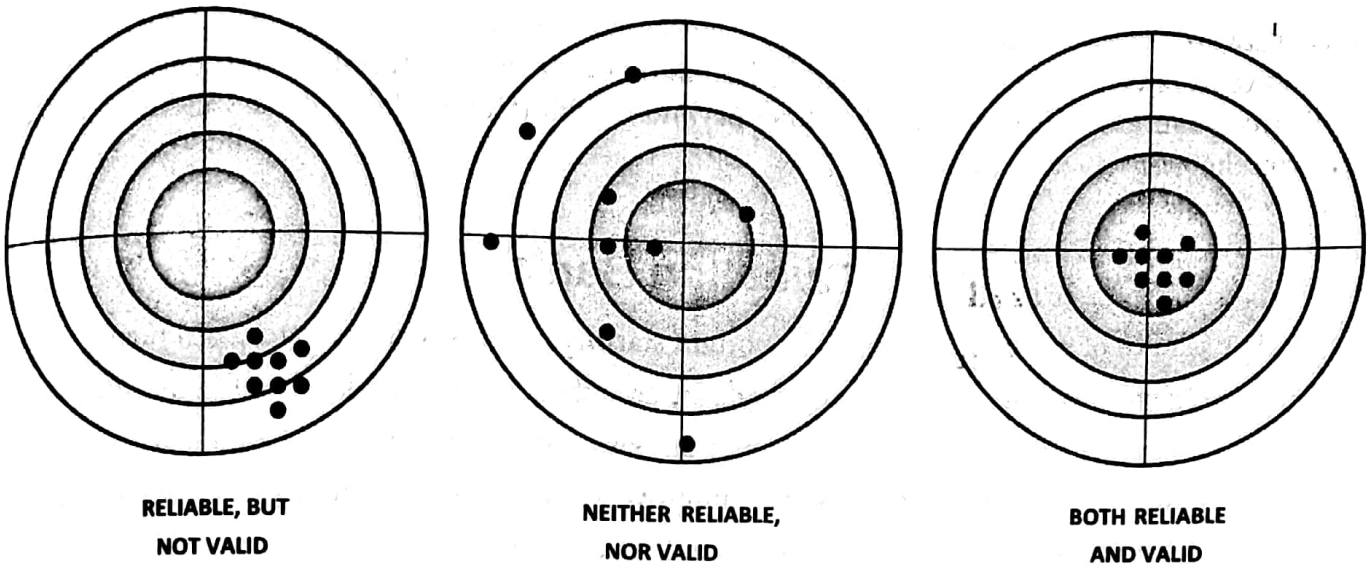

Fig. 3.6 Reliability and Validity

III. *Measurement Validity or Construct Validity* – It is concerned with the fact that whether the measure which is being employed actually measures what it claims.

IV. *Ecological Validity* – It refers to the fact that how closely a research study mirrors the natural settings of people's real experiences. A valid research has to be as natural in its settings as it can.

A valid result is always reliable, but a reliable result may not be valid.

Factors influencing validity can be summarised as –

I. *History or change in time* – As time passes, variables also take different values.

II. *Instrumentation* – It refers to the effect caused by changes in measuring instrument or method during the research.

III. *Selection Bias* – It occurs when the test units are selected in such a way that they are not representative of the population.

Most of the sociological investigations don't lead to concrete data. Social situations change from time to time and different sociologists also have ideological orientations. There is also a little scope of controlled experimentation to test the validity. So, in most sociological investigations, validity is poor. While Positivists may argue that validity is possible in Sociology by the use of scientific methods, Interpretivists deny such possibility as human consciousness cannot be captured using any method. According to Interpretivists, most of the sociologists tend to brush the problem of validity under the carpet and instead, spend their time accumulating more data and devising more sophisticated theories to claim valid outcomes.

To overcome the limitations associated with the use of the terms reliability and validity, especially with the qualitative research, some sociological researchers have suggested that sociological research should be judged on the basis of some different criteria. Lincoln and Guba suggested that alternative terms

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like trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability can be used to suit the nature of qualitative research in Sociology, to overcome limitation of the use of terms like validity and reliability. Similarly, Hammersley has also urged to look beyond reliability and validity debate and instead, also focus on the *relevance* of research.

Question Bank

1. Choice of method is the most important starting point is social research. Elaborate.
2. Quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary to each other. Comment.
3. Quantitative methods are not the bastion positivist researchers only. Comment.
4. How can the use of quantitative data improve the reliability and validity in social research?
5. What are various components of a sound research design?
6. Defining variables in social research lays the foundation of the social research. What are the various types of variables and what is their role in social research?
7. What are the limitations of using experimental research in Sociology? How can a social researcher overcome these limitations?
8. Discuss the relevance of historical method in the study of society. How did Marx, Weber and Durkheim utilise history to strengthen their arguments?
9. What are comparative methods? How did Durkheim utilise comparative methods in his theory of social facts?
10. Define hypothesis and also give an illustration. What are null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis?
11. A faulty hypothesis can make or mar the social research. What are the quintessential features of a sound hypothesis?
12. What are various sources of hypothesis? What are the kinds of errors that may creep in a hypothesis?
13. Participant Observation is time consuming and narrow in its approach, but has relatively high validity. Comment.
14. Sampling is a convenient tool to gather information about a population. But it can be grossly misleading as well. State out the limitation of sampling in sociological analysis.
15. Probability sampling has its core to randomness. Elaborate. Also list out the errors which sampling may suffer from.
16. Why are reliability and validity essential in sociological research? How can a researcher improve the validity of research?
17. Quantitative methods are better identifiable with predictability and reliability. If that is so, why are qualitative methods used in social research?
18. Name a few modern data analysis techniques which can be used in quantitative research in Sociology?

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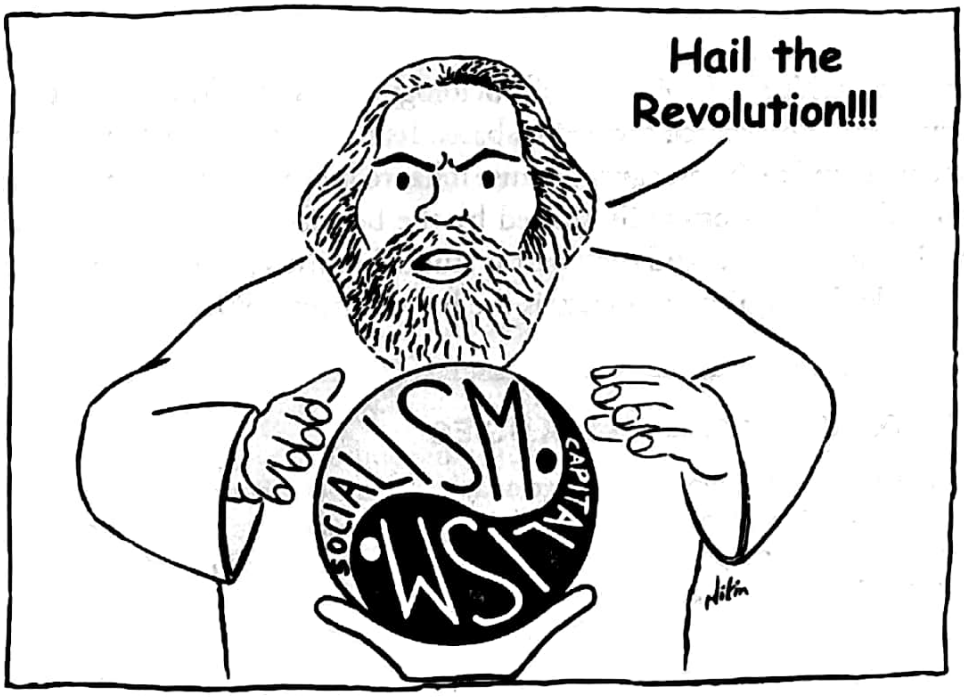
Social Thinkers

4



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the various theoretical perspectives in Sociology and their propounders
2. Explain differences between Functionalist and Conflict perspective
3. Understand the concepts like Historical Materialism, Ideal Type, Social Actions, Pattern Variables, among others

Foundation of every discipline is laid by some torchbearers. Comte, Durkheim, Marx and Weber were such torchbearers in case of Sociology. Due to its very nature, Sociology has happily accommodated diverse thoughts in its study. On one hand, there are Positivists like Durkheim who gave society primacy; there are post-modernists on the other side, who put individual subjectivity at the heart of the discipline. As the discipline grew, it witnessed various phases, dominated by a set of particular ideas in a particular epoch. Unlike many other scientific disciplines, truth in Sociology has many shades of grey and this has brought fresh perspectives in the discipline from time to time. Social thinkers present multiple truths and this helps us in understanding the complex human society which cannot be explained by *one size fits all* type universal rules. Their vibrant contribution has led to profound intellectual churnings in the discipline and as a result, the discipline has evolved as a mature discipline.

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As there was some discussion in the earlier chapters also, social reality of life is complex and at the same time, has some nuanced patterns in it. These complexities and patterns are viewed differently by different social researchers. Some have tried to view the social reality from the lenses of theoretical frameworks, while the others have contended themselves with mere observation of social phenomena. We start this chapter by analysing the earliest such endeavours which are clubbed under the broad heading, functionalism.

Functionalism

Functionalism as a perspective evolved with the beginning of Sociology as a discipline and August Comte, Durkheim and Spencer put forth ideas which formed its basis. Its basic premise is that society works as a system of interconnected parts and each part exists because it has to perform certain functional prerequisites for the whole system. This view is primarily shaped by the beliefs of functionalists that society behaves like an organism with various parts and each part is studied in the light of the function it performs for the organism as a whole. Integration in society is the basic concern of functionalists.

TAUTOLOGIES AND TELEOLOGIES

These are the two fundamental limiting aspects of functionalist explanations. Tautology denotes saying the same thing twice. For example, *this rectangle has four sides* is tautological. Functionalists are accused of using tautological explanations. For example, functionalist claim that religion exists because it performs the function of enhancing social cohesion. But when we ask what they mean by *religion*, they define it as that collective activity which has the function of enhancing social cohesion. So, causal relationship between two separate things (religion and social cohesion), is simply the elaboration of the definition. Teleology is the study of purposes, intentions or goals. Functionalists explanations are accused of suffering from *illegitimate teleologies*. For example, functional explanation of social stratification is teleological in the sense that it uses serving a societal need of ensuring that the best people get the most important jobs. The problem with this is that it uses a consequence as a cause.

Often the terms Positivism and Functionalism are used in conjunction, but the two are not the same. Positivism is that strand of Sociology which puts scientific study at the heart of the discipline. It aims to make the discipline scientific and Positivists tend to make prediction by doling out theories in a similar fashion to natural sciences. Comte was the first true Positivist. Both, the functionalist and conflict theorists like Durkheim and Marx respectively, also fall under this classification as they offered theories which were predictive in nature. Thus, functionalism is like a subset of Positivism in this sense (but not exactly) and Durkheim was the first true functionalist.

Functionalist approach begins with an observation that behaviour of the society is structured. Relationships between the members of society are organised in terms of the rules. Social relationships are therefore, patterned and recurrent. These relationships are guided by generalised values in the society which guide our behaviour. This value consensus also provides for certain degree of integration in the society.

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It was applied in different contexts by different thinkers. Malinowski used it to study religion, Murdock used it to evaluate universality of family, Davis and Moore used it to study stratification in society, Herbert J Gans used it to analyse functions of poverty and Merton used it to study deviance.

It became a dominant perspective in Sociology during the 1940s and 1950s, as a variant of functionalism which was called Structural Functionalism, led by Parsons and Merton emerged and this time onwards, its popularity declined during the upheavals of 1960s and 70s, when conflict perspective (along with other perspectives) again emerged as a more viable alternative. The fact that functionalists only look at the beneficial aspects of social relations, leads to their criticism that their approach is conservative and status quoist. Functionalists are also accused of offering teleological explanations, i.e., they confuse cause with effect in a circular fashion. For example, Davis and Moore's theory of stratification outlines the positive functions of stratification and then they use these effects to explain the origin of stratification. Critics like Alvin Gouldner point out that while stressing on values in society, functionalists fail to see whose values are these.

Functionalist theories are also prone to *ecological fallacies*, i.e., they assume that inference about individuals can be made out of the aggregate data. For example, aggregate GDP growth data in case of the world, say in the year 2017, may be positive, but it doesn't mean that everyone is becoming better-off. Functionalists make similar mistakes when they consider the larger functional role of institutions, but ignore the impact of those institutions on the individuals.

Conflict Perspective

Like functionalists, conflict theorists also stress on structure and, hence, are predominantly Positivist in their approach. They too, suggest a grand framework to explain working of society, but instead of emphasising on consensus, they focus on the divisions in society. They seek to explain why unequal relations exist in society and how they are perpetuated. Marx was the first major social thinker who gave this perspective through his dialectical materialistic conception of history. He saw societies as divided into two classes like a dominant upper class in form of the *haves* and a subjugated class in form of the *have nots*. His ideas had a reflection of not only sociological analysis, but also of a radical agenda of political reforms.

Frankfurt School of Germany was another major carrier of Marxist ideas. But it also aimed at getting rid of deficiencies in Marxist perspective by introducing an element of culture into structural analysis. Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and more recently Jurgen Habermas belonged to this school, which is also known as *Critical School* or *neo-Marxist school.*

German scholar Ralf Dahrendorf combined Marxist ideas with Weberian perspective and he related conflict in society to difference in interests of individuals and groups. Unlike Marx, who related conflict only with class, Dahrendorf, taking cues from Weber, also added dimension of power and authority.

Ivan Illich, Althuser applied Marxist ideas in the field of education and culture. Gramsci used Marxist thoughts to give the concept of *hegemony* in the field of polity. Pierre Bourdieu used conflict perspective to develop his model of four fold *capitals* in modern societies. Wallerstein used this perspective to study the effect of globalisation and unequal trade among nations in his *World Systems Theory.* Some of these ideas are discussed in the later chapters.

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While the functionalist perspective declined significantly after 1960s, conflict perspective is more enduring and has continued to evoke interests of sociologists in the wake of new events like global financial crisis of 2011-12 and Jasmine Revolution in the Middle East in 2012.

Marx – Historical Materialism, Mode of Production, Alienation, Class Struggle

Karl Marx was one of the early pioneers of the discipline of Sociology. He laid the foundation of *conflict perspective* in Sociology, which was radically different from the then prevailing structural-functionalist view. Although conflict theories came under severe criticism during the 19th Century because of their radical nature, his contribution to Sociology in terms of theories, concepts, methods and perspectives is unmatched as he provided an alternative narrative which has endured the test of times even today.



Fig. 4.1 Karl Marx

He wrote in a background when industrialisation and capitalism were in full swing and Europe was witnessing post-French revolution changes. Changes in Europe were too profound and social environment was in a huge flux. It prompted Marx to give a thought about the misery and suffering of the people whom he saw as victims of the new economic order called capitalism. Inequality among the social classes prompted Marx to put forward a theory about the current state in capitalism and its origin in history.

Historical Materialism

Historical Materialism or the *Materialistic Conception of History* is the pivot to all the works of Marx. Its clearest exposition is done in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859.* It is a conception of society in terms of evolutions from one stage to another, which Marx refers to as modes of production, and material or economic factors have a pivotal role in historical change. It is an inquiry into nature of relations between man and man and man and things, as history proceeds.

His theory is called *historical* because analysis of society is in terms of evolution from one state to another, as the time passes and history is made. According to Marx, *History is a process of man's self- creation.* Since man's involvement into relations of production creates history, it is necessary to understand history to understand society. It is called *materialistic* for two reasons, firstly, his conception of society is based upon materialistic and not metaphysical factors which are understood in terms of material production. Secondly, understanding of change is based upon changing material conditions and not ideas.

Further, his theory of historical materialism has two aspects –

I. His materialistic conception of society is in terms of *economic infrastructure* and *social superstructure* which are two conceptual entities, created by Marx to understand the modes of production or society.

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II. He understands the historical evolution process in terms of a *dialectic process,* where two opposing forces interact with each other and new structures are produced and the dialectic process continues.

Marx borrowed ides of Historical or Dialectical Materialism from the Hegelian notions of *Dialectical Idealism,* but Marx felt that Hegel's idealism led to a very conservative political orientation, and Ludwig Feuerbach's – a Young Hegelian – notion of *Materialism* is more relevant. Thus, he retained the dialectical approach of Hegel, but replaced the idealism with Feuerbach's materialism. Marx believed that, material sources and conditions and not ideas per se are important in the working of any *mode of production.* Material world is characterised by its own independent existence and is not a result of human thinking.

Marx was also influenced by *political economists* like Adam Smith and David Ricardo who had postulated that labour was the source of all wealth. Marx was also influenced by the political economists' depiction of the horrors of the capitalist system and the exploitation of the workers, but he didn't deem such evils as inevitable as he saw their solution in communism.

'In order to survive, man must produce' – proclaimed Marx. Production is essential for the survival of human beings. It is the first historical act and had been universally a part of human history throughout. While going for production, man enters into relationships with other men. It is the fundamental aspect of history. Man produces to satisfy his needs which are ever growing and according to Marx – *Man is a perpetually dissatisfied animal.* Once a set of needs is satisfied, new ones are created. Thus, production continues and history proceeds.

PRAXIS

It literally means *practical* as against mere theory. David Harvey defines it as practical reflective activity. Critical theorists often argue for the use of praxis against theory in search of practical solutions to social problems. This concept in Sociology was initially put forward by Marx and it has two closely related meanings. First, it suggests action as opposed to philosophical speculation (it, thus, forms the basis of dialectic materialism). Secondly, it implies that the fundamental characteristic of human society is material production against idealism – to meet the basic needs. Man primarily acts on the natural world, i.e., he works and only secondarily thinks about it. In terms of Marx' idea of social change, it also implies that it is not enough to understand the world. We must also try to improve it by real actions.

In order to produce, man must enter into *relations* with others. Apart from relations, some *forces of production* are also required which include tools, techniques, skills, etc.

Relations of Production or social relations of production, according to Marx, are of two types in any mode of production –

I. Relations between man and man – They pertain to the associations which individuals form in order to undertake production. These associations also lead to stratification and formulation of *classes* depending upon different positions in the production process. Broadly, there are two classes – *the haves,* who own the production and earn profit or benefits, and *the have nots,* who don't have any real control on their labour in any mode of production and they have to sell their labour and earn wages in an industrial society. Nature of these relations is in the form of *antagonistic cooperation,* i.e., the two groups have opposite interests, but they still come together for production. According to Marx, *the have nots* are in a disadvantaged position and

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are forced to accept this state of antagonistic cooperation. This further accentuates the essential contradiction between the interests of the two classes.

II. Relations between man and things – They are of the nature of *ownership* and *non-ownership* of things required in the production. *The haves* control the production process in every mode of production, whereas *the have nots* are non-owners in the production process and just own their labour. Man is free to sell his labour in an industrial society. Similarly, in other societies or mode of productions, ownership and non-ownership relations exist.

According to Marx, these relations are dynamic. Antagonism keeps increasing, resulting into conflict between the two classes. Similarly, the relationship between man and things also keeps changing. In a capitalist society, Marx foresees such a degree of exploitation that the man loses control over his own labour also. According to Marx, these social relationships determine the existence of man and not his own will. According to Marx – '*It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousnesses*' i.e., men themselves don't decide what type of social relations (in production process) they will have, rather, social relations determine who they will be the ruled or the ruler, i.e., material conditions also shape the mental conditions of human beings. Men are not driven by their inner voices as these voices are subdued by the material consideration and the social relations created by these dominant material relations.

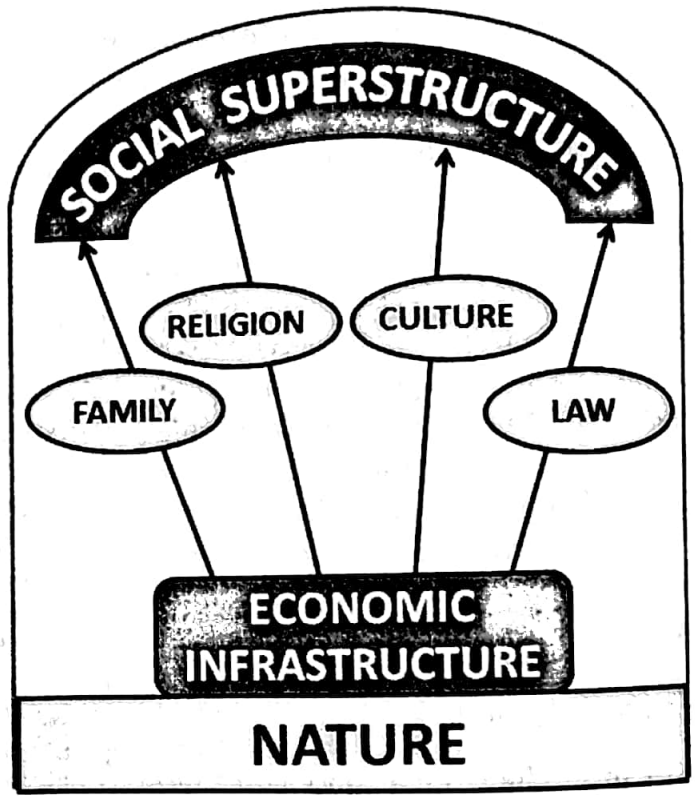

Fig. 4.2 Marx's Systemic View

Forces of Production, according to Marx, have two aspects which are men and things. Men are further categorised into *the haves* and *the have nots*. Things include tools, techniques, equipments, skills, etc. Major changes in society occur when new forces of production are evolved (which also create new relations of production) which replace the older ones and create a new mode of production. A contradiction between the older and newer forces of production is resolved by the replacement of older mode of production by the newer one. In every society, there is centrality of one major thing. For example, in feudal society, land is central, in capitalist society, capital is central. Forces of production help in transforming the things which are available in nature into things which can be exchanged in market. Forces of production also represent man's control over nature. As the history proceeds, man's control over nature increases. Thus, man and nature are also in a state of constant struggle and the development in the forces of production can be seen in terms of man's increasing control over nature.

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Both the forces and relations of production change continuously and together the two constitute *economic base* or *economic infrastructure* or simply the *infrastructure* of society. This constant interplay results into a particular type of social formation or social state, which is called *mode of production* or (roughly referred as society or social formation according to Marx).

Marx had a systemic view of society and he deemed *production as central in understanding the society.* The forces and relations of production continuously interplay and influence each other. According to his systemic view, society or mode of production consists of two parts –

I. *Economic Infrastructure* – It includes *forces* and *relations,* i.e., men and things being involved in production include classes, tools, techniques, etc. It represents the centrality of material or economic factors in shaping the whole mode of production.

II. *Social Superstructure* – It includes all other aspects of society like – culture, law, state, family, religion and education and it is largely shaped by economic infrastructure. As economic infrastructure changes, social superstructure also changes.

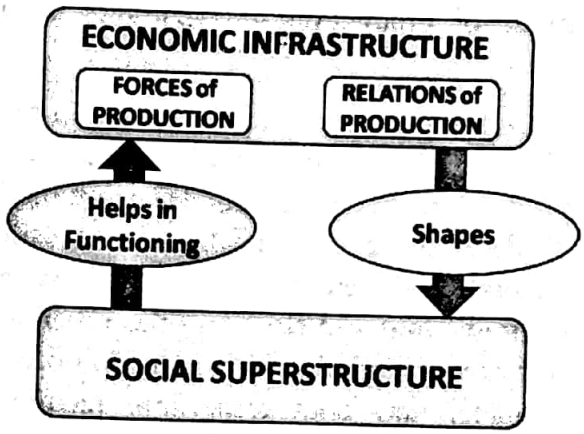

Fig. 4.3 Components of Marx's Systemic View

Economic infrastructure shapes social superstructure which in turns helps in the functioning of economic infrastructure. Thus, nature of forces and relations of production will result in similar superstructure and consequently, a typical organisation of society will emerge which is called as mode of production.

A major contradiction in any production activity is that there is a conflict between forces and relations of production. There is a conflict of interest between the various social groups in the relations of production as forces of production are unequally controlled by such groups. For example, in capitalist production, forces of production include collective production by a large number of workers, yet they are privately controlled by the capitalists. Contradiction is that while production is collective or social in nature, control over forces is private as a handful of capitalists have the actual control over these forces. Further, the fruit of these forces is also appropriated unequally by the capitalists.

Marx is criticised on the following grounds regarding his materialistic conception of history –

I. He is criticised as being reductionist for over-emphasising on material factors. He reduces the importance of all other factors in society into merely economic factors. Karl Popper termed his approach as *economic reductioinism* for ignoring ideas.

II. Marx also over emphasised conflict and ignored social order aspect. Simmel even went on to say that conflict also has its own functions.

III. Conflict is attributed to relations within economic infrastructure, but Dahrendorf says differential authority structure is the root cause of conflict.

IV. Marx focussed primarily on macro evolutionary aspect and ignored the micro reality of social life which was explored by non-psitivist tradition.

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Mode of Production

Marx defines evolution of mankind in terms of various stages which he refers to as *modes of production*. It is the term which Marx uses for a particular social formation or society. It is uniquely defined in terms of combination of a particular *force of production* and *relations of production* in a materialistic context. Every mode of production has centrality of one thing.

Marx has conceptualised the society in terms of six stages or six evolutionary modes of production. Every new mode of production displaces the earlier one because of various factors like – inherent weaknesses of the system, contradictions and class struggle. When a set of forces and relations of production become obsolete, new ones come into picture. A revolution is often required to change the relations of production.

ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

It was referred by Marx to explain the stagnation of oriental societies. It was a departure from his dialectical materialistic and evolutionary conception. It was characterised by simple production methods, despotic rule, self-sufficient villages, absence of private property, economy based on handicraft and agriculture and absence of autonomous cities. As there was no private property, there was no class struggle based upon antagonism between land lords and peasants. As these societies lacked in the dynamics of class struggle, there was also a little hope of revolution. However, this model is also criticised for being an overall misfit in the wider dialectical schema of the Marx also failing to represent the actual oriental society of those days.

Out of the six modes, four are historical and two are futuristic, historical stages include –

I. *Primitive Communism* – In this mode of production, all were equal and had equal access to forces of production and society was a hunting gathering society. Forces of production were at an extremely low level of development and there was de facto equality in society as food was also abundant and population was low. Relations of production were based upon cooperation, rather than domination as ownership of forces of production was communal. With the invention of new tools, forces became sophisticated. Communal structure of society started to break up as new form of social organisation emerged with emergence of private ownership. This lead to conflicts and contradiction between erstwhile mode of production and emerging new mode of production which is termed as *negation of primitive communism*. Those who held command over tools emerged as masters and those who became dependent became slaves in the new mode of production.

II. *Ancient Slave Mode of Production* – In this mode, some men had control over skills and tools and others were subordinate to them. This mode symbolises ancient slavery in which slaves didn't have control on their laboras well. As population further increased, slaves were pressurised to produce more, their exploitation increased and the slaves revolted. New forces of production emerged in the form of agriculture and feudalsim also emerged.

III. *Feudalistic Mode of Production* – In this mode, society was divided into land owning feudal lords and landless serfs. Land was central to economic activity and feudal lords were in control of land and serfs were dependent on feudal lords. In this mode of production, erstwhile masters become feudal lords, controlling the land and slaves become serfs. Serfs were free, but were forced to

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cultivate on the land of feudal lords and had to pay tax and service, which kept on rising, leading to revolt of serfs when mature conditions arrived. New mode of production in the form of capitalism emerged with an increase in trade and erstwhile feudal lords became capitalists and serfs became workers in factories.

IV. *Capitalistic Mode of Production* – According to Marx, this is the current mode of production. In this mode of production, capital is central to production and society is primarily divided into *the have nots* called the *proletariat* and *the haves* called the *bourgeiose*. Marx argued that capital produces nothing. Only labor produces wealth, yet wages paid are too low. The difference between the two is the surplus which is gobbled up by the capitalists. Workers lose control over their labor as well and start feeling alienated. The most significant contradictions that leads to class conflict in capitalist society is – contradiction between the social character of production and private form of appropriation. It leads to conflict and exploited workers will unite and revolt heralding new mode of production – socialistic mode of production, eventually leading to communism.

Marx terms feudalistic and capitalistic modes of production as *negation of negation* as these modes of production negate a mode of production which has itself negated another mode of production. Marx doesn't stop here and he envisages a future where things will be set right. He believes that contradiction of history will end soon. He is of the view that capitalism is inherently unstable and soon it will be replaced by other modes of the production and *the have nots* will get their due. According to him, the future stages in the dialectical process will be –

I. *Socialistic Mode of Production* – It is a transitory mode of production in which proletariat will topple bourgeiose in a revolution and will control forces of production. Marx calls it as *dictatorship of proletariat* as, for a short while, worker controls the forces of production. It will result into reversal of the control. However, Marx believes that control by workers shall also come to an end to realise the true potential of all human beings.

II. *Advanced Communism* – It is the final mode in which forces of production will be communally owned as workers too will renounce their rule and everyone will carry on his or her own creative pursuit and there will be no class in society. There will be no state and a person's true self or being will be re-integrated with oneself. According to Marx, this will be the last mode of production as the contradiction will be resolved in this mode and hence, there will not be any new unequal relations of production. In this mode of production, collective production will remain, but the qualitative nature of relations will be transformed and ownership will also be now collective. Dialectical principle will cease to operate in this mode of produciton and this stage will be a closing chapter of dialectical materialism.

Thus, Marx' dynamic model of society is based upon following propositions – a continuous change in the forces and relations of production in response to the changing material conditions; a continuous struggle between two classes till capitalism and its resolution in socialism and communism; a continuous struggle between man and nature throughout history will be resolved in communism; a continuous struggle to resolve the contradictions of previous stage through the process of dialectic; a continuous struggle between being and social being, that will end in communism.

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General criticism of Marx for his Mode of Production theory is –

I. First of all, his futuristic communist utopia never arrived even in the communist countries. Proletariats have never taken a leading role in toppling capitalism and instead, intellectuals have filled the void by coming forward for the cause of the proletariat.

II. He also suggested that some societies may have different mode of production as in case of Asia,where he himself suggested an Asiatic Mode of Production, which runs counter to his generalised *mode of production* thesis.

III. His mode of production theory is criticised for narrow empiricism and being reductionist in approach. He has also limited his analysis to production and has ignored the aspects related to consumption.

IV. He has also ignored the feminist dimension of production as patriarchy is also seen as an important factor in the growth of capitalism.

V. His futuristic modelling smacks his obcession with social justice. Without any sound reasoning, he predicts that dialectic process will cease. Some forms of inequalities are likely to remain due to natural and man made differences in society.

Marx on Individual

According to Marx, man is perpetually dissatisfied; he creates new needs once existing needs are satisfied. Marx, however, sees man as driven by the structure of society and subordinate to it. Individual consciousness is shaped by the production process. Consciousness becomes a function of the person's position in the production process, i.e., forces and relations of production influence human thoughts.

Marx' views on individual are further elaborated in his idea of *being*. According to him, there two essential aspects of human nature, first which is constant and other which changes with changes in production.

I. The constant part is called *being* and is perpetually dissatisfied and creative. Man tends to create things which are expression of his creativity. Once the society limits the creativity of individual, he feels alienated.

II. The other part of human nature is governed by a person's social position. This is referred as *social being*. It is identified by the work done by the individual. In the existing societies, man is identified by his *social being* and not by his *being*. Similarly, in existing societies, individual consciousness is determined by his *social being*, rather than his *being*.

Marx also talks about the basic nature of *social being* in different societies. For example, in capitalist societies, social being is selfish; on the other hand, in communism, it becomes cooperative.

Alienation

Marx believed that there is an inherent relationship between labour and human nature and this relation is perverted in capitalistic mode of production. He calls this perverted relation as *alienation*. Alienation explains the peculiar form that our relation to our own labour has taken under capitalism and labour in capitalism is no longer seen as serving the purpose of human existence. Rather than being an end

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in itself, an expression of human capabilities, labour in capitalism is reduced to being a means to an end, i.e., producing and earning money for the capitalists. Labour is now owned by the capitalist, it no longer transforms the workers, they get alienated from it and ultimately from themselves. Alienation is an example of the sort of contradiction that Marx's dialectical approach focused on. There is a real contradiction between human nature, which is defined and transformed by labour and the actual social conditions of labour under capitalism. Thus, Marx uses this concept to show the devastating effect of the capitalist production on human beings and on the society.

Concept of alienation occupies a central role in Marxian understanding of exploitation and he dwell on it in his work *Economic and Political Manuscripts, 1844*. Alienation literally means separation from. Marx sees this separation in multiple dimensions. It is a feeling of estrangement and disenchantment from a group, a situation, society and even with oneself. It also refers to a situation of powerlessness, isolation and meaninglessness experienced by the people when they confront social institutions, which they cannot control and consider oppressive. It is the breakdown of the natural interconnection among people and what they produce.

History of mankind has a dual aspect according to Marx – '*It was a history of increasing control of man over nature, at the same time it was history of increasing alienation of man.*' Primitive man felt alienated with nature as nature was too overpowering. Man devised means of production and forces of production to overpower nature, but alienation is transferred from natural sphere to social sphere. As man goes from one mode of production to another, alienation increases and in those modes of production, '*It is not the consciousness of the man that determines their existence, but on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousnesses.*' Hence, man becomes a slave of production and his individuality is lost. According to Marx, an individual is essentially creative and his true consciousness is defined by his *being*, however, man in a mode of production is identified by his *social being*, which is based on his work. Man uses his creativity to shape his material world. But his creativity is objectified as he loses control over what he produces.

Marx gives primary importance to alienation at workplace as it is a part of economic infrastructure which shapes the superstructure. Work is considered central in the life of an individual. It is an expression of creative *being* of men. So, alienation of labour is the key to alienation of human beings.

Its cause lies in the uneven structure of production itself. Historically, in different modes of production, the economic infrastructure or the production process constrains the individual's creativity, i.e., his being. When man feels unable to find expression of his creativity, he feels alienated. This happens in every hitherto existing society.

Alienation happens in two ways –

I. In a given mode of production, it increases with time. This is because material forces become stronger and control over forces of production becomes tighter, leading to increasing exploitation. For example, slaves in an ancient mode of production become more alienated as they are burdened with more work and less food. Similarly, in feudalism also, taxes and hardship on serfs increase with time.

II. Its degree increases as mode of production itself changes. Marx says, *History of mankind is a history of alienation*. It is least in primitive communism and peaks in capitalism and work becomes a suffering in capitalism.

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Marx explains alienation in capitalistic mode of production in the chapter *Fetishism of Commodities* in his *Das Capital, 1867*. In capitalism, the commodities which are produced in the factory and are sold in the market become fetishes as workers have to purchase in market what they produced in factory. Commodities assume their own importance as if they have their own powerful existence. Labour of workers become dependent on production of these commodities. The very survival of workers becomes dependent on the commodities. This fetishism or fixation of commodities prevents workers from seeing the actual reality behind it. Workers start to treat commodities as if value is inherent in them at the expense of their own labour, which is the real force that produces the commodities. Its other dimension is that relations between man and man become insignificant and more value is given to relations between man and things. Labour of man is commoditised as a result.

COMMODITY FETISHISM

It is a concept which is closely related to Marxian idea of capitalistic production. It is a condition under capitalism under which social relations become expressed as relations between things and things assume more importance than the man who produces them. Marx' work on commodity fetishism is central to highlight the social structure of a modern capitalist society and its relation to human labour and human potential. By starting with commodity, Marx is able to reveal the true nature of capitalistic mode of production. According to Marx, *commodity* is a product of labour of man. Earlier, commodities were produced by man for satisfaction of his needs and personal use only and hence, they had *use value* according to Marx, but in modern capitalist industries, when worker is not entitled to the fruit of his work, commodities now have *exchange value*. Use value is connected to the intimate relation between human needs and the actual objects that can satisfy those needs. It is difficult to compare the use values of different things. For example, bread has the use value of satisfying hunger and shoes have the use value of protecting our feet and the two cannot be compared as both are *qualitatively* different. But in capitalistic mode of production, commodities come in the market and are exchanged for money and other things as they are now only *quantitatively* different. Commodities are the products of human labour, but they can become separated from the needs and purposes of their creators and the exchange value floats free from the actual commodity and seems to exist in a realm, separate from any human use. In capitalism, it seems that the commodities and the market for them have independent existences. As the commodities take on an independent, almost mystical external reality, they appear like fetishes to those who produce them. By fetish, Marx meant a thing that we ourselves make and then worship as if it were a god or spirit. In capitalism, the products that we make, their values, and the economy that consists of our exchanges, all seem to take on lives of their own, separate from any human need or decision. Even our own labour, the thing that, according to Marx, makes us truly human, becomes a commodity that is bought and sold. Our labour acquires an exchange value that is separate from us. Thus, man feels powerless with little control over what he produces and commodities become a source of alienation. Marx called this process as the *fetishism of commodities*. The concept takes us from the level of the individual actor to the level of large-scale social structures like religious, political, and organisational structures and people reify the whole range of social relationships and social structures in the same way as people reify commodities and other economic phenomena. One major criticism of the concept is that it ignores the fact that the workers may also sell their labour independently.

Marx considers four dimensions of alienation in capitalism –

I. Alienation from the process of production – Process of production in capitalism is defined irrespective of individuality of workers. It is fixed and workers cannot change it. Workers only

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man the machines which are given more importance. Worker loses control over production in capitalism and hence, feels alienated from the process of production.

II. Alienation from the product – In capitalism, product doesn't belong to those who produce it, but to capitalist. Workers don't have any control over quantity, quality or nature of the product. Moreover, the same product has to be purchased from the market, leading to sense of alienation from the product.

III. Alienation from the fellow workers – Work is compartmentalised and a worker gets no time to interact with others, either inside or outside the workplace. The communal or the social element of the work is lost in the capitalistic mode of production. It leads to feeling of alienation from the fellow workers as well.

IV. Alienation from oneself and one's potential – In such a situation, worker feels so helpless that they even doubt their own existence. Work is not a choice, but a compulsion. *Work is external to the worker; it is not a part of his nature.* He loses control over his own thoughts also, as none of his thoughts can be transformed into reality. He gets alienated from his thoughts also. This is peak of alienation.

These four dimensions lead to *inversion of subject-object relationship*. Alienation is not a result of impersonal market forces, but is due to changed relationship between men. As some men become masters and others in serving position, the whole production process is vitiated.

Solution to alienation was visualised in a state when production process was overhauled and relations of production were modified. It happens in communism where forces of production will be collectively owned. In communism only, being of man is truly realised and he goes for all the creative pursuits that were inhibited in earlier modes of production.

Marx' idea of alienation is criticised on following grounds –

I. Karl Popper says that alienation can be a breeding ground for creative ideas also. Similarly, Merton also states that people may rebel and innovate if they feel alienated.

II. Durkheim had highlighted that anomie and alienation can be corrected by existing structures also and there is no need for overhaul of the system in the form of utopian communism.

III. Goldthorpe and Lockwood, in their affluent worker study highlight that work is just a means to an end, i.e., better standards of living. Workers are more concerned about the latter. Workers are more concerned about what happens outside the factory and it shapes their behaviours and attitude more than the work itself. Workers can satisfy their expressive and affective needs through family relationships.

IV. According to C W Mills in his study of middle class entitled *White Collar, 1951*, it is not just the working class that suffers alienation, but white collared staff also witness alienation. Even white collar staff has to assume a false personality at work in terms of fake smiles, artificial politeness, etc. which alienates them from their true self. According to him, their personality is also sold to employer.

V. Robert Blauner in his study *Alienation and Freedom, 1964* has highlighted that alienation depends on technology used at work. In different industries, using different technologies, degree

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of alienation is also different. Different technologies provide for different degree of control workers have on their own work and different degree of sense of meaning in their work. Different technology also allows different levels of social integration as well. For example, printing jobs involve workers creative inputs and division of labour is not very high and hence, alienation is less, on the other hand, automated automotive assembly lines result into the most extreme forms of alienation. He rejects the Marxian notion that workers in industrial society are autonomously alienated. He divides the concept of alienation into four dimensions, i.e., degree of control workers have over their work, the degree of meaning and sense of purpose they find in their work, the degree to which they are socially integrated into work and the degree to which they are involved in their work. He finally concludes that change in technology used can go a long way in solving the problem of alienation. However, Marxians argue back that Blauner missed the big picture. Marx never said that industrialisation leads to alienation, but it is the capitalism which leads to alienation.

VI. Max Weber say that over bureaucratisation of society leads to alienation as man is guided by fixed rules and his creativity is suffocated.

Class and Society

Class is the fundamental unit of organisation according to Marx and society is always divided into opposing classes. '*Man is born in a society in which property relations have already been determined. Just as a man cannot chose who his father will be, he has no choice over his class as well*' said Marx famously. Class is central concept in Marxian writings to understand society as a whole. In his seminal work *Das Capital, 1867,* Marx writes that class results from the relations of production which create different positions and he defines it as '*A group of people sharing the same position in the process of production.*' However, he saw a class more than this and he saw it in terms of potential for conflict and a class truly exists only when people become aware of their conflicting relation with other classes.

Marx sees two broad classes in every society – *the haves* and *the have nots*. As mankind progressed from primitive communism, surplus started to emerge and some men started to control the forces of production and unequal relations of production emerged. This led to first class formation. In ancient society masters, in feudal society, feudal lords and in capitalist society capitalists are *the haves*. 'The haves' are owners of forces of production and are dominant in society. Marx also talks of intermediate classes. In his *Revolutions and Counter-revolutions in Germany*, he talks about eight classes and in his *Class Struggle in France*, he talks about six classes. However, he contends that as history proceeds, all the intermediary classes will be absorbed into two broad strata through the process of *class polarisation*. Polarisation involves two processes. One is bourgeoisisation, which involves upward mobility and the other proletarianisation, which involves downward mobility. Polarisation will occur with increasing exploitation and will also be accompanied by class antagonism or class struggle.

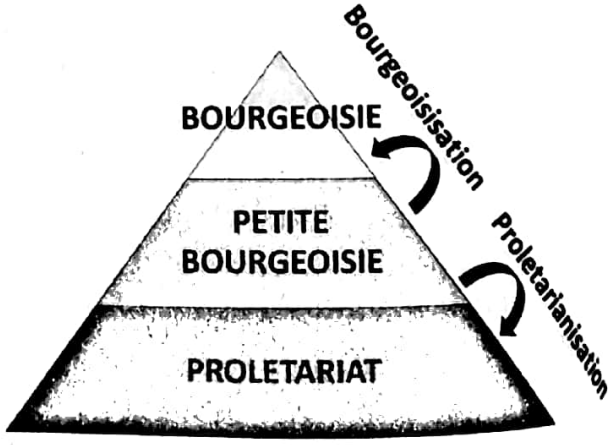

Fig. 4.4 Class Polarisation

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Marx also sees class in terms of its objective and subjective expression in the form of *class in itself* and *class for itself*. For Marx, a class truly exists only when people become aware of their conflicting relation with respect to other classes. Without this awareness, they only constitute, what Marx called, a class in itself. When they become aware of the conflict, they become a true class, a class for itself.

I. *Class in itself* is the objective manifestation of class. It is like a *category* which is seen by others as so and the members are not aware of being a part of a common stratum. It is only an analytical construct to Marx in order to stratify position. It is by virtue of people having a common relationship to the means of production. It is solely defined by position in relations of production. For example, proletariats are a class in itself because they have some common attributes like lack of ownership of production means and being deprived of fruits of production. A *class in itself* becomes a *class for itself* when the contradiction between the consciousness of its members and the reality of their situation ends. Members become aware of the exploitative situation.

II. On the other hand, *Class for itself* is a class in which workers are aware of their common condition, their mission, etc. and it develops only when class consciousness develops among workers themselves. They start to see through the condition of exploitation and can now themselves realise the unequal terms of production. It is a social class which has been defined on the basis of subjective criterion. It is only when workers become *class for itself,* that they will be in a position to unite against the capitalist. It is a phase which is a pre-condition for the change of mode of production to socialism. Transformation from *class in itself* to *class for itself* is governed by the ever increasing exploitation, communal working in a factory and the rising gap between *the haves* and *the have nots*. Polarisation of the two classes will further hasten this process. Polarisation will occur as a result of increasing mechanisation and homogenisation of the workforce. As two strata become clear in their formation, the fault lines will also become apparent. According to Marx, the capitalist society, by its very nature, is unstable as it is based on contradictions and antagonisms, which can be resolved only by its transformation. According to Marx, class in itself becomes a class for itself only in capitalist mode of production, as in earlier modes of production, change of mode of production resulted only in replacement of one set of contradictions by the other and no qualitative change in relationships of production occurred. Before communism arrives, class for itself is merely transitory in nature as old contradictions are replaced with the new contradictions. Final transition of class in itself to class for itself occurs only in communism.

Marx sees classes in society in terms of antagonistic cooperation. So *Class Struggle* is also inherent in Marxian conception of class. In each mode of production, *the haves* and *the have nots* enter into relations of production. Due to antagonistic cooperation, classes enter into struggle which keeps on increasing. According to Marx – '*History of hitherto existing societies is history of class struggle.*' He also states that – *Class struggle acts as a motor of the history,* – i.e., conflict between the two classes in every mode of production is the force behind historical developments. New things and new modes of production emerge as a result of class struggle. Class struggle is not smooth and is mediated by a number of factors and situations. Forces of production keep on changing which require entirely new set of relations of production. Old relations come into conflict with new relations, thereby contributing to class struggle. For example, in a feudal system, industrial production emerged, which required geographically mobile labour, whereas agricultural production required people tied to their lands. Inherent contradiction in production process becomes a basis for class struggle. The interests of haves and *the have nots* are

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opposite leading to antagonistic relations. Increase in prices benefits only the capitalists and rise in wages is never proportionate.

Marx also sees increasing class struggle in terms of increasing alienation, which is a situation of separation. Productive forces constrain individual creativity, thereby leading to alienation. Alienation and class struggle reaches at its peak in capitalism.

Mechanism of class struggle differs in different societies, depending upon the factors and situation. However, its fundamental nature remains the same. The mechanism is same in ancient and feudal mode, but different in capitalistic mode. In ancient and feudal mode, *the have nots* and their struggle was supported by the *emerging class,* which is a representative of the new forces of production. This emerging class of people is from *the haves* of new mode of production. Thus, ironically, *the have nots,* in their own struggle, actually fulfil the interests of the emerging class, resulting in a situation of farce. *The have nots* get the same exploitative deal which they want to change. Their attempt to change or revolution turns out to be farce. *The have nots* fall into another exploitative relation, which is a tragedy for them and they move from tragedy to farce again. In feudal system also, the serfs were aided by some enterprising feudal lords who pioneered the factory system of production. According to Marx – '*History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, then as a farce.*'

In capitalistic mode of production, people don't have any alternative and alienation is at its peak. While in earlier modes of production, class struggle resulted into a mere change of mode of production with cosmetic change in relations of production, in capitalistic mode of production, qualitative change happens. It is only in capitalistic mode of production that workers gained a critical mass in terms of *true consciousness,* leadership, ideology and change the structure itself. Thus, the ensuing revolution is for emancipation of all, including the capitalists and the end of perpetual class struggle as well. It is a true revolution. According to Marx, revolution will not come on its own, but is possible only if some mature conditions exist. These mature conditions include – a critical mass of workers having consciousness, network of communication among workers, clear perception of common enemy, appropriate organisation and an ideology which is generated by leadership.

Workers' revolution will result into a state of transition where they will take over the state and abolish all the private property. The production will be communally owned. Each one will get according to one's need and not according to one's greed. This stage, Marx refers to as socialism. Later, workers will renounce their rule, leading to a state of communism, where there will be no class and hence, no class struggle. Hence, class struggle ends as the dialectic materialistic process comes to an end.

General criticism of class struggle theory –

I. Marx' futuristic conception failed to take shape even 130 years after his demise. Industrial capitalism, has in fact, grown stronger. Socialist experiments have failed worldwide and communism is still a utopian concept. The qualitative transformation he talked so vociferously, never happened.

II. Frank Parkin in his *Class Inequality and Political Order, 1972* points out that classes exist even in socialist countries.

III. Contrary to Marxian prediction that class struggle will intensify, it has moderated in most of the Europe, which is an epitome of capitalism. Workers, themselves, have become affluent and now

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have a stake in the capitalist economy. Class is, in fact, given more importance as it is now used as a source of identity.

IV. Weber and others have highlighted that apart from economic basis, there are other basis of stratification in society.

V. Lenski asserts that even breakdown of capitalism may not lead to socialism, as other modes of production may emerge.

VI. According to Dahrendorf, contrary to Marx' prediction, the manual working class has become increasingly heterogeneous or dissimilar and hence, there is little chance of it uniting for a revolution. Similar conclusions were drawn by Darren Theil, in a 2007 study of workers in London. Ken Roberts, in his *Class in Contemporary Britain, 2011*, also states that most of the manual workers still see themselves as working class, but there is a little evidence that they are developing a class consciousness which is critical for class struggle.

In this light, modern Marxists like Ralf Dahrendorf contend that modern capitalism has modified itself. Though Marxian ideas still hold, their context has changed. He also contends that classes have further fragmented as division of labour becomes more specialised. In fact, inequalities are now at an individual level.

Marx says *Capitalism sows its own seeds of destruction* as Marx believed that capitalism is an exploitative and oppressive system. But it is nevertheless a necessary and progressive stage of human history because it creates the preconditions for an egalitarian future, free from both, exploitation and poverty. Capitalism is an inherently unstable system also as it is based on contradictions and exploitation. There is also a contradiction between social production and individual ownership by the capitalist. Apart from this contradiction, a process of class polarisation will further make class divide more acute. Intermediate classes will merge into a single proletariat as mechanical production reduces semi-skilled and skilled workers in a single category. Due to competition, only large companies will survive and wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a few only. Further, capitalism and factory system provides the masses with an opportunity to organise themselves for the ultimate social change, thus sowing seeds for its self-destruction. Even when two classes are objectively opposed to each other, they do not automatically engage in a conflict. For a conflict to occur, it is necessary for them to become subjectively conscious of their class interests and identities, and therefore, also of their rivals' interests and identities. It is only after this kind of *class consciousness* is developed through political mobilisation that class conflicts occur.

Marx is still relevant in explaining conflict in various aspect of life. His concepts are still relevant in understanding social order, social problems and individual. Many great scholars like Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Habermas, Gramsci and Althusser carried forward Marxist ideas into newer fields of sociological study. Neo-Marxists understand today's world order in terms of neo-colonialism also. World System Theory of Wallerstein is an example of re-definition of Marxian paradigm in a global set up. Similarly, in India also, Naxal issue can be seen from Marxist lens.

Failure of socialist countries is cited by the detractors of Marxism as failure of Marxism, but they fail to notice that the proclaimed socialism was never similar to Marxist socialism and was at best,

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pseudo-socialism, which was more suffocating than emancipatory in nature. Ideals of equality were never practiced in these socialist countries and instead, state acted as supra-power.

Some also accuse Marx of being economic determinist or reductionist, but they fail to notice that he also acknowledges influence of social superstructure on economic infrastructure. Further, Marx has also acknowledged that there was a different mode of production in Asia. While explaining *mature conditions* which will result in overthrowing of capitalist mode of production, he also acknowledges influence of leadership and ideology as well.

Durkheim – Division of Labour, Social Fact, Suicide, Religion and Society

Emile Durkheim was one of the pioneers of the discipline of Sociology and was also the founder scholar of functionalist tradition in Sociology, along with Spencer and Comte. Before him, other scholars like Comte tried to lay the foundation of the discipline, but it was Durkheim who gave distinctive sociological explanations in the field of functional analysis for the first time. He was also the one who is credited to liberate the budding discipline from the mysterious methods and terminology of theology and philosophy. He gave a macro view of society and according to him, individual is subordinate to society and is also governed by it. '*Society has a reality of its own over and above the individuals who comprise it*' said Durkheim.



Fig. 4.5 Emile Durkheim

His contribution to the formative discipline was immense and he is considered as the father of Sociology for following reasons –

I. He tried to define the subject matter of the Sociology and attempted to develop a *science* of society in form of Sociology. He defined the subject matter as *study of social facts* and suggested Scientific Methods for its study.

II. For the first time, he gave distinctively sociological explanations in his *causal functional theories*. For example, in his theory of suicide and theory of religion, he gave explanations which were distinctively sociological.

III. He developed methods specific to Sociology and also demonstrated its use in its theories. For his theory of suicide, he used methods of multivariate analysis.

IV. He also established the first ever department of Sociology in Europe and was the first professor of Sociology.

His methodology remains same during all his works, where, at the outset, he provides a fitting irrefutable definition of the phenomenon. Secondly, he refutes existing explanations and finally, he gives a distinctively sociological explanation of the given phenomenon.

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Social Facts

Durkheim was highly influenced by the approach of natural scientists and inspired by that, he tried to understand society in terms of some universal laws. He also saw discovery of universal social laws as a solution to the problems of society. He doled out the concept of social facts to lay a scientific foundation for the new discipline. Social facts were visualised as akin to natural facts. His theory of *social facts* is significant because, according to Susan Jones in her *What Does Durkheim Mean by 'Thing? 1996*, it was crucial in separating the new discipline from philosophical discourse. To discover such universal laws, the first precondition was that there should exist, some *social facts* in society like natural facts in the natural world. According to him, just as behaviour of matter in nature can be regarded as a reaction to natural stimuli, behaviour of man can also be seen as a response to the external constrain of such social facts.

In his first major work titled *Montesquieu and Rousseau, 1892*, he laid down the general conditions for the establishment of a science of society. According to him, a social science should –

I. Deal with *specific subject matter* and not total knowledge that is around.
II. Aim at identifying the *general types* rather than describing individual types.
III. Have a definite and observable field to explore and it should study objective reality.
IV. Yield general principles or laws.
V. Use methods similar to natural science.

Durkheim further clarified the scope and methodology of Sociology in his book *The Rules of Sociological Method, 1895*. According to him, task of a sociologist is to study *social facts* as *things* as we study things in a natural world. He defined social facts as – '*Social facts are ways of acting, thinking and feeling, which are external to the individual and are endowed with the power of coercion by reason of which they control of him.*' He considers social facts as those phenomena which exist outside the individual, as a force which coerce the individual to think, act and feel in a particular manner. The task of Sociology is to identify and study such social phenomenon or social facts.

Social facts, thus can be understood by their four characteristics –

I. *Externality* – Social facts exist outside the individual and must be seen apart from the individual. These are *sui-generis* (coming into existence on their own as a part of autonomous development of society).
II. *Constraining* – The social facts exercise constraining influence over the individual action. The constraint is in nature of coercion. The existence of constraints makes social facts as real as the constraint is visible in terms of its consequences.
III. *Generality* – Social facts are general in nature and must not be confused with the individual interpretations or *individual facts*. These are in the form of generalised perception which is understood by all the individuals in the same manner. Durkheim rejects the study of exceptions and focuses upon identification of *general types*. For example, he studies religion as a general type and does not study any particular religion.

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IV. *Independence* – Social facts are independent of the will of the individual. Individuals cannot change the social facts, but rather, the opposite is true.

Thus, Durkheim kept social facts above individual. According to him, social facts are not abstract phenomena and they can be visualised as objective reality. Durkheim conceded that social facts are difficult to study as they seem intangible and hence, cannot be observed directly. In *The Rules of Sociological Method, 1895*, Durkheim differentiated between two broad types of social facts — *material* and *non-material* Social Facts. Although he dealt with both in the course of his work, his main focus was on nonmaterial social facts, for example, culture, social institutions, morality, collective conscience and social currents, – rather than material social facts, for example, styles of architecture, forms of technology, division of labour and legal codes. He concluded that earlier societies were held together primarily by nonmaterial social facts, specifically, a strongly held common morality, or what he called a strong collective conscience. He saw social facts along a continuum of materiality. The sociologist usually begins a study by focusing on material social facts, which are empirically accessible, in order to understand nonmaterial social facts, which are abstract in nature and hence, difficult to grasp and can be studied only indirectly with the help of material social facts.

To make the study of social facts easier, Durkheim suggested that social facts should be studied in terms of their effects or consequences in society. While doing so, scientific approach should be adopted and the researcher should be objective in his approach, without any bias or ideology.

There are two ways which can explain social facts –

I. *Determining cause of social facts* – According to him, cause of social fact lies in another social fact. For example, cause of suicide does not lie in individual's will, but should be explored through various other social facts like – population, integration and social order.

II. *Determining functions of social facts* – According to him, social facts perform certain *functional pre-requisites* of society. Most important of which is maintenance of social order. According to him, *collective conscience* is that social fact that maintains social order. It has a constraining effect on individuals and it affects their actions. Thus, society manifests itself in individual activities.

To visualise them as objective reality, he suggested certain *rules of studying the social facts,* which were explained in his *The Rules of Sociological Method, 1895,* as a part of Durkheim's bid to establish a distinct methodology in Sociology. The rules included –

I. *Rules of observation* – Social facts should be studied as *things*. Observing social facts as things will help us to view them as definite reality rather than as abstract phenomenon. Although, these may seem to be abstract, every social fact has some representation which exists in the form of objective manifestation of the social facts. It is through these manifestations that social facts can be observed as things. Durkheim called representations as *collective representations* in the form of different types of *symbols* which denote different types of social facts.

II. *Rules of classification* – Durkheim says that every social fact is not unique, but is part of a broad classification. Different types of social facts can be identified as –

   a. *Structural or Morphological Facts* – These are the facts which give a particular society its appearance.

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b. *Institutional Social Facts* – These are facts which are institutionalised and accepted by the people. These include religion, division of labour, rate of suicide, etc.

c. *Non-Institutional Social Facts* – These are the facts which are still not accepted by the people, but have a potential of exerting constraints on individuals. They rise spontaneously and may or may not sustain. For example, mob behaviour and crowd behaviour. They are also termed as *socio-currents.*

III. *Rules of distinction* – While studying social facts, a distinction must be made between *normal* and *pathological* state. Social facts, remain in general, in normal state, but sometimes in certain situations, they also display pathological characteristics. Social facts are considered normal when they are present in their general form and fulfil some functions for society. They may also become dysfunctional in their pathological state. For example, certain rate of crime is considered normal, when it increases beyond a certain level, it morphs into pathological state and prove dysfunctional for the society.

IV. *Rules of explanation* – In order to explain social facts, Durkheim prescribed certain rules, like –

a. The investigator should observe complete objectivity and personal preoccupations and biases should be eradicated while studying the social facts.

b. Methods used by the natural sciences should be used to study social facts. He himself demonstrated the use of methods like concomitant variations, indirect experimentation and statistical techniques in his various explanations. His theory of suicide is a classical exhibition of use of quantitative methods in Sociology. Similarly, indirect experimentation was also used in his theory of religion.

c. Explanation of social facts must yield general theories. Durkheim proposed formulation of causal-functional theory, emphasising on separation of cause and function in order to prevent illegitimate teleologies.

However, his theory and method of social facts didn't truly measure up to the claim of being scientific. It came under several criticisms like –

I. Heidleman considers that Durkheim is more concerned about making of society, rather than describing a methodology for it.

II. His emphasis on universalistic and general theories didn't have much practical significance for their all-encompassing nature. According to Merton, middle range theories are required.

III. Stephen Lukes, in his *Power: A Radical View, 1974*, contends that Durkheim has glorified empiricism and moralism and hence, neglected emotions and individual subjectivity.

IV. Peter Berger accuses him of doing injustice to the discipline by ignoring individual human behaviour, in his bid to objectivity. Further, objectivity is not possible in social observation.

V. He couldn't explain why same social facts influence different individuals differently.

VI. According to Weber – '*Social facts don't exist as things in their own right waiting to be gathered like pebbles on beach.*' Social facts lie inside an individual and their influence is on the basis

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of individual's own interpretation of the social fact. In a nutshell, instead of a purely macro perspective, a micro view is also required in understanding of society.

Division of Labor

In the background of the upheaval in French society after the French Revolution, Durkheim was concerned with the maintenance of solidarity and social order in the society. He states that – '*In the modern society, where differentiation, heterogeneity and complexity exists, what holds the society together?*' He attempted an explanation of it in his *Division of Labour in Society, 1893*, as a part of his doctoral thesis, which, according to Tiryakian, is now regarded as the first classic of Sociology. It was written at a time when there was a widespread feeling of moral crisis in France and Durkheim wanted to find a solution to it in the form of bringing the social order back in shape. While Marx was pessimistic about the division of labour, Durkheim was cautiously optimistic. Through this work, he also rejected the view of Comte that high division of labour is the cause of disorder in the French society. He also rejected the view of earlier economists and philosophers, especially Hedonists and Utilitarianists and argued that division of labour is not based upon individual's interest, pleasure or utility. In the wake of the social upheaval, he explained that morality in society has not come down, but it has been replaced by a *new morality*.

Since division of labour is a social phenomenon, according to Durkheim, its causes must also be social. Division of labour is splitting of activities in a number of parts or smaller processes, undertaken by different persons or groups. It implies specialisation within particular activities or occupations. Occupational differentiation is symbolic of division of labour. Durkheim considered division of labour as a social phenomenon and rejected all classical and neo-classical economic explanations of division of labour. Earlier explanations understood it in terms of increasing productivity and hence, profit. Durkheim argued that division of labour exists not only in economic activities, but in all spheres of life. For example, even at home, there is a domestic division of labour. Therefore, it is a social phenomenon.

According to Durkheim, division of labour is a social fact and is a product of autonomous development of society and is *sui-generis*. He developed causal functional explanations of division of labour in order to prove that it as a social fact.

To explain the cause of division of labour, he employed an evolutionary perspective. He observed that in primitive societies, division of labour was very low and in modern societies it was very high. According to him, in primitive societies, the actions of individual are controlled by the *norms* and *values* of society or the *collective conscience* of society. But in modern society, the control of norms and values has weakened and strength of *collective* conscience is weak.

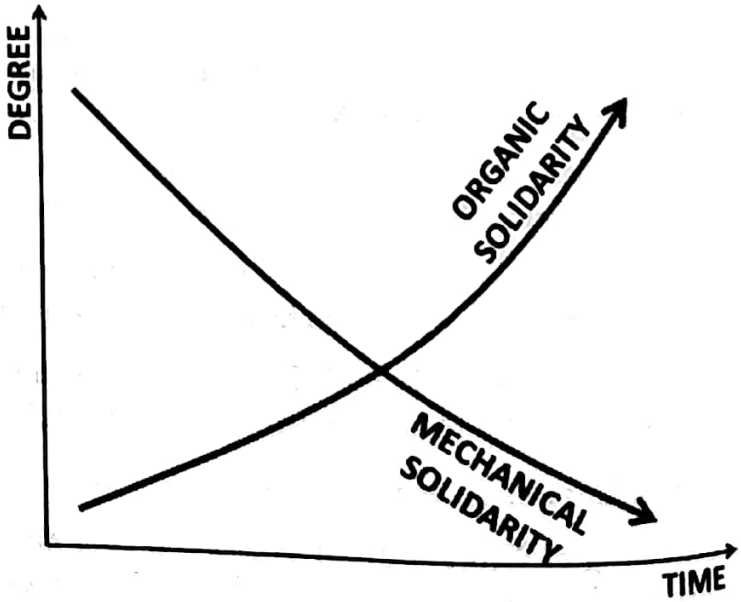

Fig. 4.6 Division of Labour and Solidarity

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Primitive society is segmentary in nature, where people used to live in independent segments. Life is simple and all the individuals perform similar activities. *Collective conscience* is very strong in such a society. Durkheim calls this state as *Mechanical Solidarity*, i.e., solidarity due to likeness or sameness. Such societies are very religious with very few specialisations and people live together. Finally, laws in such societies are repressive and conformity to the social norms is a must and there is minimum deviation. Population is also very low, i.e., *material density* is low. Further, interaction between segments of population is also low, i.e., *moral density* is also low.

Durkheim believed that the cause of the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity was the *dynamic density* which refers to combination of the number of people in a society or material density and the amount of interaction that occurs among them, i.e., *moral density*. With time, population increases, resulting into an increase in the material density. This leads to increased chances of interaction. Durkheim calls it an increase in moral density. A situation exists when there is a high degree of interaction between different segments. People from different segments now have an access to activities prevailing in other segments. It results into a competition or a struggle for the existing occupations. And the fittest survives in an existing occupation while the unfit creates new occupations and specialisations. Thus, the problems associated with dynamic density are resolved through differentiation. It initiates a never ending process of division of labour and emergence of an organic solidarity based society.

Mechanical Solidarity based Society	Organic Solidarity based Society
Differentiation in such a society is very low and is primarily based on age and sex.	There is complex differentiation in such society.
Division of functions is simple.	Division of functions is complex and there is a great degree of interdependence.
All members are alike and have great collective conscience.	Members become differentiated and interdependent.
It has repressive laws to ensure conformity to the will of community.	Laws are reformative.
Mechanical solidarity is prevalent in the entire society.	Organic solidarity is there among particular groups which are interdependent.

Durkheim also envisages division of labour as functional and enumerates its various functions. First of all, the increased division of labour makes for greater efficiency, with the result that resources increase, making the competition over them more peaceful. Society is now based upon heterogeneity of relationships. In modern societies, collective conscience is weak and hence, the binding force is also weak. Supreme value is attached to the individual. Durkheim calls such a society as being based upon *Organic Solidarity*, i.e., solidarity based on differences and dependency. With the increase of the volume of population, material and moral density also increase. Division of labour is a peaceful solution to the needs created by the increase of population, in size and density. In the absence of strong collective conscience, it integrates modern societies. The society is secular, laws are reformative and restitutive. In this context, he explains following functions of division of labour –

I. *Integration of society* – Division of labour is the basis of organic character of the society in which people are different, but still live together because of functional inter-dependence upon each

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other. The social life has become highly complex and existence of an individual is not possible without an indirect association with the others. Although at conscious level, an individual may feel independent, but at unconscious level, he is dependent upon many people.

II. *Individual autonomy for the individual* – According to Durkheim, modern society is based upon mass production of goods and services. Needs of people are increasing and lead to further specialisation. Individuals are now relatively free and hence, have better freedom to innovate. Thus, division of labour grants autonomy to individual.

Durkheim finally states that, *Individual, while becomes autonomous, comes to depend more heavily on society.* Division of labour fulfils dual needs of both, individual autonomy and integration of society.

As social facts can have abnormal forms also, division of labour also has certain abnormal forms as it is also a social fact. Study of abnormal states is necessary to get a better understanding of the normal state also. There are primarily three abnormal forms of division of labour –

I. *Anomic division of labour* – Anomie is a state of normlessness in a situation, in which, people in general don't follow norms attached to their activities. Unchecked division of labour and rapid expansion of industrial activity leads to anomie as social controls are weak. In such a situation, division of labour generates unhealthy competition and becomes dysfunctional. It generally happens during transition phases, for example, from shift of mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, as Durkheim noted towards the end of 19th Century. Durkheim notes that '*The scale is upset, but a new scale cannot be immediately improvised.*' When economic pace is too fast and moral regulation is unable to keep pace with increasing differentiation, it leads to anomic pathological state of division of labour. Durkheim argued that the customary limits to what people want and expect from life are disrupted in times of rapid change. According to Durkheim, desires can be satisfied only when they are limited. In an industrial society, desires become unlimited and traditional ceiling on them disintegrates, leading to anomie. A new moral consensus on what men can reasonably expect from life is required. Not only rapid change, but the specialised division of labour itself also produces anomie as it promotes self-interest and individualism, which is a threat to social unity. Symptoms of anomie are reflected in high rates of suicide, marital breakup and industrial conflict, as desires become limitless.

   While Marx provided a radical solution to the problem of alienation, Durkheim said that its solution can be found in the existing framework of the society. Self-interest should be replaced by a code of ethics which emphasises the need of the society as a whole. Occupational associations can play an important role in this by acting as agents of moral regulation. He saw in professional associations, many features which were lacking in business and commerce.

II. *Inadequate organisation or poorly coordinated division of labour* – If work is not organised properly, it creates imbalances and generates conflicts. In this abnormal form, the very purpose of division of labour is destroyed. Work is not well organised and coordinated. Workers are often engaged in doing meaningless tasks. There is no unity of action. Thus, solidarity breaks down and results in a disorder.

III. *Forced division of labour* – For division of labour to generate solidarity, it is not only sufficient that each individual has a specialised task, it is still necessary that this task is appropriate for him.

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Forced division of labour is a result of those structural conditions, in which, the distribution of tasks is not in correspondence with the distribution of talent and will. Such division of labour is based on inequality of opportunity, according to Durkheim, and fails to produce long-lasting solidarity. Such an abnormal form results in individuals becoming frustrated and unhappy with their society. Thus, tensions, rivalries and antagonism are the results.

Abnormal division of labour also explains why there was a situation of chaos in Europe at that time, despite his claim that division of labour brings integrity in society. According to Durkheim, division of labour must be kept in a normal state and there must be some mechanism to take care of abnormal forms. Durkheim gives a conception of a socialist state, in which division of labour will be kept in a normal state by a large number of occupational associations, which will implement the ethical code corresponding to their own occupation. This will also help in organising the work properly. But, unlike Marx who suggested a radical solution to overcome alienation, Durkheim believed that solution can be provided within the existing framework of society. Self-interest which dominates business and commerce should be replaced by a code of ethics which emphasises the needs of society as a whole.

His theory of division of labour is criticised for being a top-down theory which puts interests of individual secondary to the will of society. Individuals also have a significant choice over the type of occupation they want to go for. He also underplays economic factors which have assumed great importance in today's globalised work and neo-liberals would even argue that economics, and not the integrative need of society, plays a larger role in deciding the patterns of division of labour in society.

Division of Labour		
	Durkheim	**Marx**
Basic approach	Functional.	Conflict.
Causes of division of labour	Both, Durkheim and Marx make a very clear distinction between division of labour in simple societies and complex industrial societies and acknowledged that division of labour is inevitable.	
	Durkheim explains division of labour in industrial societies as a consequence of increased material and moral density. Specialisation makes it possible for harmonious coexistence.	Marx does not see it as a means of cooperation and coexistence. He views it as a process forced upon workers in order to let the capitalist extract profit.
Nature of division of labour	Durkheim sees Division of Labour as functional and leading to cooperation.	Marx sees division of labour as *unequal relationship* which legitimises the relationship between *the haves* and *the have nots*.
Consequence of division of labour	It leads to integration in society.	It leads to dehumanisation of workers and alienation in industrial society.
Solution to the problems related to division of labour	Anomie is abnormal and according to Durkheim, can be handled by making workers conscious of their role in society. By making them feel organically linked and involved with the life of society.	According to Marx, capitalism itself is the problem. Problems of alienation can be ended through revolution.

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Suicide

Durkheim's work on suicide was the first serious effort to establish empiricism in Sociology. In his theory of suicide, Durkheim attempts to examine a seemingly personal phenomenon in a sociological way. He exhibited the use of scientific methodology in Sociology for the first time and showed that *real laws are discoverable* in Sociology as well. His study of suicide is often taken as a starting point of research methodology in Sociology, as it is based on data which can be directly observed and measured. This theory is well known for the pragmatic approach of Durkheim in understanding social problems.

Durkheim in his *Le Suicide, 1897* defines suicide as '*Suicide is any case of death, caused by directly or indirectly, positive or negative action of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.*' Positive actions are those actions taken by the individual to end one's life, for example, consuming poison. Negative actions are in form of inaction which causes death, for example, starvation and remaining inside a burning house. Indirect causes are those when a person has no intention of dying, though he knows that he may die, as in case of army persons, fire fighters, etc.

As a Sociologist, Durkheim was not concerned with studying why any specific individual committed suicide, instead, he was interested in explaining differences in *suicide rates* among different groups.

For the purpose of theory building, he took data from police records from various regions of Europe at different time periods. With the help of this data, he established that suicide is a social phenomenon and not an individual phenomenon. He also reviewed the existing literature on suicide and rejected the existing explanations which linked suicide to factors like imitation, stress and modernity. He gave the following arguments in his support –

I. Firstly, he proved that suicide cannot be explained through psychological, geographical, climatic, hereditary factors, etc. and hence, rejected existing explanations. He used data to show that there were no positive correlation between the rate of suicide and different non-social factors like temperature, insanity, race and alcoholism.

II. He explains sociological causes of suicide by correlating suicide rates with various social factors.

III. He proved that certain rate of suicide is normal in society with the help of statistical data.

Analysing the data from different countries, races, etc. he concluded that the factors like race, hereditary and climate do not produce consistent explanations. For example, if temperature were a cause, then warmer countries or for that matter colder countries were expected to have a differential rate of suicide. Similarly, if mental illness were a cause, then there has to be some relation of suicide rates with illness incidences, but such causal relation cannot be established and the rate of suicide was found fairly consistent in different countries over a period of time.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

It is an important contribution of Durkheim to sociological methods in research. Durkheim wanted to overcome the problem of spurious correlations in the sociological research. In this approach, Durkheim analysed the impact of multiple independent variables (like gender, age and religions) on a dependent variable (like suicide). Effect of a particular independent variable can be assessed when other variables are kept constant. This exercise can be repeated for the other variables as well and this will finally lead to assessment of effect of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable. This can substantially help in proving correlations as indicators of true causations.

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He, therefore, explored causes of suicide in other social causes by using statistical techniques and found concomitant relation between suicide rate and different social variables attached to the people who committed suicide. Different *social variables* that were taken by Durkheim were – marital status, locality, i.e., rural or urban, developed or under-developed, religious orientation, i.e., Protestant or Catholic, Jews or Christians and sex, i.e., male or female. He undertook the multivariate analysis to establish the relationship between rates of suicides and social factors. After a detailed research, he concluded that –

I. Males have greater suicidal tendency as compared to females.
II. Rate of suicide is found more among the bachelors as marriage protects individuals against suicide by integrating individuals into stable social relations.
III. Underdeveloped countries have less rate of suicide than developed countries.
IV. On the basis of religion, Protestants commit more suicide than Catholics. Durkheim reasoned that since Protestant religion gives its members more freedom of interpretation of religion and free inquiry, they are less integrated to Church than Catholics.
V. Some categories of people who are men, Christians and unmarried, commit more suicide than women, Jews and married group.

In each of the above cases, he contended that those who have a higher tendency of committing suicide are less integrated to society in one way or the other. On the basis of above causal relationship between social variables and suicide rate, Durkheim concluded that suicide is a social phenomenon. According to him, though individual may have some psychological pre-disposition, but it is the impact of suicidogenic impulses which lead to actual suicide. On the basis of his analysis, he identified two types of bonds that integrate individual into the society –

I. *Forces of integration* – These result into two types of suicide associated with two states of integration – *over-integration* and *low integration.*
   a. *Altruistic suicide* – It results from over-integration of an individual. It is characteristic of traditional societies with a high degree of mechanical solidarity. He quoted various examples also. Acts like Sati in India, soldiers in war and Japanese kamikaze pilots are acts of altruistic suicide. Recent terrorist attack of 9/11 also qualifies in this category as the terrorists deliberately rammed the airplanes into the Twin Trade Towers.
   b. *Egoistic suicide* – In this case, suicide is the result of low integration of individuals in society. Social bonds are feeble and individual feels alienated and they feel that they are not a part of society, and this also means that society is not a part of the individual as well. Examples of egoistic suicide are suicide resulting from failure, success and depression. Societies which have such values that bind individuals strongly have fewer incidences of egoistic suicides. According to Durkheim, Protestant Christians have higher rates of egoistic suicides than Catholics as Protestantism gives more freedom to individual. Low rates of suicides during the time of war reflect that individuals are more integrated in the wake of external threat. According to Durkheim, whereas higher rates of egoistic suicide stem from *incurable weariness and sad depression*, the increased likelihood of altruistic suicide *springs from hope, for it depends on the belief in beautiful perspectives beyond this life.*

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II. *Forces of Regulation* – It implies control of individual by the society. There can be further two types of suicide in society – due to over-regulation and under-regulation.

a. *Anomic suicide* – When the social regulation disappears, people fail to follow the norms and values. Anomie is the result of sudden changes leading to the situations of *desperation* or *dejection*. Social regulation over individuals disappears. Such loose regulations generally occur in situation of economic boom or bust and as a result, individual's desires either become limitless or confused, leading to state of anomie and anomic suicides. Periods of disruption unleash currents of anomie like moods of rootlessness and normlessness and these currents lead to an increase in rates of anomic suicide. Anomic suicide is further classified as – *acute economic*, when there is sporadic decrease in ability of traditional institutions to regulate and fulfill social needs; *chronic economic*, when there is an abolition of social regulation, but failure to replace them with new ones; *acute domestic* and *chronic domestic* are other subtypes. However, likes of Merton argue that anomic condition occur when there is a disjunction between structural goals and the means that are available to achieve those goals.

b. *Fatalistic suicide* – These are the results of excessive control of society over an individual, an act of over-regulation. Oppression of individual leads to suffocation and powerlessness. According to Durkheim – '*Persons with futures, pitilessly blocked and passions, violently choked*

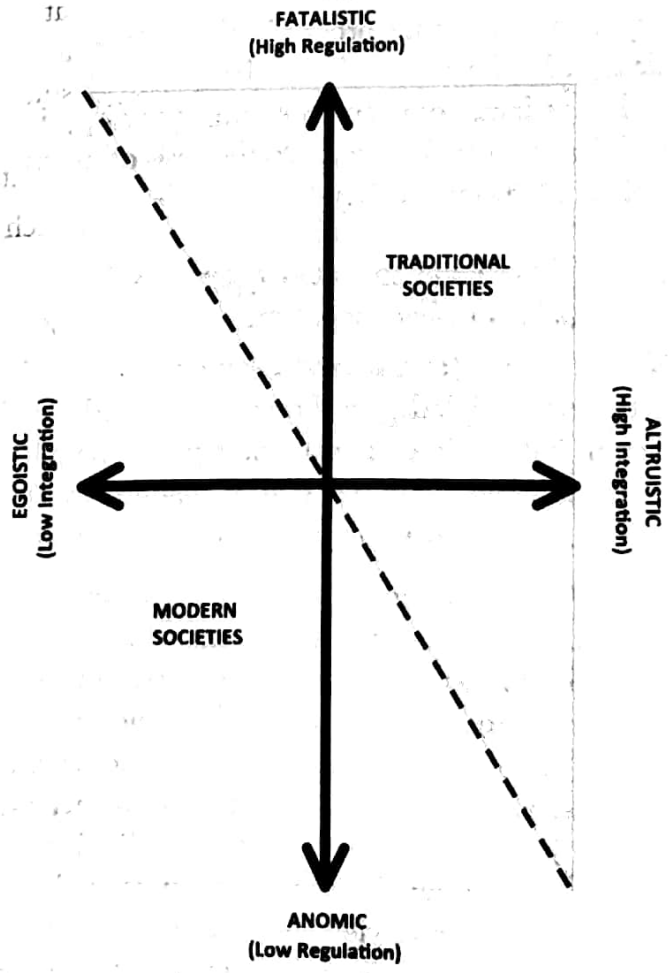

Fig. 4.7 Types of Suicide according to Durkheim

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by oppressive discipline' are more likely to commit such suicides. The classic example is the slave who takes his own life because of the hopelessness associated with the oppressive regulation of every action of his. Such suicides are rare in modern societies.

Thus, according to Durkheim, a particular case of suicide can be a case of problems of integration or regulation. In traditional societies, altruistic and fatalistic suicides were more prevalent as individual was over-regulated and over-integrated. So, suicide is a result of suicidogenic forces, comprising of varying state of integration and regulation in society. These forces are conceptualised in the form of social currents in society. If an individual comes under the influence of these currents, he has a tendency to commit suicide.

Finally, Durkheim acknowledges that there may be a secondary role of psychological factors too, but the real cause of suicide is social. He concludes that rates of suicide are fairly consistent in different societies, making it a social phenomenon, linked with the nature of a particular society. A particular rate is normal in society as it highlights the problem of integration and regulation.

Once suicide is committed, the whole society works to reinforce appropriate levels of integration and regulation. If suicide rate increases beyond a certain limit, it becomes pathological or abnormal.

Despite its claim of empiricism, his theory of suicide is criticised on the following grounds –

I. J M Atkinson in his *Discovering Suicide, 1978* contends that quality of statistics used by Durkheim is questionable. For example, there is an evidence to suggest that religious censure of suicide is more in Catholics than among Protestants. As a result, Catholics may go to a great length in disguising suicides. Similarly, higher rates of suicide in some countries over others may be due to different methods of investigations used in different countries.

II. His data has poor reliability as it is taken from police stations which do not include unreported suicides. He also didn't include *attempted suicides.*

III. David Freedman, in his *The Ecological Fallacy, 2002,* accused him of committing ecological fallacy as he tried to generalise an apparent personal phenomenon.

Religion and Society

Like his other theoretical propositions, Durkheim's theory of religion was also a result of his concerns for social order and integration in society. He evolved a functional explanation for the existence of religion in the world and observed its existence as a social fact and not as a supernatural phenomenon. This theory was also partly in reaction to the existing explanations of religion, which Durkheim deemed as *non-sociological* explanation especially that of Tylor's animistic theory based on supernatural and of Max Muller based on nature-myth.

He dwells upon idea of religion in his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1912,* and he defines religion as *'A unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say – things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices, which unite them into a single moral community, for all those who adhere to them.'* According to Durkheim, beliefs are system of ideas which explain the sacred, they constitute of myths, spiritual ideas, ethical code, etc. Practices are rites or rituals explaining individual's behaviour towards the sacred. There are two types of such rites, positive and negative. Positive rites bring individual

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and sacred together and are easier to perform, for example, worship. Negative rites help in maintaining the distance between the two and keep them separated, for example, fasting and sacrifice. These are difficult to perform.

His concept of religion is based on his systematic view of society. According to him, society consists of two parts – the sacred and the profane. According to him, this process of dividing the world into the sacred and the profane started with the totems. *The sacred,* are the things which are set apart and are forbidden. Sacred refers to all the things which are connected to the supernatural or the divine. A relationship of distance and fear is maintained with respect to these things. *Profane* are the things apart from the sacred. It includes all the day-to-day things which people use in their lives. Sacred and profane are two worlds apart and both are mutually exclusive.

Durkheim also gave a causal explanation of religion by using the method of *indirect experimentation.* Modern religion is complex and full of variations, so, establishing a causal linkage is difficult. But at the same time, the simple forms of religion exist and if the cause of such simpler forms is established; the same will apply to the modern religions also.

Durkheim conducted an experiment on simplest form of religion, i.e., totemism, in which totems are worshipped. Durkheim argued that the totem is nothing but the representation of the clan itself. He drew this analysis from the study of religious practices among *Arunta,* the Australian aboriginals. If the cause of totem is established, the same will be the cause of modern religion.

Primitive men were wanderers and they kept on moving from one place to another. Occasionally, when they came together for some purpose (for clan festivals, etc.) and interacted on such occasions, they felt different. This feeling disappeared, once they separated. Individuals, who experienced the heightened energy of social force in a gathering of the clan, sought some explanation for this state. According to primitive logic, they explained this feeling in terms of presence of some supernatural force. But, according to Durkheim, the gathering itself was the real cause and it was a showcase of social forces. Durkheim calls this feeling as the *state of exultation* or *collective effervescence*, i.e., the heightened feeling of energy generated in collective gatherings. It takes individuals away from the concerns of profane social life to an elevated sphere, in which they feel as if they are in contact with higher forces. These higher forces are deemed as divine or supernatural and attributed to certain *totems* by the primitive tribes. Once they break the gathering and are separated, they feel lonely and sad. Sometimes, they again feel the need to re-experience that feeling. Primitive people create a *totem* to represent and regain that feeling. When people assemble near the totem, they relive that feeling again. They fail to explain this phenomenon and by their primitive logic, they give it a *sacred* status. The clan member mistakenly attributes the energy he or she feels to the symbols of the clan. The totems are the material representations of the nonmaterial force that is at their base, and that nonmaterial force is none other than the society itself. This feeling, which was due to the feeling of being together was, instead, interpreted as the sacred.

According to Durkheim, there is nothing particular about totems which make them sacred and totems or sacred things must represent something. So, totem is a symbol of collectivity or the symbol of society itself as it represents those social forces which are felt by individuals at the social gatherings. As society evolves, religion also evolves. He states that – '*If it is at once symbol of God and society, is it not because God and society are one and same?*' Ultimately, he suggests that we worship society and religion

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is an example of self-creation and autonomous development of society. Religious experiences are real experiences of social forces, forces that unite us.

Social obligations are represented in sacred terms and hence, transformed into religious duties. For example, marriage becomes a sacrament, to work becomes a symbol of pleasing of gods, and death in a battle becomes a gateway to heaven.

One may ask, why does man worship totems or sacred things and why not the society itself? According to Durkheim, it is easier for man to visualise and direct his feelings of awe towards a symbol like totem and idol rather than towards a complex metaphysical thing like a society. This Durkheimian logic also explains idol worship in many religions like Hinduism.

Like his other functional theories, he sees religion in functional terms as well. He sees religion also as a social fact. He rejected the earlier philosophical and psychological explanations and averred that it is a product of self-creation and autonomous development of society like other social facts. All the people following a particular religion follow specific beliefs and practices. These are also in nature of moral codes, which each member follows. This binds them into a single community and integrates them together and they feel comfortable living together. He further explains the functions through his idea of similarity. Religion becomes basis for similarity and thus, brings people together. In modern societies, which are highly individualised and differentiated, religion performs the function of bringing people together.

His theory of religion is significant because it demonstrates that any subject can be approached from a sociological perspective. He demystified the subject of religion and encouraged its empirical study.

Durkheim's theory of religion was criticised on the following grounds –

I. The dichotomy of profane and sacred is not absolute and there can be things, also as per William Edward Stanner, which are mundane.
II. Durkheim also did not explain why a particular totem is chosen. Even a tribe may have more than one totem. Radcliffe Brown, in his study of New South Wales, discovered that there can be multiple totems within a tribe as well, based on individuals, gender, clan, etc.
III. His theory is termed as an armchair theory by Malinowski as he didn't visit the Arunta tribe even once.
IV. Empirical base of his theory was very narrow. Generalisation of a primitive religion to modern sophisticated religions is a bit farfetched.
V. According to Edmund Leach, profanity and sacred are two extremes, all social actions fall in between.
VI. Scholars argue that it is not religion, but secularism which is binding the societies together in modern industrialised societies and his ideas are applicable only to simple societies.
VII. His theory fails to explain the cause of solidarity in multicultural polytheistic societies like India.
VIII. Durkheim ignored the conflict caused by religion and focused only on its functional aspects.

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	Weber	Durkheim
Basic approach	Weber focused on meanings that individual generates.	Durkheim stresses the exteriority of social facts, which he regards as *things*.
Basic view of society	Individuals are *actors* in society.	Society is *sui-generis*.
Unit of analysis	Weber studied the major features of the great religions of the world.	Emile Durkheim studied religion in what he believes, is its most elementary form. He generalised it.
Role of religion	He saw religion as a force behind new ways of thinking – Protestants lead to rise of capitalism, Buddhism in India opposed caste system, Judaism was the religion of the oppressed Palestinian peasantry.	Durkheim emphasised the role of religion as a collective phenomenon which serves to strengthen social bonds.
	Weber saw religion as part and parcel of a larger historical trend, namely, the move towards capitalism, industrialisation and rationality.	Durkheim viewed religion as the reflection of society itself.
Supernatural	Weber did not hesitate to use the idea of gods and spirits. Weber, unlike Durkheim, attaches great importance to prophets in propagating religious beliefs.	Durkheim denied that religion is concerned with the mysterious, with gods and spirits. He called religion as society itself.
Science and religion	Weber's comparative studies showed that how religions across the world advocate values that differ and are sometimes in opposition to rationality. Science, on the other hand, is empirical. So, he sees an opposition between the two.	Durkheim viewed both religion and science as providing society with its collective representations. So, he didn't see any conflict in the two.

Durkheim gave the much needed subject matter to the nascent discipline. He, hence, defined its scope as a study of social facts. His theories and vocabulary are still indisputably termed as being distinctively sociological. His concepts of religion, suicide and anomie are even used in inter-disciplinary studies as well. His contribution to perspectives in Sociology is also immense as he was one of the early founders of structural functionalist perspective.

His relevance lies in his approach towards establishing social order in society. His concepts like division of labour are used in understanding even the global division of labour. His pragmatic understanding of crime and suicide has helped social thinkers to understand them in a broader social context, rather than just in terms of individualistic manner. It has helped in understanding the social dimension of individual's problem. We have also got insights how individuals, while becoming more free, are becoming more dependent on society.

Max Weber – Social Action, Ideal Types, Authority, Bureaucracy, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

Max Weber, like Durkheim and Marx, was one of the pioneers of the discipline of Sociology and was one of the early founders of the Interpretivist approach. Like Durkheim, he addressed the problem

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of scope and nature of the discipline and he also established the first department of Sociology in Germany. Sometimes, he is also referred to as the father of modern sociological thought. He pioneered a new approach to study the society which, later, came to be known as the *interpretative* approach. This approach put the individual and the way the individuals think, in the centre of analysis of society. Instead of focusing on society at the grand level, as the functionalists like Durkheim did, he advocated to maintain focus on micro level on the individual and his or her actions only.



Fig. 4.8 Max Weber

He is also considered to have bridged the gap between Positivism and Idealism. Sticking to Positivism, he favoured the use of Scientific Method in Sociology for the purpose of achieving objectivity and on the other hand, drawing from idealists like *Neo-Kantians*, he developed the scope of Sociology as *the meaning attached by the actors to their actions.* He opposed pure abstract theorising. Instead, his theoretical ideas are embedded in his empirical, usually historical, research. According to him, the behaviour of a man in society is qualitatively different from physical objects in the natural world and organisms in the biological world. In his book, *Methodologies of Social Sciences*, written during the first decade of the 20th Century, he defined Sociology as – '*Sociology is a science which attempts Interpretivist understanding of social action, in order thereby, to arrive at an explanation of its cause and effect.*'

Social Action

While Durkheim defined the scope of Sociology in terms of social facts, Weber used *social action* and *Ideal Types* as the basis of his theoretical framework. According to Weber, subject matter of Sociology is to study *social action* which he defined as – '*Any action is social by the virtue of the meanings attached to it by the actors, it takes into account the behaviour of others and is thereby, oriented in its course.*' In this definition, Weber mentions two conditions for any action to become social –

I. Action is social if some *meaning is attached to it* by the actor, i.e., actor must be conscious of his or her action. The meanings are in the form of *motivation* of an individual, which is his *own subjective state.* Weber rejected the independent influence of *values* on individual, rather the values are interpreted by the actor, according to his or her motivation and according to that, an action is taken.

II. Action is social if it is oriented to some other, i.e., only those actions are social which are taken in *orientation to some other object.* The orientation can be physical or mental, i.e., the other person may or may not be present in a social action. Weber also differentiated between *action* and *behaviour.* Behaviour is a biological concept and is spontaneous in nature with no attachment of meaning.

He also excluded *imitative actions* and *mass conditioned actions* from his definition as they are not oriented to some other object and no conscious meaning is attached to them. According to him, the establishment of *cause and effect* should be the aim of Sociology. Understanding the meanings attached by the actors to their actions can help us to establish *cause and effect* relationship.

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But how to establish the meanings? He suggested some methods for it, like –

I. *Verstehen* – This method literally means *comprehending or understanding* at the level of the actor. It is one of the tools for interpretative understanding. This method was the cornerstone of the interpretive Sociology and most of Weber's work lies on the foundation of this method. It involves, the comprehension of the meaning by using simple steps of investigation, which include –

   a. Investigator should reconstruct the situational choices and constraints of the actor. It involves developing the description of an actor by using secondary resources.

   b. The investigator should be at the same wavelength as that of the actor. It involves developing communication abilities which help the investigator to effectively interact with the actor. For example, medium of instruction and mode are some factors to take into account.

   c. The investigator should not have any sympathy with the actor or the situation, i.e., there should be indifference and interest should be confined to establishment of meanings alone. This will help in ensuring objectivity in the analysis.

   d. Finally, the investigator can enter into a conversation with the actor and use primary sources of data collection to establish meanings.

   In this way, by using some systematic and scientific approach, Weber maximises the probability of establishing meaning. He discusses two types of understandings which can be used to decipher the meanings –

   a. Direct observation understanding, i.e., what the investigator observes.

   b. Explanatory understanding, i.e., in which, the investigator draws meanings by explaining the situational constraints and meanings.

II. *Causal Pluralist Methods* – Weber rejected the mono-causal explanations, and stressed that the causes can be multiple or plural. This approach is also termed as *probabilistic approach*. He favoured identification of probable factors, rather than emphasising upon the singularity of the causes.

III. *Ideal Type* – Verstehen cannot be used alone and should be used with other methods like Ideal Type. Ideal Type is a mental construct which is used to identify certain regularities in social life. It doesn't deal with the notion of perfection, but, commonly understood meanings in terms of regularities. Ideal Types are used to further understand the meanings attached by the actors. This is the second most important concept in Weberian understanding of the sociological works. At the highest level of abstraction, he developed four Ideal Types of his basic unit of analysis, i.e., of social action. Four Ideal Types of social actions are –

   a. *Traditional Social Action* – It is that type of social action in which meanings are drawn from certain *beliefs* and *traditions*. It involves least conscious thinking over action. Examples can be religious actions.

   b. *Affective Social Action* – In this case, the meanings are generated due to emotions of an actor. It involves orientation of emotions like love, hatred, anger and fear. Here, consciousness is

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relatively higher than traditional action. Example of such action is a mother slapping her child out of anger.

c. *Zweckrational Social Action* – Such actions are also called *end/goal-rational* actions. In this type, action is carried out by taking into consideration the means and goals/ends. Hence, action is more logical as ends are logically defined. Here, cause and effect relations are established in actions which will finally help in achieving the goals. It is the most conscious action. Example can be of scientific research.

d. *Wertrational Social Action* – It is also called *value oriented rational actions.* In this, the goal is defined by the values of the society and the actor takes logical action in order to fulfil that goal. Such actions are galore in traditional societies like India, which have strong belief systems. Its example is soldiers going to save the country.

Any actual action can be compared with these Ideal Types of actions and meanings can be attached. A particular action may contain a combination of elements of from various Ideal Types. His work on Ideal Types is significant because, Ideal Type methodology provides investigator with ready models and hence, saves time of the investigator.

Thus, Weber acknowledges the existence of *regularities* in societies, but unlike Durkheim, he insists that these regularities exist in the mind of the individuals. The expression of these regularities is visible in terms of the actions on the basis of *subjective interpretation* of these regularities.

His idea of social action and other methods and approaches are generally criticised on following grounds –

I. According to Hans Gerth and C Wright Mills, although Weber implied that he had a great concern with mental processes, he actually spent little time on them.

II. He laid greater stress on individual meanings and ignores influence of social structure in the understanding the reality.

III. His claim of objectivity is also not true. His methods of Verstehen and Ideal Types are highly susceptible to subjectivity of the investigator.

IV. His idea of social action has focus on individual and collective action is ignored.

V. Weber also ignores unintended meanings and consequences of social action. Merton highlights such consequences in terms of latent functions.

VI. His definition of social action is also handicapped by inclusion of *orientation towards others.* Parsons expanded the meaning of social action by including situational choices, constraints and aspiration of the actor as well.

Ideal Types

Weber believed that it was the responsibility of the sociologists to develop conceptual tools, which could be used later by historians and sociologists and one such conceptual tool was *Ideal Types* which he defined as – *'An Ideal Type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete*

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individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasised viewpoints, into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct, cannot be found empirically anywhere, in reality.' In Weber's view, Ideal Type was to be derived inductively from the real world of social history and not deductively or from personal judgments alone.

According to Weber, *Ideal Types* is a type of objective methodology to study social action. The concept is not new per se, for example, Durkheim's types of suicides are Ideal Types of suicide. According to him, Ideal Types are *abstractions* or *pure types* (not *most desirable* or *perfect*), constructed through emphasising on certain traits of a given social item, which are employed in order to understand the complexities of the social world. It constitutes various *elements* which, though, are abstract, but can be later recombined and reconstituted to understand a particular reality. The highest level of abstraction is in the form of Ideal Types of social action itself.

According to Lachman, Ideal Types are significant because they act as a *measuring rod* for the investigator to understand the actual phenomenon. They are heuristic devices. They are useful in doing empirical research and in understanding a specific aspect of the social world. According to Weber, Ideal Type is not a reality in itself, but a way to express the reality. The individual elements may be meaningless, but when combined with other elements, they form the reality. Ideal Types act as fixed point of reference. According to Weber himself – '*Its function is the comparison with empirical reality, in order to establish its divergences or similarities, to describe them with the most unambiguously intelligible concepts, and to understand and explain them causally.*' Ideal Type is not a conception of perfect or desirable, but it is a pure or typical form of certain phenomenon.

Although Ideal Types are to be derived from the real world, they are not to be mirror images of that world. Rather, they are to be one-sided exaggerations (based on the researcher's interests) of the essence of what goes on in the real world.

Need for building an Ideal Type arises from the nature of social reality itself as it is complex to comprehend. One can know the reality in parts, and not whole at a time. To understand each part, features of that part must be understood separately. In this process, some critical features have to be given more importance over the others. Construction of Ideal Type depends upon the inquiry and the features may vary.

Formulation of Ideal Types – Ideal Types are formed by a number of elements which, though, found in reality, may or may not be discovered in their specific form. These elements must be found by trained investigator in the form of abstractions drawn from subjective meanings of the individual. Investigator must be capable of looking at the phenomenon from the eyes of an individual actor. These elements are thus, based upon interpretation of investigator, but are definitive specific traits which constitute the reality.

Weber used Ideal Types extensively in his works like *Economic and Social Organization, The City* and *Sociology of Religion*. Ideal Types developed by Weber are grouped into many categories –

I. *Ideal Types of Historical Particulars* – These are Ideal Types of particular historical phenomena like some ancient city, protestant ethics and capitalism.
II. *Ideal Types of Abstract Phenomena in Social Reality* – It involves developing an abstract phenomena like social action and authority which can be used to understand a social phenomenon.

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III. *Ideal Types of Particular Behaviour* – He also developed Ideal Types of particular behaviours like economic or political behaviour.

IV. *Structural Ideal Types* – These are forms taken by the causes and consequences of social action. For example, traditional domination.

In line with Weber's efforts to find a middle ground between nomothetic (general) and idiographic (specific) knowledge, he argued that Ideal Types should be neither too general nor too specific. For example, in the case of religion, he would reject Ideal Types of the history of religion in general, but he would also be critical of Ideal Types of very specific phenomena, such as an individual's religious experience. Rather, Ideal Types are developed for intermediate phenomena such as Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and Baptism.

Ideal Types are also not developed once and for all. Because society is constantly changing, and the interests of social scientists as well, it is necessary to develop new typologies to fit the changing reality.

Ideal Types perform various functions for the researcher. First of all, they act as a measuring rod for a social process. Secondly, they act as a ready reference and save the researcher from the hassles of studying a phenomenon afresh. For example, Ideal Type of capitalism can be used as a ready reference for a host of commercial activities of the 17th Century. Thirdly, it makes prediction possible. Situations which approximate an Ideal Type will have a similar outcome. Ideal Type of bureaucracy has made it possible for sociologists to predict many of its consequences in organisations. Fourthly, it also helps in establishing linkages between multiple social phenomena, as demonstrated by Weber in his Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism.

However, this heuristic device of Weber is criticised for the following reasons –

I. Weber has not suggested any specific method to identify elements of Ideal Type and it is totally left on investigator.
II. Despite his claim of objectivity, Ideal Type is highly susceptible to subjectivity of investigator, especially in selection of elements of Ideal Type.

Authority

Weber's conception of authority is a demonstration of his concept of Ideal Type in action. According to him, both power and authority are social in character and come into play where relations are there. He links the concept of power and authority by using different Ideal Types. Power is defined by Weber as *The chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action, even against the resistance of those who are participating in the communal action.*

Authority, according to Weber, is a form of legitimate power, i.e., power which is considered legitimate in society. Weber identifies three sources of legitimacy – tradition, rationality and affective or charisma and on the basis of these, he developed three *pure types* or Ideal Types of authority.

Like all other concepts, concept of authority is also developed by Weber as an Ideal Type. According to him, coercion differentiates power from authority. Power has an element of coercion in it. Power is the capability of individuals to influence others irrespective of their will.

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According to Weber, there are three elements of authority or three Ideal Types of authority, which are based upon his conception of various types of social action –

I. *Traditional Authority* – It is that type of authority which stems out from *traditional social actions*, i.e., authority based upon beliefs, customs and values. An example would be a leader who comes to power because his or her family or clan has always provided the group's leadership. For example, authority exercised by a hereditary monarch, a feudal lord, a caste Brahmin. In developing countries like India, even political leadership often exercises traditional authority as top positions in parties are occupied by members of the same family. Weber also used his Ideal-type methodology to analyse historically, the different forms of traditional authority. He differentiated between two very early forms of traditional authority. A *gerontocracy* involves rule by elders, whereas primary *patriarchalism* involves leaders, who inherit their positions. Still more modern form is *feudalism*. Weber saw structures of traditional authority, in any form, as barriers to the development of rationality. Weber argued that the structures and practices of traditional authority constitute a barrier to the rise of rational economic structures, in particular, capitalism – as well as to various other components of a rational society.

II. *Charismatic Authority* – This is a result of personal qualities of the person who exercises it. It corresponds to *affective social action*. For example, authority exercised by Mahatma Gandhi over masses. Although Weber did not deny that a charismatic leader may have outstanding characteristics, his sense of charisma was more dependent on the group of disciples and the way that they define the charismatic leader. If the followers fail to recognise a leader as a charismatic leader, he ceases to remain one. To Weber, charisma was a revolutionary force. The rise of a charismatic leader may well pose a threat to the system and lead to a dramatic change in the system. This type of authority becomes more pronounced in times of crisis and turmoil, when other types of authority seem to be failing and new forms of authority are needed. According to Weber, a charismatic system is inherently fragile. It survives only as long as the charismatic leader lives or the crisis lasts. This type of authority is also not as effective as legal-rational authority, as organisation is not done on rational criterion and members are not technically trained. An organisation based on charismatic authority has no formal rules, no established administrative organs, and no precedents to guide new judgments.

III. *Legal Rational Authority* – This authority is based on *Zweckrational social action* or total rational action. Legal-rational authority can take a variety of structural forms, but the form that most interested Weber was bureaucracy, which he considered *the purest type of exercise of legal authority*. Weber paid most of his attention to this form of authority as it leads to the most efficient systems.

Actual authority may be a combination of above Ideal Types of authority. For example, Franklin D Roosevelt, as a president of the United States and Nehru as the Indian prime minister, ruled on all three bases as they were elected in accordance with a series of rational-legal principles. By the time they were elected three times, a good part of the rules had traditional elements. Finally, many disciples and followers regarded them as charismatic leaders. In the real world, there is constant tension and, sometimes, conflict among the three bases. For example, the charismatic leader is a constant threat to the other forms of authority.

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Further, a particular type of authority may change over time and transform into another type. Weber refers routinisation of charisma and traditionalisation of rationality as examples of such transformations.

His theory of authority is criticised on various grounds –

I. Weber's conception of authority is primarily criticised for the anomaly in Ideal Types of social action and Ideal Types of authority. He mentions four types of social actions, but mentions only three types of authority.

II. Michel Foucault has argued that authority and power don't lie with particular institutions and persons, as Weber suggested. Power is highly dispersed in society and operates at all levels in different situations.

III. According to Robert Dahl, authority is situational and one may hold different kinds of authority. It is also relative. One may be in a controlling position in one instance and may be controlled by others in another instance.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy as a general sociological concept shall be discussed in the chapter on polity and society. Here, we shall discuss it from the view point of Max Weber. Bureaucracy, like his many other concepts, is also linked to the Ideal Type construct and Weber associated it with the rising rationalisation of society. It is an Ideal Type of organisation in which, structure is based on *legal rational authority*. According to Weber, bureaucracy is a type of organisation which suits most of the modern societies where work is done rationally. It is *a hierarchical organisation, designed rationally to coordinate the work of many individuals, in the pursuit of large scale administrative tasks and organisational goals*. Capitalism, which is the basis of economy in the modern world also works on rational organisation and it requires bureaucratic organisations for its working. According to him – '*From a purely technical point of view, a bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency, and is in this sense, formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability. It thus, makes possible, a particularly high degree of calculability of results, for the heads of the organisation and for those acting in relation to it. It is finally superior, both in intensive efficiency and in the scope of its operations and is formally capable of application to all kinds of administrative tasks.*'

Weber distinguished the ideal-typical of bureaucracy from the ideal-typical bureaucrat. He conceived bureaucracies as structures and bureaucrats as positions within those structures.

According to Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters, in their *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society: New Translations on Politics, Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification, 2015,* Weber specified certain typical elements associated with the bureaucracy, like –

I. Bureaucracy works on the basis of written legal rational rules. Activities of bureaucrats are in the form of official duty.

II. There is a hierarchy of officials in authority.

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III. Work is specialised in bureaucracy and staff is trained accordingly.

IV. Bureaucrats are permanent and paid and they may have to work overtime.

V. Office work is vocation for bureaucrats and they are expected to do their work honestly.

VI. The incumbent is not allowed to appropriate the position. Position always remains a part of the organisation.

VII. Administrative acts, decisions, and rules are formulated and recorded in writing.

This Ideal Type bureaucracy is only approximated in reality, but Weber argues that bureaucracies of modern societies are slowly moving towards this pure type as this type of organisation has technical superiority over other types of organisations.

Weber had certain scepticism also about bureaucracy and despite it being most efficient type of organisation, Weber foresaw it as a source of alienation of human being. He referred it as *iron cage of rationality* which makes human beings, slave of rationality, who cannot escape it as they get too addicted to it. His major fear was that the rationalisation that dominates all aspects of bureaucratic life was a threat to individual liberty and creativity. He described bureaucracies as *escape proof, practically un-shatterable* and among the hardest institutions to destroy once they are established. Unlike Marx, he didn't see future in terms of dictatorship of proletariat, but in terms of dictatorship of officials.

Weber's concept of bureaucracy attracted wide criticism. Roberto Michels, in his *Political Parties, 1911*, said that bureaucracy becomes so dominating in democracy, that it reduces a democracy into an oligarchy. Bureaucratic institutions were criticised for reducing human beings as simply cogs in the organisational machines. Others also claimed that this conception of pure legal rational institutions was utopian as humans cannot be totally rational. Organisations need flexible behaviour to deal with uncertain events and bureaucratic structures cannot provide such flexibility.

Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism

Weber's theory of Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism is contained in his *The Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism, 1904*, widely known for its use of scientific methods in Sociology, possibility of studying *macro* phenomenon in terms of *micro* and a demonstration of his idea of *causal pluralism* or *probabalism,* as he factored in political, economic and religious factors in the rise of capitalism. His study of capitalism is that of modern capitalism and, unlike Marx who gave primacy to economic structure and material aspects, Weber put more emphasis on ideas leading to an economic system. He was concerned with Protestantism, mainly as a system of ideas, and its impact on the rise of another system of ideas, the *spirit of capitalism*, and ultimately on a capitalist economic system.

His analysis starts with an observation – '*In modern Europe, business leaders, owners of capital as well as higher grades of skilled labourer and even more, the higher technologically and commercially trained personnel of modern enterprise are predominantly protestant.*' Further, he observes that, it is not only a contemporary fact, but also a historical fact. The individuals in this statement are representatives of capitalism in Europe. In contrast to feudal mode, which was represented by aristocracy, capitalism was represented by the entrepreneurs and skilled- personnel. This observation led Weber to ponder over if there – '*Is there any correlation between Protestantism and Capitalism?*'

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Thus, Weber makes an empirical observation based on the existing records as a basis for initiating the study of *protestant ethics* and *spirit of capitalism*. It points towards the Scientific Methodology used by Weber in his theories. In order to explore the possible correlation, Weber developed the Ideal Types of *Capitalism* and *Protestant Ethics*. He chose *Calvinism* as the most original form of Protestant Ethics for this purpose. Later, he made a comparative study to establish causal linkages between the two. Finally, he validated his theory by taking Ideal Types of other religions and again comparing them with the Ideal Type of capitalism.

Ideal Type of Calvinism was proposed with following elements –

I. Doctrine of predestination – In Calvinism, some people are chosen by God to enter into heaven and nobody can know whether one is chosen or not.

II. This worldly asceticism – Protestant Ethics suggest strict self-discipline with no enjoyment and more hard work for the glory of God.

III. All work is sacred – Work is not merely work, it is a *calling* or mission and should be done with devotion for the glory of God.

IV. God created the world for his own glory – A supernatural explanation to the existence of the world is given and God is deemed as unknowable.

V. No mediation of any priest can help us in knowing God – As God is unknowable, he cannot be known through mediators as well.

VI. Wealth has to be conserved and devoted to God – Riches earned through hard work should not be spent on luxuries, but in the glory of God.

Ideal Type of capitalism is explained with following elements –

I. It is an economic system which is aimed at unlimited accumulation of profit.

II. Work in modern capitalism is organised rationally.

III. Various ethics in capitalism are, time is money, work should be done well, work is for an end called profit.

IV. Capitalism honours individualism, innovation, profit pursuit and hard work.

After developing these two Ideal Types, Weber draws comparison to explore the possibility of correlation between the two. According to Weber, *Doctrine of Predestination* results into uncertainty about the destiny of Protestant Calvinists resulting into anxiety. As their destiny was unknowable, a feeling of insecurity is generated. This led to intense this worldly activity as *success in this world* was considered as being *the chosen one in that world*. Calvinists tried to rationalise the religious tenets in search of salvation and as a result, hard work and asceticism were seen as avenues to overcome the fear of the uncertain. Among other factors, Weber sees role of Charismatic leaders also in this development.

This leads to much needed hard work that is required for the rise of capitalism. Asceticism produced savings and much needed reinvestment in the nascent capitalism. Notion of calling made them hard working, similarly, other ethics of Calvinism were also suitable for the growth of capitalism. In this way,

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Weber concludes that there is an *elective affinity* between some elements of *protestant ethics* and *spirit of capitalism,* i.e., there was a coincidence between requirements of *Capitalism* and tenets of *Calvinism.* Working hard and making money, both became religious and business ethic. Protestant Ethics only provided *spirit*, there were other factors as well in rise of capitalism like *substance* in the form of capital and technology, which led to rise of capitalism. According to Michael Shea, in his article *The Protestant Ethic and the Language of Austerity, 2015*, the *spirit of capitalism* does not refer to the spirit in the metaphysical sense, but rather, a set of values, but to the spirit of hard work, austerity and growth.

Weber believes in plurality of causes. In this theory as well, dual variables exist in the form of – *spirit* and *substance*. Spirit may have been provided by the Protestant Ethics, but only spirit cannot lead to *practice* of capitalism; substance should also be there. During this time, substance was already present in the form of new factory system, new techniques of accounting, newly invented tools and machines, democratic political system for stable governance and market, etc.

Further, Weber tried to validate this correlation through *historical comparative studies* of various world religions. He developed Ideal Types of those and proved why capitalism didn't rise in their context in other countries. In his book *Religion of China, 1951*, he concludes that despite the presence of a developed economy, trade and commerce, the Confucius ethics didn't permit the rise of capitalism as it stressed upon collective harmony, traditionalism and family obligation. These values were not in harmony with the requirements of rise of capitalism. Similarly, in his book *Religion of India, 1958*, he concluded that ideas of *Karma*, *Dharma* and *Punarjanma* prevented the rise of capitalism. In India too, substance was there, but spirit was absent as there were many structural barriers in the form of caste and spiritual barriers in the form of ideas of *Karma* and *Punarjanma*. As a result, for Hindus, activity in this world was not important, because the world was seen as a transient abode and an impediment to the spiritual quest. Similarly, in case of Judaism in his *Ancient Judaism, 1952*, Judaist ethics had elements which could have promoted capitalism, but certain Historical factors scattered Jews. So, the spirit was there, but the substance was absent.

While Durkheim made a generalisation from narrow examples of aboriginals, Max Weber took a much wider observation of the religions across the world. His writings also differ from those of Durkheim in the sense that his writings concentrate on religion and social change, something which Durkheim gave little attention to.

Weber's idea of rise of capitalism is criticised on following grounds –

I. Ideal Types which Weber drew upon may be erroneous. He seems to have concentrated on certain aspects of religion only and ignored the others.

II. It is also argued the doctrine of calling was already present among the Catholics.

III. He seems to be selective while drawing elements for his analysis. For example, according to Milton Singer, he took selective elements out of Hinduism, there is an equivalent of Calvinists in forms of Chettiars of Madras.

IV. Lawrence Stone's studies in England concluded that it were not Protestant Ethics, but British aristocracy which had accounted for the rise of capitalism.

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Capitalism – Marx and Weber

	Marx	Weber
View of society	Karl Marx takes society as his unit of analysis.	Weber studies society in terms of meanings attributed or given by individuals to the world around them.
View of capitalism	Marx describes capitalism as one of the historical stages and gives a mono-causal explanation for its rise.	Weber understands capitalism in terms of the psychological motivations of individuals and gives a causal-plural explanation of its growth.
Emergence of capitalism	Marx sees the emergence of capitalism in terms of a shift in the mode of production.	Weber sees rise of capitalism as a result of mutual affinity in Protestant Ethics and factors conducive for the growth of capitalism.
Consequences of capitalism	According to Marx, capitalism leads to alienation of workers.	Capitalism is a symbol of growth of rationality, but Weber also acknowledges that bureaucracy and capitalism grow side by side and will ultimately lead to disenchantment of human beings.
Stratification	Marx sees *class* as the only dimension of stratification in a capitalistic society as it overshadows all other dimensions.	Weber argues that *class* is only one dimension and there are other dimensions also in form of *status* and *party*.
Solution	Marx foresees a revolution as an end to capitalism.	Weber sees no end to rationality as it is necessary in modern societies.

Contribution of Weber is immense as he managed to rise above the Positivism and non-Positivism debate. He added many new perspectives, concepts, methods to Sociology and was later, followed closely by Chicago School and others as well. He enriched the subject matter and scope of the discipline. He never claimed of giving universalistic theories, but rather, focused upon establishing cause and effect through multi-causal approach.

IRON CAGE OF RATIONALITY

Max Weber used the term to describe the bleak, but inevitable, future of bureaucracy and increasing rationality in social life. According to him, more rationality would not lead to universal freedom as Enlightenment theorists had believed, but would rather create an 'iron cage' from which there would be no escape. It will reduce the men into mere cogs in the machine as individuals will lose autonomy and individuality in wake of increasing specialisation and rational organisation of work.

In present society, his ideas are still relevant in the understanding of society in the wake of tremendous rise of individualism, isolation, etc. His prognosis of bureaucracy as an *iron cage of rationality* is also found to be correct to a great degree and we have seen tremendous growth of such bureaucratic institutions. His concepts are still widely used by the contemporary scholars. George Ritzer in his *McDonaldization of Society, 1993*, used Weberian bureaucratic model to explain the increasing mechanisation/rationalisation of human experiences and its negative impacts. Ritzer argues that McDonaldisation is dehumanising as we make queues to get a burger as if we are on a conveyer belt and staff repeats the same mundane tasks again and again like robots.

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Parsons – Social System, Pattern Variables



Fig. 4.9 Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons is said to be the pioneer of functionalism in Sociology, and more specifically in America, which sees society as a system or structure and every part of this structure is performing some functions. While he introduced grand functional theories in the field of Sociology, he also kept an eye on social action.

His theory of Social Action borrows ideas from economic Sociology, Culturology and Psychology. He combined them and developed a grand theory of social action that claimed to capture every possible human behaviour in time and space. He integrated French Positivism with German Idealism and British Utilitarianism to develop his own synthetic approach. He synthesised micro and macro view which is evident in his theory of social action and Social System respectively.

He took a systemic view of society and the problems of order and integration were his central concerns. He rejected the Hobbesian view that man is a rational and calculating and order in the society exists because members of the society fear the consequence of punishment from state if they didn't behave properly. According to Parsons, fear is insufficient to motivate men to obey rules and a moral commitment is essential, which is due to shared values. According to him, *value consensus* is the integrating force in the society. Value consensus is a result of roles performances, which are institutionalised in society. By the process of socialisation, role expectations, values and goals of society are inculcated in individual actors. According to him, the main task of Sociology is to analyse the *institutionalised pattern of values*.

Second problem, apart from value consensus, is the apparent incompatibility between the needs of society or Social System and individual needs. This is referred by Parsons as *motivational problem* and is dealt by the respective systems by meeting individual needs.

Social Action

He considers that all possible empirical action of the people can be arrested into a universal theoretical framework. Hence, he developed *structure of social action* in contrast to Weber's four Ideal Types of Social Action. He proposed a *Voluntaristic Theory of Social Action* or simply *Action Theory*, which sought to bridge the differences between positivists and the idealists/Interpretivists by incorporating both the objective and subjective elements and it emphasised on an *action frame of reference*. He tried to combine both the micro and macro elements of social reality. Social Action is defined by Parsons in his first seminal work *The Structure of Social Action, 1937* as '*Any act, consciously performed is a Social Action*'. Unlike Weber who says that action should be oriented towards others for it to be *social*, Parsons instead gave four conditions –

I. It occurs in a *social situation*, i.e., actor is a member of society while performing a Social Action.
II. It is oriented towards attainment of a particular *goal*, i.e., actor is motivated.
III. Action is regulated by *norms and values*.
IV. It involves investment of energy.

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According to him, an actor is a goal seeking individual with alternative means to attain those goals and is influenced by two factors –

I. *Motivational Orientation* – It is due to the personal condition of the actor. It is affected by cognitive, cathectic (emotional response) and evaluative needs of an individual.

II. *Value Orientation* – It refers to the influence of norms and values of society. It is influenced by values in three ways, i.e., cognition, appreciation and moral.

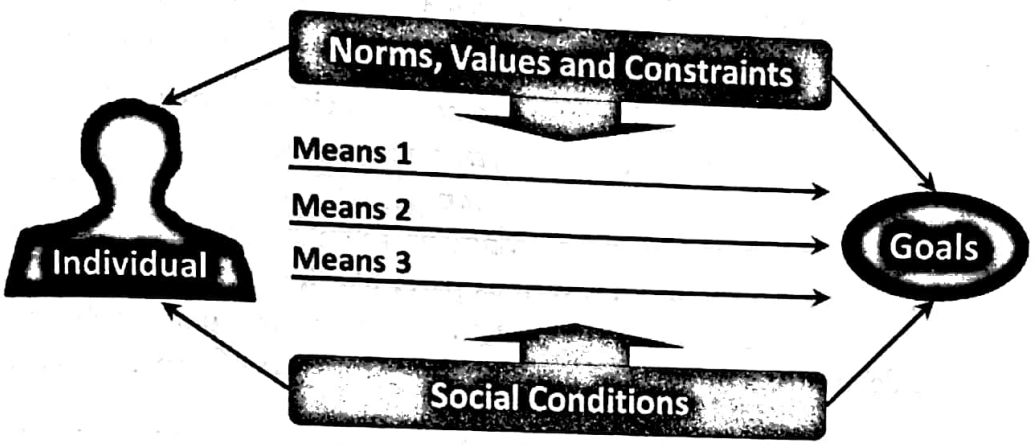

Fig. 4.10 Parson's Social Action

Like Weber, he also classified actions into three types –

I. *Instrumental Action* (similar to Zweckrational Action of Weber) – In this, evaluative component is the most dominating. Both means and ends are logically decided.

II. *Expressive Action* (similar to Affective Action of Weber) – In this, appreciative component is dominant.

III. *Moral Action* (similar to Traditional and Wertrational Action) – Here, the actor's own motivation is subordinate to the values of society.

Further, actions do not occur in isolation, but in constellation. Such constellation, in the form of institutionalised social interactions is called *Social System*. While Parsons theorised Social Action, his main attention was on Social System.

STRUCTURATION

It is a theory offered by Anthony Giddens in response to the limitations of macro and micro approaches, which focus on structure and social action respectively. Structuration is itself derived from structure and action and gives primacy to neither of them. Hence, it is a social theory of the creation and reproduction of social systems that is based on the analysis of both structure and agents and their actions.

Social System

Parsons soon moved away from the micro aspect of reality and came up with a grander framework for understanding social reality in the form of the concept of *Social System*. He gave his structural

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functionalist theory as a master framework for the working of all social institutions, including society. His idea of social system is explained in his *The Structure of Social Action, 1937*, and *The Social System, 1951*. He conceptualised social system as a solution to the limitations posed by existing models. His aim was to come up with a grand model to explain the working of all the systems in the society.

Social actions don't occur in isolation, but in constellations, which are various Social Systems. Parsons developed his idea of social system from the works of Tonnies, Durkheim, etc. He also took the idea of *Cultural System* from Malinowski, W H R Rivers, etc. and idea of *Personality System* from G H Mead, C H Cooley, etc. *Social System* is just one of the four highest abstractions in his grand structural functional framework. It is made up of a constellation of social actions and fulfils some functional pre-requisite.

Social interaction is a pre-requisite for Social System to emerge. Social System is defined as – '*Consisting of plurality of individuals actors interacting with each other, in a situation which has an environment with actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the optimization of gratification.*' It is clear from this definition that a system has two parts – structure (actors, environment, relation, etc.) and functions (performance of which leads to gratification). Structure has various parts like institutions, organisations, kinships, stratification, power relations, religion and moral values. As Parsons was not simply a structuralist, but also a functionalist, he delineated a number of functional prerequisites of a social system –

I. First, social systems must be structured so that they operate compatibly with other systems.
II. Second, to survive, the Social System must have the requisite support from other systems.
III. Third, the system must meet a significant proportion of the needs of its actors.
IV. Fourth, the system must elicit adequate participation from its members.
V. Fifth, it must have at least a minimum of control over potentially disruptive behaviour.
VI. Sixth, if conflict becomes sufficiently disruptive, it must be controlled.
VII. Finally, a social system requires a language in order to survive.

However, Parsons did not completely ignore the issue of the relationship between actors and social structures in his discussion of the social system. Parsons was interested in the ways in which the norms and values of a system are transferred to the actors within the system.

Initially, Parsons through his *Mechanism Equilibrium Phase* viewed Social System in terms of *structure* only, i.e., how different mechanisms like family and law education maintain an equilibrium, which according to Parsons, is *Moving Equilibrium*, but later through his *Requisite Functional Phase*, Parsons talked of Social System in terms of *fulfilment of functions or functional prerequisites* or AGIL functions. Thus, introduction of AGIL was a subtle shift from analysis of structure to analysis of function. Every system fulfils certain functions. Social System itself performs function of integration in society. Further, he generalised his AGIL model and said that every system has further four sub-systems, for example, Social System also has four subsystems and so on.

He gave a concept of *Action Systems* as a precursor to his idea of Social System. Action Systems are the highest conceptual abstractions in his theoretical framework. At the highest abstraction/generalisation, he gave four *Action Systems* –

I. *Organismic System or Biological System or Behavioural System* – It is the physical or biological aspect of social reality. It is the *storehouse of energy*, according to Parsons.

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II. *Personality System* – It represents the internal, hidden aspects of society, resulting from motives alone. It is the *storehouse of motivation.*

III. *Social System* – It refers to a pattern of *actual interaction* between units in the society. Institutionalised roles are viewed as a Social System. It also has four subsystems – Economic System (for Adaptation), Political System (for Goal Attainment), Social Institutions for Social Control (for Integration), Socialisation System or fiduciary system, e.g. Family and Educational Institutions (for Latency or Pattern Maintenance). Although the idea of a Social System encompasses all types of collectivities, one specific and particularly important social system is society.

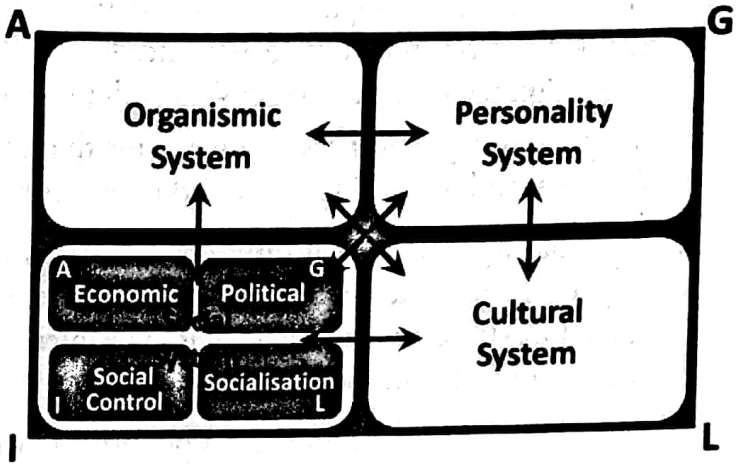

Fig. 4.11 Parsons' Action Systems

IV. *Cultural System* – It consists of norms and values. Also termed as *storehouse of information.*

The four Action Systems do not exist in the real world but are, rather, analytical tools for analysing the real world.

Though, he viewed the Social System as a system of interaction, he did not take interaction as the fundamental unit in the study of Social System. Rather, he used the status-role complex as the basic unit of the system, which is defined by the structure and not the individual who performs them. Status refers to a structural position within the Social System, and role is what the actor does in such a position, seen in the context of its functional significance for the larger system. Thus, he gives primacy to structure over individual.

According to him, every Action System has following characteristics –

I. System is a unified whole made up of interdependent parts called subsystems, and each sub-system can be treated as a system itself.

II. Each system has a boundary that separates it from other systems and environment.

III. Systems or subsystems are organised in a relatively stable manner, so that definite patterns of inter-relations come to exist between the subsystems.

IV. Systems are dynamic in nature.

V. There are certain functional pre-requisites which need to be fulfilled for the existence of a system.

Parsons distinguished among four structures, or subsystems, in society in terms of the functions (AGIL) they perform. According to him, a system exists because it performs certain functional pre-requisites which are necessary to sustain the system in equilibrium. To visualise the system and its functional prerequisites, Parsons gave an *AGIL framework,* where there are four problems or functional pre-requisites of any system – Adaptation (to physical environment), Goal Attainment, Latency or Pattern

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Maintenance (for stability) and Integration. A system or society must find solution to these problems or pre-requisites, if it is to survive.

I. In order to survive, Social System must gain some control over environment (for needs like food and security). The economy is the subsystem that performs the function for *society* of adapting to the environment through labour, production, and allocation. Through such work, the economy adapts the environment to society's needs, and it helps society adapt to these external realities. Adaptation refers to the relationship with the environment.

II. The polity (or political system) performs the function of goal attainment by pursuing societal objectives and mobilising actors and resources to that end.

III. The fiduciary system or institutions of socialisation (for example, the schools, the family and religion) handle the latency or pattern maintenance function by transmitting culture (norms and values) to actors and allowing it to be internalised by them. It helps in maintaining the basic patterns of values in society.

IV. Finally, the integration function is performed by the societal community or institutions of social control (for example, the law), which coordinates the various components of society.

Thus, through his AGIL concept, he understands all the parts of the society in terms of the functions they perform.

Parsons took a synthetic approach (as he synthesised the Action theory or micro and systems theory for macro explanations) which is called as structural functional view of the society. His idea of system and Social System was said to be a master analytical framework. He saw existence of society in terms of a Social System, which has various subsystems and so on and each performs a unique pre-requisite.

A Social System is distinct from other systems and maintains a boundary as do other systems from each other. A Social System survives by maintaining this boundary.

In his conceptualisation of systems, Parsons also sees their inter-relation and inter-linkages. Social System is linked with other systems through *Energy flow* and *Information control*, which Parsons termed as *Cybernetic Hierarchy of Control.*

Social change occurs when there is a change in the energy flow or the information control as equilibrium stage is disturbed. This is restored by –

I. *Socialisation* – Shared values are transmitted from one generation to another by various institutions like family and education.

II. *Social Control* – It discourages deviance and various institutions enforcing it are law, police, etc.

Parsons also views social change as a change in terms of *evolution from simple to complex societies.*

Parsons concept of Social System is criticised on various grounds, some of which are –

I. His Social System theory is termed as a grand functional theory with little practical utility and low on empirical testability. His ideas are too abstract with little empirical verifiability. Dahrendorf called his conception as utopian.

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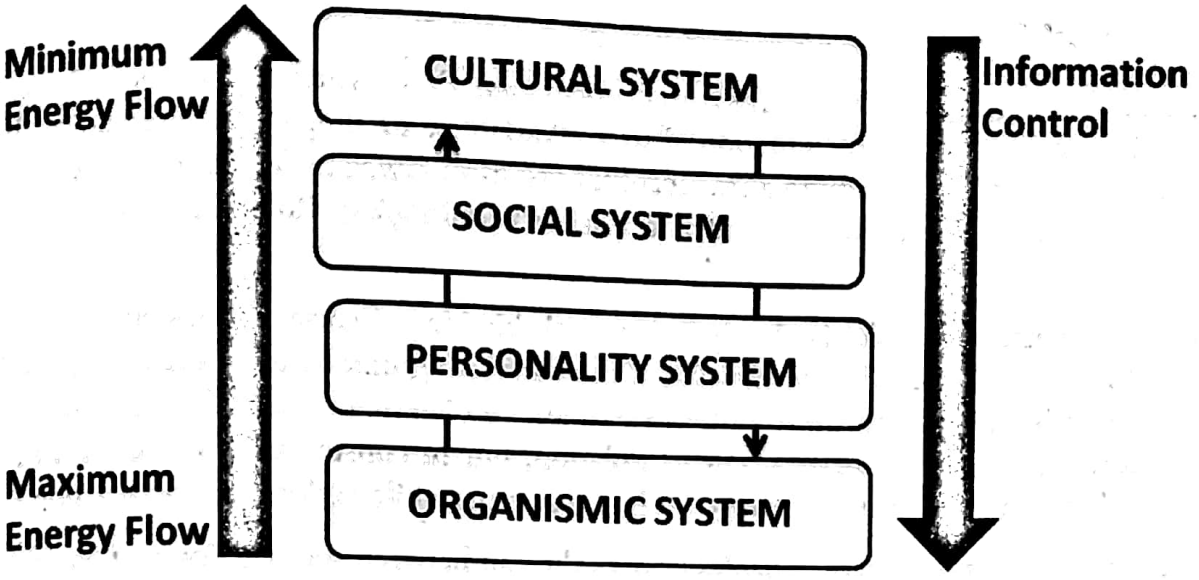

Fig. 4.12 Cybernetic Hierarchy of Control

II. He takes an over-socialised view of man, in which, man is influenced by the values and norms alone like a cog in a machine.

III. Merton takes much realistic view and he included latent functions and dysfunctions as well in his analysis. Merton termed such a grand conception as both futile and sterile.

IV. According to Jonathan Turner, structure functionalism of Parsons suffers from illegitimate teleologies and tautologies, which are the two most important logical problems confronting structural functionalism. They often take cause for an effect and vice-versa.

V. The emphasis in the writings of Parsons and Merton on the scientific character of Sociology has been criticised by many later sociologists as *Positivism*.

VI. Marxist sociologists criticise functionalism for its neglect of class conflict or class antagonism that exist in society. Political sociologists have criticised it for neglecting the role of power and domination in the structure and function of social institutions.

VII. He ignored conflict. According to Turner, he was obsessed with integration.

However, despite its limitations, the Social System framework can be used as a framework to understand various social sub-systems and their problems or functional pre-requisites. Social problems like insurgencies in tribal areas can be understood from systems view as –

I. Poverty, as a result of problem of adaptation in the economic system.

II. Vested interests affect the goal attainment in a political system.

III. Deprived people feel alienated and face the problem of integration in the cultural system.

IV. Stress and lack of motivation creates problems of latency in institutions of socialisation like family.

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Pattern Variables

In more general terms, these are referred as *types of orientation*. Parsons defines these as the fundamental dilemmas that actors face in any situation. Pattern Variables, to simply put, are choices between alternative variables while performing *roles*. According to him, *Action Systems* in society exist in form of *Roles*. Society develops such roles in order to achieve certain goals. Roles are a vital link between individual and society.

Parsons' idea of pattern variables is closely linked with his idea of social actions and inspired from Weberian idea of Ideal Types. *Pattern Variables* is the connecting link between the Parsonsian idea of social action and Social System, while pattern variables are dilemmas, Social System is the solution. Actions, according to Parsons, never occur in isolation, but in constellation in the form of Action Systems and there are some dilemmas that exist in the systems while performing social action.

Talcott Parsons' concept of pattern variables bridges the gap between social action and Social System. It was a result of his commitment to develop a set of concepts which reflected the properties of all Action Systems. Pattern variables allow for the categorisation of the modes of orientation in personality systems, the value patterns of cultural systems and the normative requirements of the Social Systems. Thus, they represent a broad framework which helps in categorisation of dichotomies of the personality system, normative demands and value orientations.

A *Social System* may be characterised by the combination of solutions offered to these dilemmas that actor faces or in other words, these pattern variables structure any *system of interaction*. These dilemmas, confronting every actor, are exhaustive in coverage.

According to Parsons, such dilemmas can be resolved by *role institutionalisation* and *role internalisation*.

According to Parsons, such dichotomous variables exist in five pairs –

I. *Self- Orientation vs Collective Orientation* – It refers to the dilemma between fulfilment of self-interest or collective interest.

II. *Affectivity vs Affective Neutrality* – It refers to the dilemma between emotional attachment and emotional detachment in a particular situation. For example, relation of doctor with his or her patient is largely affectively neutral.

III. *Particularism vs Universalism* – It refers to the dilemmas regarding the standard of values to be used in an evaluationary process. Particularism refers to traditional values and beliefs. Universalism refers to modern and rational value system.

IV. *Ascription vs Achievement* – These are patterns which help the actors to judge others in a situation. Whether the judgment is to be done in terms of ascriptive (based on birth) attributes or on the basis of achieved attributes.

V. *Diffuseness vs Specificity* – It refers to the dilemmas regarding relations and obligations. For example, Buyer-seller relation, in strict terms, in a modern economy is specific and is guided by rules and money market, but in rural areas, they are diffused. In rural areas, price of a commodity is not specific, but depends upon who the buyer is.

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Further, according to Parsons, social institutions in society tend to cluster around opposite poles in these dichotomies. For example, in a family, relations are particularistic, affective and diffused. It is also true for a concept like Gemeinschaft. On the other hand, at the workplace, they are universalistic, affectively neutral and achievement based. This is also true for Gesellschaft Ideal Type of Tonnies. Choices of individuals of one pattern over another are dictated by the cultural values and institutionalised norms, i.e., *social action* is guided by *Social System*. When values and norms are not settled properly, as in case of economies in transition, such dilemmas are difficult to resolve.

At the broadest level, pattern variables also represent two dichotomies which stand for traditional and modern society. Traditional society/system emphasises upon ascription, diffuseness, particularism, affectivity, self-orientation.

Further, on the basis of his idea of pattern variables, he identified four types of structures of Social Systems –

I. *Universalistic Achievement Pattern* – Its nearest example is modern American Society.
II. *Universalistic Ascription Pattern* – Its example is Nazi Germany. As an organisation it was rational, but notions of superiority and inferiority were assigned based on birth.
III. *Particularistic Achievement Pattern* – Classical Chinese family is one of the examples, where, even the royal blooded members of the family had to prove their worth via individual achievements.
IV. *Particularistic Ascription Pattern* – Traditional Indian Caste system is one of its examples.

Significance of pattern variables lies in the fact that they help in distinguishing between types of societies and also indicate that no society is absolutely static or absolutely dynamic. Significance of pattern variables, according to Parsons, is not limited to setting *role expectations* in society, but, they, in addition, provide the overall direction in which most of the members chose their roles.

Parsons introduced a systematic outlook in the discipline of Sociology. He is also known to introduce sophisticated terminology, which at times attracted criticism as well. His legacy was carried forward by functionalists like Merton. Despite his frequent criticism, his imprint on the discipline is indelible. Recently, attempts to revive his ideas have been made by Parsonsian sociologists like Bryan Turner and Jeffrey Alexander.

Merton – Latent and Manifest Functions, Conformity and Deviance, Reference Groups



Fig. 4.13 Robert Merton

Merton, like Parsons, was a prominent American sociologist known for his various path breaking concepts like Middle Range Theories, Latent and Manifest Functions and Anomie. Merton was one of the biggest doyens of structural functionalism along with Parsons, but he always tried to distance himself from being called a true structural functionalism in the conventional sense of understanding of the concept. Due to his modified functionalism, he is also known as a

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neo-functionalist, as his functionalism deals with not only theoretical work, but empirical reality as well. He particularly draws our attention to the reasons why functional theories of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, which were formulated to deal with the realities of a simpler tribal society, isolated from the rest of the world, could not be applied to contemporary societies of our own time, which are complex and where historical traditions have overlapped with social institutions over several centuries.

Therefore, Merton argues that an institution such as religion, which is universally integrative in simpler tribal societies, may cause disharmony in our own society, where there are many religions, which often compete against each other. So, religion, instead of being functional (integrative), may become dysfunctional (disintegrative) in society.

He modified earlier functionalist view and criticised the three fundamental postulates of earlier functionalist and suggested their modification in following paradigms –

I. Modification of postulate of *functional unity* – According to him, social reality has to be viewed in terms of a system and various objects or phenomena ensure the unity of the system. Durkheim, Spencer and Radcliffe Brown emphasised on functional unity. Merton argued that today's world is complex and it is not necessary that whatever exists provides the function of unity of the system. Investigator has to study *dysfunction* and *non-functions* of a particular *social item* as well. This idea was novel in functionalist approach as earlier structural functionalist never looked beyond pure integrative functionalist perspective.

II. Modification of postulate of *functional indispensability* – Earlier functionalists like Radcliffe Brown and Parsons argued that there are some indispensable functions to be performed in the society and there are also some social institutions which are indispensable to perform such functions. However, Merton argued that *social items* are not indispensable in nature and there may be *functional alternatives*, i.e., the same function may be performed by different items as well. By recognising that some structures are expendable, functionalism opens the way for meaningful social change. Merton states *just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items*. Our society, for example, could continue to exist (and even be improved) by the elimination of discrimination against various minority groups. Similarly, one can argue that Indian society will perhaps be a better place if caste is not there.

III. Modification of postulate of *universal functionalism* – Earlier functionalists believed that all existing social and cultural forms are invariably functional and fulfil some positive function. Merton argued that the context in which the *social item* is studied should also be taken into account. The item may be functional in one context and dysfunctional in other context. He also distinguished between latent and manifest functions.

Merton's position was that all these functional postulates rely on non-empirical assertions based on abstract, theoretical systems. According to Merton, an all- encompassing theory is, at best, a philosophical system, marked by its architectural splendours as well its sterility. He believed that empirical tests, and not theoretical assertions, are crucial to functional analysis. To this end, he developed his own *functional paradigm* of functional analysis as a guide to the integration of theory and research which was a result of his belief in empirical research. His addition of concepts of *non-functions*, *dysfunctions* and *manifest and latent functions* define his new paradigm. Further, according to his paradigm, *social items* must be

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in a standardised pattern and they must not be too abstract or too concrete. Social context of study should be specified clearly as the meaning of social item may change with a change in context. Then, a general description of social item must be made using the available information. The investigator should identify manifest and latent functions. Then, dysfunctions should also be studied. Investigator should also highlight functional alternatives as well.

Latent and Manifest Functions

Merton criticised some of the aspects of structural functionalism and tried to add new dimensions to functional analysis. *Latent and Manifest Functions* was one such important dimension. He rejected the earlier dominant postulates of traditional functionalists and sought to modify them. According to him, a social item like slavery may be functional in one situation or for one group and dysfunctional in the other. To cope up with such issues, he suggested that there should be multiple levels of analysis while dealing with social items.

Identification of latent and manifest functions of social items helps us in deepening our analysis. Earlier functionalists looked only at the manifest functions, but ignored the possible unintended functions. Thus, his approach combined *psychological* and *socio-cultural* aspects. Difference between Manifest and Latent function can also be seen as the difference between *conscious intention* and *actual outcome*.

Manifest function is seen in terms of the actual intention of the actor. These are the functions understood by the actor himself. These are the subjective dispositions of the actor. It refers to the micro aspect of reality and is usually studied mainly through a Non-Positivist approach.

Latent functions on the other hand are the functions that are neither intended nor perceived by the actor. These functions are actually established by an investigator and are objective manifestations of the actions of the actor. According to Merton, they mostly include dysfunctions, non-functions and unanticipated functions also. The manifest function of slavery, for example, was to increase the economic productivity of the South, but it had the latent function of providing a vast underclass that served to increase the social status of southern whites, both rich and poor.

He took the example of Hopi Tribes and their rain dance to illustrate his idea of latent and manifest functions in his *Social Theory and Social Structure, 1967*. While manifest function of such rain dances is to appease rain gods, but according to Merton, their latent function is to reinforce the solidarity of the tribes. Similarly, even before Merton explicitly propounded this theory Thorstein Veblen, in his *Theory of Leisure Class, 1899*, he had taken the example of conspicuous consumption in terms of purchase of new cars. Transportation is a manifest function, but, the latent function is the reassertion of social status.

Middle Range Theories

Merton proposed middle range theories in the wake of apparent failure of Grand Functional Theories. Middle range theories are a middle path between the macro theories, which were too ambitious, and micro theories, which had little practical consequence. Middle range theories focus on limited set of assumptions, from which, specific hypothesis can be derived and empirical testing can be done. Middle range theories are more suitable for sociological analysis for their limited set of assumptions, specific hypothesis and empirical testability.

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Major task of middle range theories is to fill the gap between *raw empiricism* and *grand theories*. The middle range theories will take specific aspects of social reality which can be theorised and tested empirically. Middle range theories must be supported by quantitative as well as qualitative method and should use both primary and secondary sources of data. Thus, middle range theories are a triple alliance of theory, data and method.

Advantages of middle range theories include scientific nature, testability, empiricism, practical applicability, etc. However, subjective identification of middle range phenomenon is challenging while re-coursing to middle range theories.

Conformity and Deviance or Merton's Strain Theory

Conformity is that action which is oriented to social norms or expectations and which falls within the toleration prescribed by the society. Cause of conformity lies in socialisation, hierarchy in society, laws and rules, ideology, religion, vested interests, etc.

Deviance on the other hand is non-conformity or deviating from the accepted path. Deviance may be positively sanctioned by rewarding it, for example, Nobel Prize for *deviant* scientific activities or negatively sanctioned by punishment etc. as in the case of deviant criminal behaviour or simply accepted without any reward or punishment. Deviant in one society may be normal in other societies. For example, Teton Sioux Indians of the USA, as part of their Sun Dance ceremony, mutilate their bodies as a display of valour, but the same activity is termed as masochism or madness in other societies. There are two main approaches of dealing with deviance, psychological and sociological. Psychological approaches invariably see deviance as undesirable negative phenomenon. Sociological theories, like that of Durkheim and Merton, however, offer a different sociological view.

Merton explains his idea of deviance in his *Social Structure and Anomie, 1938*. It is an analysis of the relationship between culture (according to Merton, culture is the organised set of normative values, governing behaviour), structure, and anomie. Merton's theory of deviance is based on his own conception of *anomie* which was drawn in the backdrop of *The Great Economic Depression*.

His idea of anomie is different from Durkheim's idea of anomie. Durkheim defined anomie as a form of normlessness and defined it as a pathological state, due to pathological division of labour. According to Durkheim, it always has negative consequences and is only transitory in nature.

Merton, on the other hand, views anomie as a part of the system and a general feature of society which is always there. He sees it in terms of goals and means and it can lead to positive deviance also. He defined anomie as '*A situation in which there is a discrepancy between culturally defined goals and structural means available to achieve them.*' The culture calls for some type of behaviour that the social structure prevents from occurring. Deviance is considered as a result of anomie.

He takes the example of *American Dream,* which mentions the feasibility of journey from *log cabin to White House* for everyone. According to Merton, in American society, the culture places a great emphasis on material success, but many people fail to achieve such success due to their position in the society. Merton argues that this is so because structural means are not sufficient and only a few privileged reach at the top. This creates a feeling of deprivation among the others. The legitimate means to economic success are education and jobs. Not all groups of people have equal access to these means.

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The result is *structural strain* that produces deviance. Lower class individuals are most likely to experience these strains because they aim for the same goals as the rest of the society, however they have blocked opportunities for success. These individuals are therefore, more likely to turn to crime and deviance as a way to achieve economic success. There is a high correlation that exists between unemployment and crime and the structural strain theory helps explain this relationship.

According to Merton, structure of society itself produces deviance rather than psychological factors or personality types. A deviant person may resort to various responses and Merton enumerates five responses which he also calls as *adaptive responses* –

I. *Conformist* – He or she is the one who accepts both goals and means and despite their utility or fairness, he or she keeps on pursuing them with some degree of indifference. For example, school students often study to become like someone in life (the goal), in a manner they are told to and study in a fashion that has been continuing for years even if the method (the means) is not suitable for them.

II. *Innovator* – It occurs when an individual accepts *culturally defined goals*, but rejects *socially accepted means*. According to this broad definition, scientists are also deviants apart from thieves, robbers, etc. On the other hand, if a person who may accept cultural goal of material progress, but resorts to means like theft and crime can also fall in the same category of innovator. Merton argues that the members of the lower strata of society are most likely to resort to this route to success. He also argues that innovators are imperfectly socialised. So, they abandon institutional means while retaining aspirations of success.

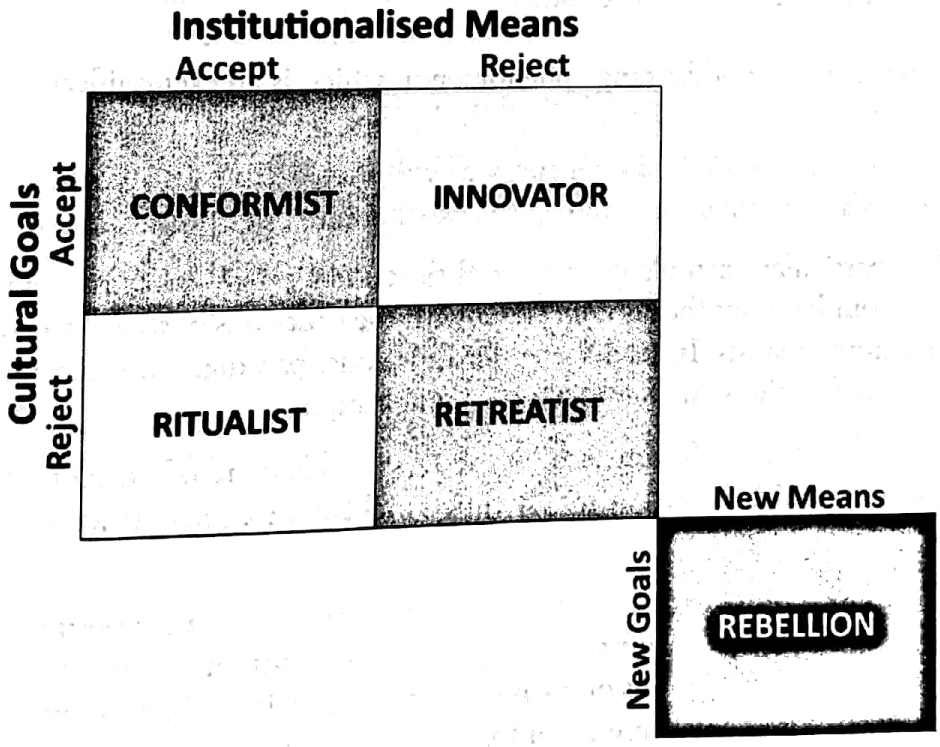

Fig. 4.14 Deviance and the Adaptive Responses

III. *Ritualist* – A ritualist accepts socially understandable means, but fails to understand the goals. Red-tapism in bureaucracy follows ritualism. A ritualist is least concerned with the achievement

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or non-achievement of goals. Members of lower middle class are the most likely adopters of this response as their occupations provide them little chances of great success, but their lower middle class values deter them to take other means.

IV. *Retreatist* – It involves rejection of both means and goals. Alcoholics, drug addicts, vagrants, etc. fall in this category. Retreatists reject the means and goals for various reasons and become indifferent to socio-cultural norms and values.

V. *Rebellion* – It involves first, the rejection of both goals and means and then the creation of new means and goals. Social reformers fall in this category as they propose new goals which later become institutionalised. They most predominantly belong to a rising class rather than the most depressed strata.

	Means	Goals	Example
Conformist	+	+	School Student
Innovator	–	+	Criminals
Ritualist	+	–	Bureaucrats
Retreator	–	–	Drug Addicts
Rebellion	–→+	–→+	Revolutionaries

Out of these five responses, except for the first one, other responses are *anomic responses*. According to Merton, majority of people remain conformists, even if there is a discrepancy between means and goals.

His theory of deviance is important for following terms –

I. Deviance represents a middle range phenomenon which is an exemplification of Merton's idea of middle range.

II. He highlighted unintended consequences of culturally defined goals and means in terms of dysfunctions also and thus, he modified the existing functional approach.

Thus, anomie is a particular example of structural functionalism, Merton is looking at social (and cultural) structures, but he is not focally concerned with the functions of those structures as in the case of earlier structure functionalists. Instead, as per his functional paradigm, he is mainly concerned with dysfunctions and non-functions and anomie is such an example.

Through the idea of anomie, Merton also introduces an element of criticism to the process of stratification in society, which is seen as totally functional by the earlier structural functionalists like Davis and Moore.

According to Merton, conformists are conformists not because they stand opposite to deviants, but due to the fact that those who are conformists at one point are deviants at another point of time. Further, even a deviant confirms to either means or goals (except a Retreatist). Many cultures diverge from each other, such that deviance in one culture is conformance in another. For example – Homosexuality is considered a deviant behaviour in most of the countries and only nineteen countries recognise same sex marriage as of January 2017.

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Merton's theory of anomie is criticised on the following grounds –

I. According to Interactionists like Howard Becker in his article *Labelling Theory Reconsidered, 1974*, deviance is not the intrinsic quality of behaviour itself. One is *labelled* as a deviant and one's not deviant. Same person may not be labelled as deviant by one group, but can be by another group.

II. Lemert in his *Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control, 1972* as well as Laurie Taylor in his *Deviance and Society, 1971* argue that those who wield power also decide who will be deviant. Definitions of deviance don't reflect consensus of society, but views of the powerful.

III. Merton refers to only goals and means, there may be other aspects of social structure which may cause anomie.

IV. Albert Cohen in his *Deviance and Control, 1966* argues that deviance is due to a specific subculture that members of particular subgroups develop. Hence, it is collective in nature and not at an individual level as Merton has tried to prove.

V. Albert Cohen further argues that Merton has failed to take into account *non-utilitarian crimes* such as vandalism, which don't produce any rewards that can be explained by the idea of a subculture, but not by goals-means dichotomy, as proposed by Merton.

VI. Chicago School also develops a distinctive explanation of deviance in the form of an *ecological approach* according to which, in a given city or town, deviance levels vary from area to area depending upon relative economic prosperity and other factors.

VII. A person at different times may respond to the same type of social impetus differently. It shows that anomic behaviour depends on the individual as well.

Merton and Durkheim on Anomie and Deviance

Durkheim	Merton
Durkheim sees anomie as a result of pathological consequences of certain social facts.	Anomie is a structural phenomenon.
Anomie is a temporary stage, occurring when there is a transition from one set of values to another and there is lack of value consensus during this transition.	According to Merton, anomie is ever present in society as some degree of structural strain is always there.
Durkheim sees anomie as synonymous to normlessness and since it is a pathological state, it has negative consequences.	Anomie is not normlessness per se, but a result of frustration from inability to achieve culturally defined goals. It may also lead to positive effects like innovation and revolution.

Reference Group

Reference group as a concept first appeared in – *Archives of Psychology* of Herbert Hyman, but it was Merton who added a functional dimension in his *Contribution to the Theory of Reference Group Behaviour, 1950*. This theory was primarily inspired from the Samuel Stouffer's – *The American Soldier,*

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1949 which highlights the feeling of *relative deprivation* of a soldier despite no apparent deprivation in terms of actual hardship.

Reference Group is defined as a group, with which, one always makes a comparison, in order to evaluate one's achievement, aspirations, role performance and ambition. They act as normative standards for the individual.

Merton later distinguished between *Reference Group* and *Interaction Group*. Interaction groups are a more general part of the individual's social environment but may neither set *normative standards* for individual nor serve as a standard of comparison. On the other hand, reference group is the aspirational group and is defined in normative terms as a standard of comparison. It implies that relative deprivation is also akin to reference group behaviour.

Reference groups can be of two types –

I. Membership Groups
II. Non-Membership Groups

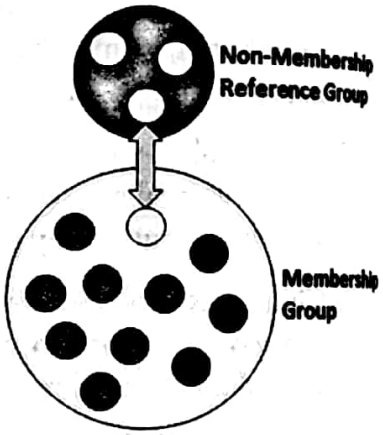

Fig. 4.15 Reference Groups

Further, according to Merton, reference groups can be of two more types – *positive* and *negative* reference groups. Positive reference groups are the ones that individual wishes to join; negative are those which individual wishes to avoid.

He also gives the concept of *anticipatory socialisation* in which individual starts to behave in a manner in which members of aspirational reference group behave. It leads to change in the value system of individual and it facilitates easy merger of individual in the aspirational group.

He also sees some dysfunctional aspects of anticipatory socialisation in case of closed systems. In such a situation, an individual becomes a pariah in his own social group and also fails to gain entry into reference group and is reduced to a *marginal man*.

It is totally up to an individual to decide what reference group one will make. So, a membership group may not be a reference group, but a non-membership group can be.

Merton also suggested some factors which are decisive in making a group, a reference group –

I. Power and prestige
II. Isolation in membership group
III. Open vs close group
IV. Reference individuals or role models in a group

Further, reference groups don't remain the same always. The choice of reference groups depends on the nature and quality of norms and values one is interested in and as interests change, reference groups also change. One's reference group in political field may not be same as those in the religious field. As the choice of reference group is entirely upon an individual, often, there is a considerable difference in the

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type of groups chosen by different generations. This, to some extent, explains the phenomenon of *Generation Gap*.

Merton's theories and concepts are considered relevant, especially while developing a concept of holistic explanation in terms of both intended and unintended consequences. Social problems can be approached in a more pragmatic way, undertaking its manifest and latent analysis. By using Merton's functional paradigm, a number of middle range theories were formulated, which have strengthened the understanding of the society. For example, his theory of deviance has led to the development of a number of sub-cultural theories of deviance. The study of limited phenomenon is followed till now. He also made a contribution to make Sociology more inter-disciplinary. He gave some other concepts like *Self-fulfilling Prophecy* which have become a part of common vocabulary, along with his other concepts like *Reference Group*.

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

A self-fulfilling prophecy is a prediction that becomes true, due to the very fact that it is a prophecy and because of a purported positive feedback mechanism between behaviour of the actor and belief of the prophecy maker. For example, if a teacher in a class openly says that a student *X* will top, there are chances that student may actually tops the class. A corollary of this is that subjects often perform according to the social expectations attached to them. This concept is also applicable in sociology of work.

Mead – Self and Identity

Mead was one of the most important scholars that were associated with the Chicago School. He gave a unique explanation of the human interactions in society and rejected a behaviouristic view of human beings, the view that people blindly and unconsciously respond to, as an external stimuli. He believed that people had consciousness, a self, and that it was the responsibility of the sociologist to study this aspect of social reality. He was highly influenced by *psychological behaviourism* and included many of its principles in his works. Mead offered Sociology, a social-psychological theory that stood in stark contrast to the prevailing theories offered by most of the major European theorists. His works were also central towards evolution of symbolic Interactionism.

Self and Identity

The two most significant intellectual roots of Mead's work in particular, and of symbolic Interactionism in general, are the *philosophy of pragmatism* and *psychological behaviourism*. His ideas are contained in *Mind, Self and Society, 1934*, a work compiled from the notes of his students, in particular of Herbert Blumer. His major theoretical work in the field of symbolic Interactionism is his idea of *Self*. *Self*, according to Herbert Blumer, is the foundation of symbolic Interaction.



Fig. 4.16 Herbert Mead

In Mead's view, traditional social psychology began with the psychology of the individual, in an effort to explain social experience; in contrast, Mead always gave priority to the social world in

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understanding a social experience. A thinking, self-conscious individual is logically impossible in Mead's theory, without a prior social group, i.e., the social group comes first, and it leads to the development of self-conscious mental states. To explain his view point, Mead took help of various concepts like – gesture, symbols, mind and self.

The *gesture* is in Mead's view, the basic mechanism in the social act and in the social process. More generally it can be physical or vocal. What distinguishes humans is their ability to employ *significant gestures*, or those that require thought on the part of the actor before a reaction. The *vocal gesture* is particularly important in the development of significant gestures. Not all vocal gestures are significant, for example, a grunt. However, it is the development of vocal gestures, especially in the form of a language that is the most important factor in making possible, the distinctive development of human life.

A *significant symbol* is a kind of gesture, which only humans can make. Gestures become significant symbols when they arouse in the individual, who is making them, the same kind of response, they are supposed to elicit from those, to whom the gestures are addressed. For example, when we say *hello* to another person, it elicits the same response as it arouses in us, only when we have significant symbols, can we truly have communication. Communication in the full sense of the term is not possible among ants, bees, and so on as they use some basic gestures and not significant symbols. Physical gestures can also be significant symbols, but they are not ideally suited to be significant symbols because people cannot easily see or hear their own physical gestures. Thus, it is the vocal utterances made by us that are most likely to become significant symbols, although not all vocalisations are symbols. For example, ambiguous utterances, grunts and babblings are not significant symbols. The set of vocal gestures, most likely to become significant symbols, is *language*.

In a conversation of gestures, only the gestures are communicated and not the meanings. However, with language, the gestures and their meanings, both are communicated. Another effect of language is that it stimulates the person speaking as it does to others by eliciting the same response. From a pragmatic point of view, a significant symbol works better in the social world than a non-significant gesture, as the former has better potential of making an effective communication. For example, in communicating our displeasure to others, an angry verbal rebuke works far better than our contorted body language.

In Mead's theory, significant symbols perform another crucial function –they make the *mind*, mental processes, and so on, possible. It is only through significant symbols, especially language, that human *thinking* is possible. Use of language has made it possible that we can think beyond the limited. Mead defines thinking as '*simply an internalised or implicit conversation of the individual, with himself, by means of such gestures* or it is a *conversation between I and Me*.' In other words, thinking involves talking to oneself and it is possible only when there is a language or significant symbols to facilitate that. Significant symbols like language also make possible symbolic interaction.

Mind is deemed by Mead as a process and not as a thing. It is as an *inner conversation with one's self* and it is not found as a physical thing within the individual. It is not an intracranial thing, as it is understood generally, but it is a social phenomenon. It arises and develops within the social process and is an integral part of that process. The social process precedes the mind, i.e., it is not, as many believe, a product of the mind and mind develops as we as humans engage ourselves in social processes. Mind can also be distinguished from other like-sounding concepts like consciousness, in Mead's work, by

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its ability to respond to the overall community and put forth an organised response. Mind involves thought processes, oriented towards problem solving. The real world is rife with problems, and it is the function of the mind to try to solve those problems and permit people to operate more effectively in the society.

Self

Self is defined by Mead as the '*peculiar ability to be both subject and object.*' As is true of all Mead's major concepts, the self also presupposes a social process, communication, among humans. According to Mead, lower animals do not have selves, nor do human infants at birth. Self arises with development and through social activity and social relationships. Hence, it is also a result of social processes and interactions that we subject ourselves to. To Mead, it is impossible to imagine a self arising in the absence of social experiences. However, once a self has developed, it is possible for it to continue to exist without a social contact.

REFLEXIVITY

This is an approach in which the sociologist tries to take an outsider's perspective on her/his own work. She/he tries to look at herself/himself and her/his research, through the eyes of others, especially those who are the subjects of her research.

One of the practical aspects of reflexivity is the importance of carefully documenting whatever one is doing. This ensures that others can retrace the steps we have taken to arrive at a particular conclusion, and see for themselves, if we are right. It also helps us to check and re-check our own thinking or line of argument.

How much ever self-reflexive the sociologist tries to be, there is always the possibility of unconscious bias. To deal with this possibility, sociologists explicitly mention those features of their own social background that might be relevant as a possible source of bias on the topic being researched. This alerts readers to the possibility of bias and allows them to mentally *compensate* for it when reading the research study.

The self is dialectically related to the mind. That is, on one hand, the body is not a self and becomes a self only when a mind has developed. On the other hand, the self, along with its reflexiveness, is essential to the development of the mind. However, even though we may think of it as a mental process, the self is a social process.

The general mechanism for the development of the self is *reflexivity*, or *the ability to put ourselves unconsciously into others' places and to act as they act.* As a result, people are able to examine themselves as others would examine them. The self also allows people to take part in their conversations with others. That is, we become aware of what we are saying and as a result, we are able to monitor what is being said and to determine what is going to be said next. In order to have selves, individuals must be able to get *outside themselves* so that they can evaluate themselves, so that they can become objects to themselves. To do this, people basically put themselves in the same experiential field as they put everyone else. However, people cannot experience themselves directly. They can do so only indirectly, by putting themselves in the position of others and viewing themselves from that standpoint. The standpoint from which one views one's self can be that of a particular individual or that of the social group as a whole.

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In Mead's analysis, *Self* is greatly dynamic because –

I. It carries the capability to read the self of others.
II. It has the capability to go for an internal interaction between *I* and *Me*.
III. It has the capability to communicate with the *mind*.

According to Mead, *Self* of an individual is a process and not a thing. It is not a biological phenomenon and individual is not born with a self, but it develops as the individual grows in the society. It is developed through communication and interactions. Mead traces the genesis of the self through two stages in childhood development –

I. *Play Stage* – The first stage is the play stage. It is during this stage that children learn to take the attitude of *particular/discrete others* to themselves. Although lower animals also play, only human beings *play by being someone else*. Children play various roles in which they learn to take roles of others who are around them. As a result of such play, the child learns to become both, *subject* and *object* and begins to become able to build a self. However, it is a *limited self*, because the child can take only the roles of *distinct and separate others*. For example, children may play at being *maa* and *papa* and in the process, develop the ability to evaluate themselves as their parents, and other specific individuals. However, they lack a more general and organised sense of themselves.
II. *Game Stage* – It is the next stage, the game stage, that is required if a person is to develop a self in the full sense of the term. Whereas in the *play stage*, the child takes the role of *discrete particular others*, in the game stage, the child must take the role of everyone else involved in the game, i.e., take the roles of, which Mead terms as *generalised other*. In the play stage, children are not organised as a whole because they play a series of discrete roles. As a result, in Mead's view, they lack definite personalities. However, in the game stage, such organisation begins and a definite personality starts to emerge. Children start to learn to be able to function in organised groups and, most important, to determine what they will do within a specific group. In other words, to have a self, one must be a member of a community and be directed by the attitudes common to the community. While play requires only pieces of selves, the game requires a coherent self.

Through these two concepts of play and game, Mead elaborates a process of social interactions which lead to the development of self. Mead tries to demonstrate that whatever social capital we possess is acquired and learned and we are not born with that.

Generalised Other is one of the central concept in Mead's theory of *self*. The generalised other is the attitude of the entire community. The ability to take the role of the generalised other is essential for the development of the self. It is also crucial that people should be able to evaluate themselves from the point of view of the *generalised other* and not merely from the viewpoint of *discrete others*. It is only when we take roles of the generalised others that we become full members of the society. Taking the role of the generalised others, rather than that of discrete others, allows for the possibility of abstract thinking and objectivity. Not only taking the role of the generalised others is essential to the development of the self, it is also crucial for the development of organised group activities. The generalised others also represents

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Mead's inclination to give priority to the pre-existing social world as it is through the generalised others, that the group influences the behaviour of individuals.

Mead also looks at the self from a pragmatic point of view. At the individual level, the self allows the individual to be a more efficient member of the larger society. Because of the self, people are more likely to do what is expected of them in a given situation. Because people often try to live up to group expectations, they are more likely to avoid the inefficiencies that come from failing to do what the group expects. Furthermore, the self allows for greater coordination in a society as a whole. Because individuals can be counted on to do what is expected of them, the group and society at large can operate more effectively and efficiently.

Though community plays a large role in the formation of self, it doesn't mean actors are little more than conformists and that there is little individuality, since everyone is busy conforming to the expectations of the generalised others. But Mead is clear that each self is different from all the others. There is not simply one grand generalised other but that there are many generalised others in the society, because there are many groups in the society. People, therefore, have multiple generalised others and, as a result, multiple selves. Each person's unique set of selves makes him or her different from everyone else. Furthermore, people need not accept the community as it is. They can reform things and seek to make them better. In other words, to stand up to the generalised other, the individual must construct a still larger generalised other, composed not only from the present but also from the past and the future, and then respond to it. This idea adds dynamism to Mead's concept of self.

I and Me

While Mead takes an evolutionary view of self through the play and game stages, he also identifies two other aspects, or phases, of the self, which he labels the *I* and the *Me*. According to Mead, the self is essentially a social process going on with these two distinguishable phases. The *I* and the *Me* are processes within the larger process of the self and like the self, they are also not *things*.

The *I* is the immediate response of an individual to others. It is the incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self. People do not know in advance, what the action the *I* will take in a social situation. We are never totally aware of the *I* and through it, we surprise ourselves with our actions. We know the *I* only after the act has been carried out. Thus, we know the *I* only in our memories. Mead lays great stress on the *I* for four reasons –

I. First, it is a key source of novelty in the social processes and gives dynamism to the individual personality, which otherwise, sounds conformist to the society.

II. Second, Mead believes that it is in the *I* that our most important values are located.

III. Third, the *I* constitutes something that we all seek, which is the realisation of the self. It is the *I* that permits us to develop a *definite personality*

IV. Finally, Mead sees an evolutionary process in history, in which, people in primitive societies are dominated more by the *Me*, while in modern societies, there is a greater component of the *I*.

The *I* gives Mead's theoretical system some much-needed dynamism and creativity. Without it, Mead's actors would be totally dominated by external and internal controls. Since every personality is a mix of

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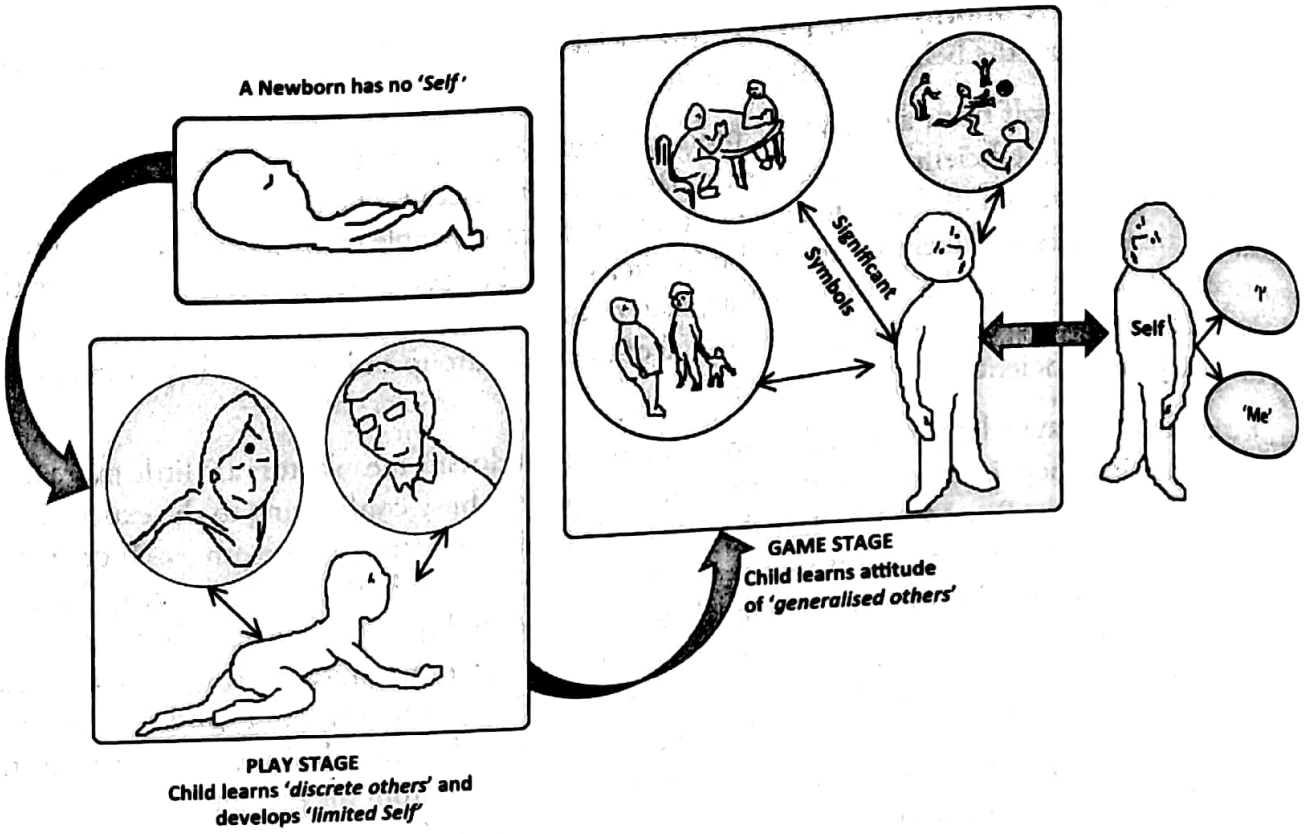

Fig. 4.17 Mead's Concept of 'I and Me'

the *I* and the *Me*, the great historical figures are seen as having a larger proportion of the *I* than most others have. But in day-to-day situations, anyone's *I* may assert itself and lead to a change in the social situation. Uniqueness is also brought into Mead's system through the biographical articulation of each individual's *I* and *Me*. That is, the specific exigencies of each person's life give him or her a unique mix of the *I* and the *Me*.

The *I* and the *Me* have contrasting natures. The *I* reacts against the *Me*, which is defined by Mead as the *organised set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes*. In other words, the *Me* is the adoption of the generalised other and Mead calls it *Social Self*. In contrast to the *I*, people are conscious of the *Me*. The *Me* involves conscious responsibility. As Mead says, *The Me is a conventional, habitual individual*. Conformists are dominated by the *Me*, although everyone, whatever his or her degree of conformity has, and must have, a substantial *Me*. It is through the *Me* that society dominates the individual. Indeed, Mead defines the idea of social control as the dominance of the expression of the *Me* over the expression of the *I*.

Mead also looks at the *I* and the *Me* in pragmatic terms. The *Me* allows the individual to live comfortably in the social world, while the *I* makes a change in the society possible. Society gets enough conformity via the *Me*, to allow it to function, and it gets a steady infusion of new developments through the *I* to prevent it from stagnating. The *I* and the *Me* are thus, a part of the whole social process and allow both individuals and society to function more effectively. We achieve self-awareness when we learn to distinguish between the *Me* and the *I*. Individuals become self-conscious when they begin to see themselves as others see them.

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I	Me
Both are two dimension of the *Self*, which is created socially.	
The *I* is the immediate response of an individual to others.	The *Me* is the adoption of the generalised others and is also called *social self*.
It is the incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self.	The *Me* is a conventional and habitual individual.
We are never totally aware of the *I* and we know the *I* only after the act has been carried out.	We are conscious of the *Me*.
It initiates change.	It promotes status quo.
It is the storehouse of novelty and creativity.	It is a storehouse of conformity.

G H Mead gave a distinct social-psychological explanation when Sociology was dominated by macro theories. He indicated that the foundation of human life is human behaviour, i.e., neither it is normatively defined values as earlier sociologists like Emile Durkheim have argued, and is purely driven by instinct, as indicated by Sigmund Freud, nor, behaviour is totally guided by material considerations as explained by Marx. Rather, human behaviour is reflective, reactive and modifiable in interactional situations

Mead is often criticised for ignoring biological/genetic influence on human attitude. According to Ropers, Mead's analysis sees social activities as only discrete episodes without any historical continuity. Interactionism in general focuses upon individual interactions in vacuum. Patrick Baert, in his *Social Theory in Twentieth Century and Beyond, 2010,* argues that Mead saw social life as too consensual. Critics also point out that Mead and other symbolic Interactionists fail to elaborate the origin of meanings. However, this criticism is largely unwarranted as Mead has highlighted that self is not same for every individual and the introduction of the concept of the *I* of individual offers much dynamism to his theory.

This theory of Mead debunked all the predecessors and it offered a cornerstone to the rise of symbolic interaction. He was a true founder of a sociological tradition which emerged as a strong pillar of the discipline. According to John Dewey – '*Mead was a seminal mind of the very first order.*

Question Bank

1. What is Social Action? How it is related to wider society?
2. Commodity Fetishism captures the evils of modern factory systems. Comment.
3. Functionalism laid the foundation of the discipline of Sociology, but was soon challenged by other perspectives. Analyse the statement in the wake of inherent limitations of functionalist perspective.
4. Marx laid out a radical view of society, but his theories lacked pragmatic outlook. Comment in the wake of failings of communism around the world.
5. Communism of Marx remains utopian, but the romanticism associated with it has kept the ideology alive. Comment in the wake of limitations of today's capitalistic societies.

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6. Durkheim's approach to Sociology was unique for its precise definitions, acute observations of social facts and irrefutable logics. Analyse this statement in the wake of his landmark study of suicide.
7. Division of labour can be dysfunctional, but society has mechanisms to correct this. Evaluate this statement in the wake of Durkheim's conception of division of labour.
8. Man creates religion. Comment in light of Durkheim's idea of religion. What is the flaw in his approach to such an ambitious statement about religion?
9. We have to first understand man before we understand the society. Evaluate this statement in the light of Weberian idea of social action.
10. The proverbial Weberian Bureaucracy is not to be found anywhere in real life, but still his Ideal Type framework of bureaucracy, is so relevant in understanding the modern 21st Century Indian bureaucracy. Comment.
11. What is Authority? What kinds of authorities did Gandhi and Hitler exercise from the perspective of the Weberian framework?
12. Protestant Ethics in Europe led to a social change in Europe according to Weber. What were the other factors and conditions that precipitated and facilitated this change?
13. Parsons' idea of social system was vague and futile. It was too grand to find a favour among many social researchers. What are the major limitations of his framework?
14. Interpretative Sociology owes a lot to Weber and Mead. Comment.
15. Merton exposed the proverbial chinks in the armour of Parsons, but he himself repeated the same mistakes. Comment.
16. Merton's idea of Latent Function introduced the much needed flexibility in the functional analysis of the society. Evaluate this statement in the light of the limitations of Parsonsian frameworks.
17. Society will be stagnant if there are no deviants. Comment.
18. Indian youth has to make a careful choice of reference groups to make India a superpower by 2050. What conditions may lead to the choice of a bad reference group according to Merton?
19. Mead's conception of the Self and its dialectical relationship with society is so fundamental, but still grossly ignored by the earlier sociologists. Comment.

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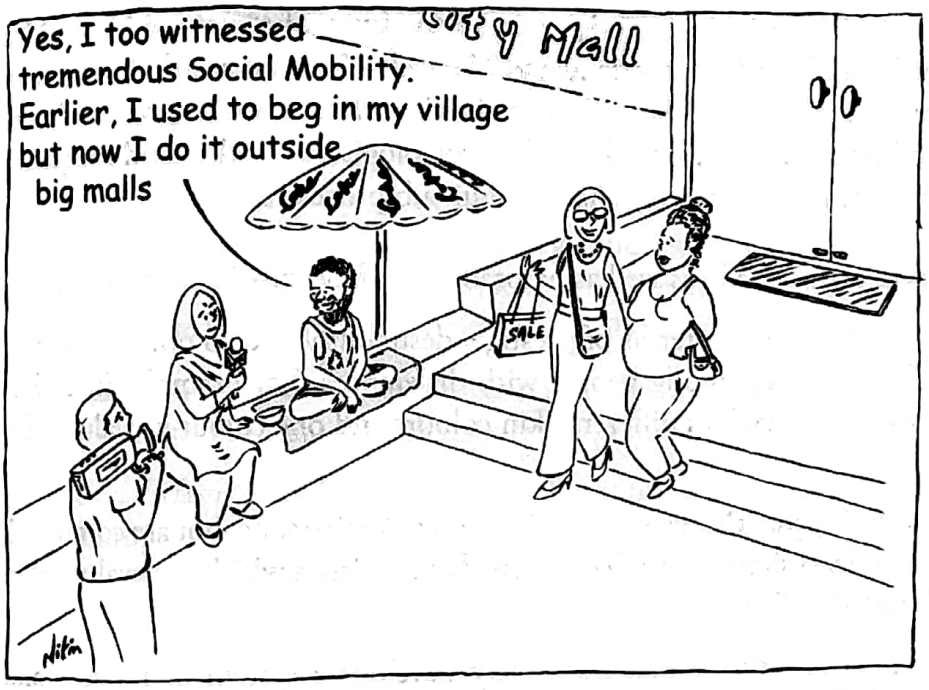
Stratification and Mobility

5



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of Stratification and Social Mobility
2. Explain the various processes involved in Stratification
3. Understand various sociological perspectives on Stratification
4. Explain the phenomenon of Social Mobility and the factors affecting it

Despite our claims of divinity making us equal beings and even most of the modern democratic framework treating us equal, inequality remains a fact of life. Sociologists are also intrigued by this phenomenon and various conceptual frameworks like Stratification and Mobility are devised. Functional theorists have a much benign view of this phenomenon and they term it as a result of the intrinsic needs of the society. They also claim that stratification is inevitable and it also benefits all the members of the society by facilitating an efficient division of labour. But various other thinkers take exception to this view. Conflict theorists view stratification as a contraption by the dominant groups in the society. According to them, stratification leads to oppression of those at the bottom. Stratification doesn't maximise the good of society, but only of those at the top. A solution to this stratification issue is presented in the form of social mobility, a transition from one hierarchy or social state to another.

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All societies are marked by differences on various counts like sex, wealth, skills, colour, status, power and geography. Such differences may be natural or man-made. But such differences rarely remain differences. Society tends to attach values to such differences in terms of superiority or inferiority, desirability or undesirability and so on. Attachment of these values, later leads to evaluation of differences as well. Social differences now no longer remain mere differences, but now become inequalities. While *differences are created by nature, man creates inequalities.* Thus, social inequalities come into existence into every society. This makes inequalities culture specific. These inequalities occur in specific pattern. These patterns are understood through the concept of *Social Stratification.*

Social stratification is a process in which social inequalities exist in the form of structural hierarchical strata, one placed above the other. It is defined by Sutherland and Maxwell – *'As a process of differentiation, which places some people higher than the others'.* Stratification is viewed as a social process (social phenomenon) as well as a method (mental construct), devised by sociologists to understand inequality in the society. As a social process, it can be visualised as having four sub processes –

I. *Differentiation* – Differences exist socially as well as naturally and they exist in every society.

II. *Evaluation* – Differences are evaluated in terms of prestige, desirability and so on. It leads to a feeling of superiority, inferiority, etc. among people with differences. For example, in Indian society, apparently more value is placed on different skin colours and one colour is evaluated as superior over the other.

III. *Ranking* – The differences and inequalities also don't exist in an objective state, but are compared. Ranking is applied to people who share a set of common characteristics which are evaluated in terms of desirability and undesirability.

IV. *Rewarding* – After differentiation and evaluation, society develops a system of rewards and punishment in the form of differential opportunities to those belonging to different strata, and stratification is further reinforced.

Strata are either closed or open. In closed strata, mobility is not possible. For example, caste is largely a closed stratification type. Modern democracies have institutions like bureaucracy, which are examples of open stratification.

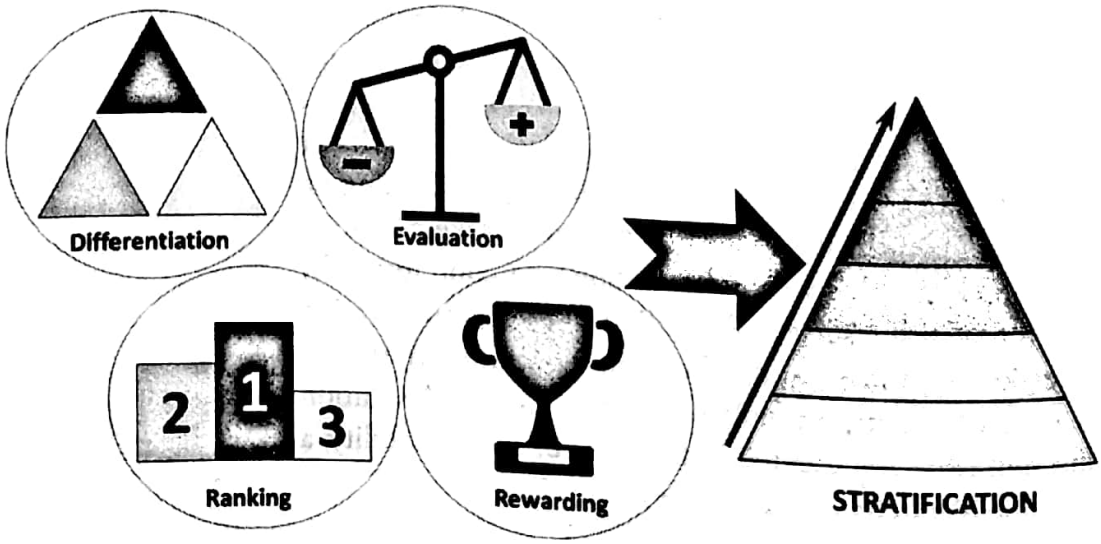

Fig. 5.1 Process of Stratification

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Social stratification is traditionally classified into four forms by T B Bottomore – slavery, estates, caste and class.

I. *Slavery* is the earliest form of social stratification. It is the legally recognised division of society into slaves and citizens. Citizens have the citizenship rights whereas, the slaves don't have citizenship rights. It existed in most of the parts of Europe and other ancient nations from 500 BCE to 600 BCE.

II. *Estate system* is a later form of social stratification, which according to Bottomore, developed as a result of development of feudal system. They were established in Europe in the 7th Century and they lasted until the 17th Century. Estates were legally defined, with each estate having special privileges and duties. Feudal estates were also political groups. Estates included serfs, clergy and feudal lords or the nobility as the three estates. The nobility were ordained to defend all, the clergy to pray for all and the commoners or serfs to provide food for all. Feudal lords were in control of the land as well. Clergy and feudal lords controlled the economy and oppressed the serfs. A vestige of estate system still remains in England in which hereditary titles are still recognised and some other persons are also knighted for their services.

III. *Caste* is a type of social stratification in which, occupation, status and rights are fixed by birth. It still exists in India, though its forms and functions are constantly changing now.

IV. *Social classes* may have existed for long, but had more definite origin in the feudal estates of Europe. Classes are the consequences of economic factors. According to Marx, the ownership of the means of production is the crucial factor that shapes the class system. Those who own the means of production like land and capital, form one class and those who do not, form another class. Diverse classifications are offered by different thinkers. Classes also allow greater degree of mobility than other erstwhile modes of stratification like estates and slavery.

Inequality and Equality

G D Berreman suggests that out of *differentiation* of persons, which is a natural and universal phenomenon, inequality or social evaluation of differences arises. They are a result of association of individuals to different social groups, which are evaluated differently by the society. Inequality is an important area of study in Sociology, as it is closely related to poverty, deprivation and exclusion as well.

Patterns of unequal access to social resources are also commonly called social inequalities. In every society, some people have a greater share of the valued resources like money, property, education, health, and power than others. These social resources can be divided into four forms of capital according to Pierre Bourdieu –

I. Economic capital in the form of material assets and income.

II. Cultural capital such as educational qualifications and status.

III. Social capital in the form of networks of contacts and social associations.

IV. Symbolic capital like social status and good reputation.

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Often, these forms of capital overlap and one can be converted into the other. For example, a person from a well-off family (economic capital) can afford expensive higher education, and can acquire cultural or educational capital. Someone with influential relatives and friends (social capital) may, through access to good advice, recommendations or information, manage to get a well-paid job.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

The concept was originally given by James Coleman. It describes the sum total of relations that exist between individuals, both within families and outside family, in the community and outside the community as well. Social knowledge and connections also help people to accomplish their goals and extend influence. Like physical capital, it is also an asset as it helps individuals to grow in their lives and have better opportunities in terms of employment, education, etc. Social capital is higher where community bonds are stronger. As per estimates, developing countries are endowed with higher social capital as compared to developed countries. The concept was also used by Pierre Bourdieu in describing the four types of capitals.

Inequalities existed long ago and they have been studied even before the dawn of Sociology as a discipline. Rousseau identified two kinds of inequality among people, first, *natural* or physical inequality, referring to difference of age, health, bodily strength, and mental abilities; and second, *moral* or political inequality, referring to differences in privileges that are established or authorised by the consent of people themselves, e.g. power and honour.

Inequalities in society exist in various forms like, income, political, economic, wealth, capability and social capital. Haralambos and Holborn, in their *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, 2014*, have clubbed all types of inequalities in two broad types of inequalities, which are, inequality of power and inequality of material well -being. These inequalities become repressive when they are rigidly enforced. Caste, slavery, bondage, etc. are such examples. Inequalities take the form of stratification in a society when they are present in the structure of the society, in different hierarchical patterns. Inequalities exist at micro level as well as at macro level. Globally, nations are also divided as first world countries and the third world countries. Dependency theory expresses these inequalities from a Marxist perspective.

Marxists attribute inequalities in societies to the unequal access to the forces of production. According to them, opportunities and resources are monopolised by a few at the expense of the others, which lead to inequalities in societies.

Functionalists, on the other hand, argue that inequalities in society are inevitable as they ensure that all kinds of jobs get done in the society. Inequalities are a result of unequal capabilities of individuals and they get unequal rewards for that. Wilkinson and Pickett have contested this view in their *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better, 2010*. According to them, inequality in society is not only harmful for the individual, but is also dysfunctional for the society as a whole. For example, unequal societies have higher level of mistrust and as a result, cooperation and harmony in the society takes a hit.

According to Goran Therborn, in his *The Killing Fields of Inequality, 2015* –' *Inequalities are produced and sustained socially by systemic arrangements, processes and distributive actions, individual as well as collective*'. Hence, both individual and collective actions cause inequalities and both structures as well as social actions are causes of it.

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Therborn has delved not only into causes, but also consequences of inequalities, which he cites in the form of premature death, ill health, humiliation, loss of human rights, exclusion from mainstream social life, powerlessness and even dehumanisation. According to him – '*Social consequence of inequalities is a violation of human dignity, denial of the possibility for everybody's human capabilities to develop*'. To deal with these consequences, he suggests that *exclusion* of the poor from everyday life and *seclusion* of the elite from the public has to be countered somehow.

Attempts have also been made to measure inequalities, especially economic inequalities, in objective terms. Gini Coefficient is used by the economists to measure economic inequalities at the national level. There are many periodic reports and surveys as well. A 2017 report of Oxfam, titled *An Economy for the 99%*, indicates that the richest one per cent in India hold 58 per cent of the total wealth.

Excessive inequalities are seen as undesirable in both, communist and capitalist societies as it is a potential source of unrest, conflict and antagonism. Indian constitution mentions reduction of social and economic inequalities as one of the directive principles, which state should strive to follow. Similarly, in most of the countries, taxation is in the form of *progressive taxation,* which involves taxing the rich at a higher rate and the less affluent, at a lower rate. Similarly, social security schemes are run by governments in most of the developed countries, which aim at uplifting the poor and bridging the economic gap between the rich and the poor. In India also, many positive discrimination tools are used to minimise social and income inequalities. Provisioning of reservations, PDS, concessional loans, subsidies, free education, cheaper medicines, etc. aim at reducing the inequalities.

PETER SAUNDERS ON EQUALITY

He identified equality as a multifarious phenomenon and attributed three characteristics to it –

I. Formal or Legal Equality – In most modern democracies, this type of equality is de-facto there. For example, Indian Constitution provides Right to Equality. But in practice, it may not be same as theory.

II. Equality of Opportunity – It is a symbol of merit based society, but most of the societies are imperfect on this count.

III. Equality of Outcome – It is a symbol of an egalitarian society, which provides for equality in terms of outcome as well, irrespective of the efforts put by the members.

At the same time, he also identifies the fact that equality of opportunity, is often in contradiction to the other two equalities. For example, a system of positive discrimination (like the many which exist in India also), actually discriminates others and hence, leads to injustice as well. He suggests solution to this problem by ensuring that people are de-facto equal formally and are not denied their legitimate entitlements.

Hierarchy

Hierarchy in society is closely associated with the process of stratification. While one view is that in traditional societies, hierarchy existed, but in modern societies, there is stratification. According to some sociologists, hierarchy prevailed in societies based on castes or estates and social-inequalities were legitimated as naturally given. Stratification, on the other hand, is a feature of modern industrial societies, in which inequalities do exist but are not considered as a part of natural or divine order. However, it is only partially true.

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In general, inequalities lead to stratification and stratification leads to hierarchy. When inequalities are arranged in an order, hierarchy is formed. Hierarchy denotes presence of multiple strata in a society placed one above the other. Hierarchies can be present in many forms like caste hierarchy, class hierarchy, gender hierarchy and political hierarchy. More extensive the hierarchy, higher is the differentiation in the society. Further, according to the functionalists, hierarchy is also a symbol of rising specialisation and differentiation in the society. Post modernists argue that western societies, now have a continuum of individualised inequalities and hence, almost infinite strata and numerous hierarchies.

Hierarchy can also be interpreted as the opposite of equality. Modern democratic societies provide for equality of opportunity and abhor hierarchy based on status. Rule of law and equality of law have given equal status to everyone. Though, modern democracies have facilitated equality in the political sphere, inequalities in social and economic sphere still exist. In fact, today, an individual is a part of multiple hierarchies at the same time. There is a different hierarchy at workplace and a different one at home.

Hierarchy also results into unequal opportunities and unequal rewards. Unequal rewards further reinforce hierarchy. Marxists perceive this hierarchy as a design of the dominant classes and deem it inimical to classless society. According to them, hierarchy promotes conflict as well. Functionalists, on the other hand, argue that hierarchy is a symbol of division of labour in the society and is necessary for working of the Social System.

Hierarchy is viewed in value-neutral terms also. In parlance of work organisation, hierarchy is a necessity. In organisations, hierarchy provides direction to the collective efforts and ensures that orders are executed. No organisation in the world is without a formal or informal hierarchy. In some organisations like army, it is very tight, in some organisations like startup tech firms, it is very loose.

Poverty

Poverty is a social problem which is often expressed in terms of lack of material resources which one requires for a minimum standard of life. But, what are these minimum standards? There is no agreement upon this and hence, the definition of poverty has no consensus. According to Ruth Lister, in her *Poverty, 2004– 'Definition of poverty has important implications for political, policy and academic discourse'.* In India also, recent definitions of poverty from the government have risen heckles as critics argued that these definitions are exclusionary and don't provide a measure of actual poverty. Another contention of the critics is that across the countries, poverty is invariably defined in terms of material well-being only. Hence, poverty is defined as a form of multiple deprivations. So, poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and caused by a variety of factors and hence, its manifestation also differs from context to context. Poverty is an inter-related wave of economic, social, psychological, cultural and political factors, which influence the occurrence and persistence of poverty. Real poverty may not be apparent and apparent poverty may not be real.

Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well- being and comprises of many dimensions. It includes low income and the inability to acquire basic goods and services required for survival with dignity. There are two broad views on poverty, one is of a sociologist and other is of an economist. A sociologist looks at it as a multidimensional concept by taking into consideration, many aspects of human well-being, while an economist identifies the lack of economic resources as causing hardship to a person. A sociologist

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views poverty within the framework of social problems and concerns himself with the causes and effects of poverty.

Poverty can also be looked at from various other perspectives, like – *absolute* or *relative* poverty. Absolute poverty is measured in terms of a benchmark, like per capita income in absolute terms, through concepts like *poverty line*. For example, such global parameter can be $1.25 per day. But this suffers from a major weakness as purchasing powers and currency exchange rates in different countries may be different. It addresses only subsistence needs. Relative poverty, on the other hand, argues that poverty is culturally defined and measured in terms of relative deprivation. Peter Townsend was one of the pioneers of defining poverty in terms of relative deprivation, which was backed by his extensive field studies in 1960s and 70s in Britain. Other measures like *calorie* approach have also been adopted. Despite varying approaches, this one is commonly agreed that poverty is one of the fundamental causes of exclusion. It leads to multiple vulnerabilities and hence, multiple forms of exclusions.

DEPENDENCY CULTURE

It is a neoliberal perspective which refers to a system of social welfare that encourages people to stay on state sponsored benefits rather than work. Liberal politicians like Margaret Thatcher were vocal critics of this culture. The critics of this viewpoint assume that people make rational calculations and for them, finding a work which requires more efforts and provide less returns, is a loss making proposition and hence, they continue to hang on state doles. The theory also terms the situation bad for the beneficiaries as well as they become indolent and don't develop any capacities. A dependency culture may arise out of a desire to reduce relative poverty, through means tested benefits and a progressive tax system.

Major theories that have described poverty are –

I. *Blame the poor* view and *blame the system* view – It can be argued that the poor remain in poverty because avenues of social mobility are very few and structural means are not available to everyone. There are often visible and invisible barriers which are overlooked by *blame the poor* view. While the *blame the poor* view identifies that a poor is poor due to lack of skills, competency and unwillingness to enter the labour market, structural perspective asks why a poor person has low skill and competency? There are several structural factors like, class, caste, gender, ethnicity, educational, health access and geographical factors which lead to differential access to resources and rewards. So, lack of ambition, skills and competency is a consequence of the constrained situation of the poor and not a cause of it. So, structural view calls for minimisation of inequalities and redistribution of resources for reducing poverty.

II. *The cultural perspective* – The term *Culture of Poverty* was popularised in the US in 1950s, by Oscar Lewis, in his study of Mexican cities. According to it, poverty is not a result of individual shortcomings, but an outcome of a larger social atmosphere in which children are socialised. According to the cultural perspective on poverty, the lower class is seen as manifesting patterns of behaviour and values which are characteristically different from those of the dominant society and culture and it is similar across the countries, marked by features like, fatalism, instant gratification, feeling of dependency and helplessness. This culture, or sub-culture, as Lewis calls it, helps in perpetuating poverty.

III. *Poverty as a positive feedback system or a vicious circle* – It is also called a vicious circle of poverty and this theory argues that various factors which cause poverty work in such a way that a poor

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person can never get out of those. For example, unemployment leads to poverty, poor people cannot have good education, without good education there is no employment.

IV. *Stratification theories* – The poor are also part of stratification scheme in the society, in which they occupy the bottom of the pyramid. Different approaches define this stratification differently. For example, functionalists like Herbert Gans, in his *More Equality, 1973,* argue that poverty persists because it is rewarding for a majority of section who want various kinds of services. Its existence ensures that all kinds of menial works also get done. It helps in running of various institutions like police, hospitals and asylums. Poor also provide a baseline of failure to the rest of society which works hard to avoid falling to that level. However, non-functional view holds that some sections like older people, minority groups and females are more likely to witness poverty.

V. *Dialectical approach* – Marxists argue that poverty in society can only be understood in terms of the effects of a capitalist economy. According to them, the question *Why Poverty?* is same as asking *Why Wealth?*. Poverty exists because it benefits the ruling class.

VI. *Poverty and power thesis* – Ralph Miliband in his *Politics and Poverty, 1974,* argues that the poor are the weakest groups in the struggle for the scarce resources. Poor often have no bargaining powers, low trade union support, etc. which is exploited by the employers.

VII. *Feminist view – 'Poverty of women is often hidden behind the study of poverty as a household phenomenon'*, according to Ruspini in his article *Longitudinal Research in Social Sciences, 2000.* It is well known that employment rates of women are lower than men and they often land into low paid jobs.

VIII. *Dependency theory* – Andre Gunder Frank argues that poverty in the East is a result of prosperity in the West. Western countries' exploitative colonial rule impoverished these countries. Similarly, Wallerstein conceptualised this argument in the form of World Systems Theory.

Poverty also has cultural and gender dimensions. According to Ruth Lister – *'women are being over-represented among the poor'* and she calls it as *feminization of poverty*. Apart from the apparent statistical poverty, women suffer from many more forms of deprivations and hence, suffer from some sort of *hidden poverty* as well, i.e., resources of family are not equitably shared within the family also. Similarly, Levitas and others, in their study, found that lone parents are at a higher risk of falling into poverty. Similarly, various studies on minority groups across the globe show that minority groups are more prone to poverty than the majority groups. For example, in America, minority groups are more likely to land into unskilled jobs as compared to the Whites. In another study, Alcock found that disabled also suffer from not only higher degree of poverty, but also social exclusion because disability has extra economic and social costs associated with it.

Gunnar Myrdal refutes neo-Marxist theories and instead argues that poverty is due to lack of development of institutional structures like, educational institutions, political systems and lack of competitive markets. C K Prahalad offers an interesting perspective on poverty in his *Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits, 2004* According to him – *'poverty is not to be always looked at from a benevolent perspective'*. Business firms can redesign their products and services to suit the masses and can add value to their lives as well as earn profit. New insights into challenges of fighting poverty have been provided by the recent inter-disciplinary research. For example, the World Bank, in a report published in 2013, held that climate change is likely to hinder future attempts to

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reduce poverty, as climate change will hit the poorest, the hardest, by having a multiplier effect on their lives.

Some sociologists assert that in India, poverty also has an ethnic and religious dimension. It is strongly linked with caste, tribe, religious communities and cultural factors. Today, the national poverty line for the Parsi community in Bombay is more than Rs 1 lakh per month, poverty prevalence among tribals of central India is more than 50 per cent as compared to national average of 32 per cent. Similarly, Justice Sachar Committee report of 2006, highlights higher incidence of poverty among Muslims.

Despite various theoretical perspectives and the solutions offered, it is a fact that poverty, as a social problem, still persists. The welfare state has failed in its promise of redistribution of the wealth. Wealth is reshuffled simply within classes rather than among them. Government efforts are often piecemeal and incremental which fail to make a dent on inequality, in the structure which can be addressed only by radical changes like massive redistribution of resources.

Exclusion

Some sociologists prefer the use of this term over poverty in analysing the well- being of those members of the society, who suffer from multiple deprivations. Like poverty, for social exclusion also, there is no fixed definition. According to Michael Haralambos – '*It refers to a situation in which multiple deprivations prevent individuals from participating in important areas of social activities*'. Social exclusion, according to Ruth Lister, in her seminal work titled *Poverty, 2004*, refers to the ways in which individuals may be cut off from full involvement in the wider society or prevention of individuals or groups from having the same opportunities that are available to the majority of the population. It means *being left out*, so, it can be voluntary or due to structural reasons, which is a more prevalent and commonly understood form of social exclusion. According to Mary Daly, the concept is wider than poverty as it talks about not only resource availability, but also about participation in various social processes. David Byrne puts exclusion in subject and object perspective as *exclusion is something that is done by some people to other people.*

It is a process by which individuals or households experience multiple deprivations, either of resources or of social links to the wider community or society, which prevents them from participating fully in the economic, social and political life of the society, in which they are around. Differential treatment, unequal opportunities and marginalisation are tools of social exclusion. Social exclusion is not accidental but systematic. It is the result of structural features of the society. It is a broader concept than poverty or inequality as it may encompass both. Social exclusion is involuntary, that is, exclusion is practiced regardless of the wishes of those who are excluded. For example, rich people are never found sleeping on the pavements or under bridges like thousands of homeless poor people in cities and towns.

RUTH LISTER ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION

She views social exclusion as a wider concept than poverty, but not an alternative to the concept of poverty. In fact, she calls for simultaneous use of the two concepts. According to her, the excluded are in the disadvantageous positions and this situation is maintained by those who in an advantageous position. Therefore, some forms of inherent injustice lies in the society which perpetuates exclusion. It also leads to denial of various rights.

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Stratification and inequalities in society promote exclusion as in the case of caste system, class, etc. It is not the same as poverty and has multiple dimensions –

I. Social exclusion may also lead to exclusion of social rights and erect barriers thereof, which prevent access to these rights.

II. It may lead to resource or economic exclusion as in case of poverty.

III. It can lead to labour market exclusions as in case of unemployment and underemployment.

IV. It can lead to service exclusion as in the case of caste system, racial segregation, etc. Even today, upper caste Hindus prevent the people from lower castes to access even the basic services.

V. It may also lead to exclusion from social relations like family and friends, which happens when people are away or forbidden to make such contacts.

VI. It can also lead to exclusion and isolation from larger society itself. It also leads to issues like anomie and social integration.

VII. Exclusion can also manifest itself as extreme marginalisation as in the case of multi- cultural societies.

'Homelessness is one of the worst forms of social exclusions', according to Anthony Giddens as it automatically excludes an individual from various other social services. Social exclusion leads to other abnormal behaviours also. For example, Elliott Currie, in her studies, found that exclusion also leads to delinquent behaviour. Apart from poverty, exclusion is also practiced on several other cultural basis like race. Apartheid is one of the most telling examples of social exclusion which is still prevalent in South Africa, despite a legal ban on it. In India, Dalits, tribals, women and the differently-abled are the worst sufferers of multiple forms of exclusion. Lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender (LGBT) community is another long ignored community across the world which suffers multiple exclusions. Roffee and Waling, in their article *Rethinking Microaggressions and Anti-social Behaviour against LGBTIQ+ Youth, 2016*, discovered that LGBT students in educational institutions are invariably subjected to anti-social behaviours from other students even in developed countries.

Prolonged experience of discriminatory or insulting behaviour often produces a reaction on the part of the excluded, who then stop trying for inclusion. For example, *upper* caste Hindu communities have often denied entry into temples for the *lower* castes and specially the Dalits. After decades of such treatment, the Dalits may build their own temple, or convert to another religion. Some may become *retreatists* according to Merton.

At different periods of history, protest movements arose against caste, gender and religious discrimination. Yet, prejudices remain and often, new ones emerge. When legislations are enacted to curb exclusions, these are practiced at more subtle and latent level. Thus, legislation alone is unable to transform society or produce a lasting social change. A constant social campaign to bring awareness and sensitivity is required to break them.

Further, social exclusion is not a phenomenon prevalent among the under-privileged only and can be voluntary as well. It is practiced among the affluent as well. Exclusive clubs and gated communities are such examples. *Religious and social out-casting* is a phenomenon prevalent in India which applies

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to affluent class also when they violate the norms of the groups. People may also exclude themselves in other situations like, delinquency, drug addiction, school dropout, anomie and escapist mentality.

Deprivation

It refers to denial of access to resources required for self-development and fulfilment of basic necessities. Resources can be social, economic and cultural and basic necessities vary from one culture to another.

Globally, poverty is more often than not, expressed in economic terms, while deprivation can have other dimensions as well. According to Pierre Bourdieu, it is lack of adequate social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital. Thus, deprivation is a broader phenomenon than poverty. When compared to exclusion, deprivation is *of* resources, exclusion is *from* social participation.

One may face deprivation despite relatively good economic condition. People in war torn areas, like West Asia and some African countries, suffer from multiple deprivations in the form of non-access to health, education, sanitation, housing, etc. due to absence of a peaceful political atmosphere. In other cases, cultural norms can lead to deprivations. For example, in Islamic countries and many other orthodox patriarchal societies, women are not allowed to take education and other social activities. Some traditional societies like India also have rigid social stratification like caste, which also lead to multiple deprivations for those in the lower strata. Similarly, racism and ethnocentric practices also deprive one section of population from amenities of life as it is still a case in South Africa. Thus, deprivation can also be due to structural factors.

MATERIAL DEPRIVATION IN EU

Deprivation and poverty criteria can be wide ranging and a comparison of EU criteria with Indian criteria will illustrate this fact. The indicator adopted, as of November 2016, by the Social Protection Committee of EU, to reflect the level of deprivation, measures the percentage of the population that cannot afford at least three of the following nine items:

I. To pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills
II. To keep their home adequately warm
III. To face unexpected expenses
IV. To eat meat or proteins regularly
V. To go on a holiday
VI. Own a television set
VII. A washing machine
VIII. A car
IX. A telephone

Absolute deprivation refers to a situation when one doesn't have even the basic necessities of life like food, sanitation, drinking water, basic education and health. Extreme poverty, marginalisation and hunger are examples of absolute deprivation.

Robert Merton also mentions *relative deprivation* as another form of deprivation. Despite absolute progress in society, due to presence of inequalities, relative deprivation always remains there. Marxists attribute deprivation to unequal nature of society, which is marked by unequal control over forces of productions.

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Theories of Stratification – Structural Functionalist View

Structure functionalists believe that social stratification in society exists because it serves an important role in the functioning of the society. Different strata are created due to differential capacity of actors and their ability to perform different roles. Functionalists see existence of various strata in terms of their interdependence, cooperation and serving the function of integration of society. Parsons, Davis and Moore, W L Warner made important contribution towards the development of this perspective.

According to Parsons – '*Every society is based upon consensus in terms of norms and values*'. The conformity to these norms is considered desirable and is often rewarded. Differential conformity and differential rewards form strata in society. People themselves tend to follow social norms and compare their performance vis-à-vis these norms. Those who perform in greater conformity to these norms get bigger rewards and are ranked higher. Another argument of Parsons is that society has certain functional pre-requisites which need to be fulfilled. Social stratification helps in fulfilment of these functional prerequisites. According to Parsons – '*Stratification is inevitable as value-consensus is an integral part of all types of societies*'. Parsons acknowledges that there is inequality in society, but this is deemed as legitimate as per values and norms, as a measure of differential achievement. Some wield more power and this is considered legitimate as it is deemed to be in the welfare of all. Critics argue that which values are more important is not clear, but Parsons argues that it vary from society to society, for example, in a traditional society, religious values may be more important. In a developing country like India, integration is the main focus as there is an emphasis on preservation of traditional values and solidarity.

W L Warner in his *The Social Life of a Modern Community, 1941* emphasises on *social status* instead of economic class. He considers three variables namely education, occupation and income as determinants of status. Other criteria which determine status are friendship, membership of voluntary groups and leisure activities. He gives similar explanation as that of Parsons in doling out an explanation for differential status.

Similarly, Davis and Moore formulated their famed functionalist theory in their work *Some Principle of Social Stratification, 1945*. Davis and Moore observed that there is no society which is not stratified; strata exist on the basis of differential rewards. Such rewards are attached to the positions that exist in the various strata and some of these positions are functionally more important and others are functionally less important. Societies need these stratified positions for its proper functioning. Higher rewards are attached to functionally more important positions, in order to attract talented people who are needed to hold such positions. Talent is considered scarce and more talented people are required to hold functionally more important positions. Important positions also require greater investment of time, skill-sets and training on the part of the occupier and hence, such positions need to be compensated accordingly. In this way, society ensures that these functions are performed properly, thereby ensuring proper social organisation. Thus, social stratification is a mechanism of role allocation, in which more important positions are filled by more talented people for the benefit of all. However, this functionalist view came under significant criticism and Melvin Tumin was one of the biggest critics.

Melvin Tumin defines social stratification as an arrangement of any social group or society into a *hierarchy of positions* that are unequal with regards to power, property, social evaluation and psychic gratification. He challenged the claim of Davis and Moore and argued that it is not possible to determine the relative functional importance of various social positions in an objective manner. Similarly, according to him,

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talent and ability can also not be measured. According to him, there is no equal opportunity and trainees don't make any significant sacrifices. He also contends that rewards are not the only motivational force to motivate individuals. Tumin looked at the functional theory from a conflict perspective also. He felt that far from being functional, stratification systems are dysfunctional. Firstly, stratification limits the opportunities of the under-privileged or subordinate groups in society, stratification often acts as a barrier to motivation and not a promoter of it. This limitation of opportunities represents a loss of talent to the wider society. Secondly, stratification helps to maintain the status quo even when the status quo has become dysfunctional. This is because the privileged class is able to impose upon society, the idea that the existing inequalities are natural, logical and morally right. Thirdly, because stratification systems distribute rewards unjustly, they encourage the less privileged to become hostile, suspicious and distrustful. This results in social unrest and chaos, threatening the integration of society.

Davis and Moore, however, tried to dispel the notions of Tumin and argued that functional importance of a position can be judged by the uniqueness of such positions and the degree to which other positions depend on the particular position. Differential rewards are necessary as loss of trainees is not only in terms of money, but also in terms of time and energy. Stratification may be dysfunctional in some instances, but its very existence in society proves its functional nature.

Other major criticisms of structure functional theories of stratification are –

I. Apart from Tumin, Dahrendorf was also one of the major critics of functional theory. Ralf Dahrendorf observes that stratification originates from the *closely related trinity of norms, sanction and power.*

II. Similarly, rigidity of caste system cannot be explained through functional theories of Davis and Moore and others.

III. Further, *elite recruitment* theory proves that elite gobble up all the rewards and perpetuate the elite rule.

IV. Beck and Baudrillard also visualise that such functional stratification is no longer valid as inequalities are now individualised and no clear strata exists today.

V. According to Alvin Gouldner, stratification is not inevitable as Davis and Moore predicted and he criticises them for providing a justification for social inequalities.

VI. According to Jonathan Turner – '*Structure functionalist theories suffer from illegitimate teleologies as a big logical problem*'. They often take cause for effects and vice-versa, for example, if you ask them which positions are more important? They will say the one which are rewarded the most. When you ask them why are they rewarded the most? They will say that because they are functionally more important.

Theories of Stratification – Marxian View

Marxian idea of stratification flows from his central notion of dialectical materialism, unequal control over forces of production and consequent class formation. His conception of strata is based on material factors. According to Marxians, in every mode of production, a minority gains control over forces of

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production and hence, society gets divided into two broad strata – *the haves* or the ruling class and *the have nots* or the subject class. This stratification is most acute in capitalism. Power of ruling class is driven from its ownership of the forces of production and it exploits the subject class. Only when the forces of production are communally owned, the classes will disappear, thereby bringing an end to the exploitation and oppression of some by the others.

From Marxian perspective, system of stratification is derived from the relation of the social groups to the forces of production. Units or strata are defined as '*classes*'. A class is defined as *a social group, whose members share the same relations to the forces of production.* Relationship between the classes is that of mutual dependence and conflict. For example, proletariat labour depends on capitalists for wages and capitalists depend on labour for work in factories. But, this dependence is not in symmetrical reciprocatory terms and currents of antagonism exist in their relations.

Marx, thus, conceptualises not only two broad strata, but also talks of other intermediary strata like petite bourgeoisie and lumpenproletariat. He was however, critical of the lumpenproletariat as a group, as it has little potential of developing class consciousness. He, however, asserts that the intermediate strata will dissolve through the processes of proletarianisation and bourgeoisisation and will get subsumed under the two broad strata only.

Marx also has an optimistic view about social stratification and he sees class struggle leading to a revolution that will ultimately lead to class equality in the society. Unlike functional view, Marxists regard stratification as a mechanism, whereby, some exploit others rather than a means of furtherance of collective goals.

UNDERCLASS

The concept is used by neo-liberal sociologists and is similar to the Marxist concept of lumpenproletariat. Charles Murray popularised this concept in Sociology. According to him, this is a stratum which is a result of unequal economics and misplaced government policies. It is born when people have very less bargaining power and are at the mercy of the employer. He, however, warns that this growing class may also cause threat to social cohesion. Various researchers have found that minority groups, women etc. are most likely to be its part.

This Marxian view was extended by other scholars as well who visualised the presence of such strata in every social institution. This stratification is perpetuated by elite-capture and high entry barriers to upper stratum. Some scholars like Wallerstein have extended Marxian view to a pan-global level and have contended that among countries also, there are *the haves* and *the have nots*.

Theories of Stratification – Weber's Trinitarian View

Marx said that nature made everyone equal, but some men deprived the others. He agreed that there are inequalities in society in various fields, but they all emanate from one thing, which is control over the forces of production. Thus, in the Marxist theory, social classes are defined by what relation they have to the means of production.

Weber, however, refused to reduce stratification to economic factors (or class, in Weber's terms), but saw it as multidimensional. Thus, society is stratified on the basis of economics, prestige/status, and power. One resulting implication is that people can rank high on one or two of these dimensions of stratification and low on the other, permitting a far more sophisticated analysis of social stratification.

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Class, according to him, is not a community, but merely a group of people in the same economic or market situation. It is a group of people who share a similar position in a market situation. Class situation, therefore, is a market situation or an economic situation. According to Weber, economic condition of a person affects his or her chances of obtaining those material things which are deemed as desirable in the society. Weber used the term *life chances*, which refers to the rewards and advantages afforded by market capacity to differentiate different classes. Those who share similar *life chances* share similar class. Hence, on the basis of life chances, Weber sees different classes like propertied upper class, property-less white collar workers, petty bourgeoisie and manual working class.

Marx on Class	Weber on Class
Class is the only form of stratification in society based on ownership of forces of production.	Apart from class, there are other forms of stratification also viz – status and party. However, basis of class stratification is mainly economic. Class stratification is not based on ownership of forces of production, but is due to economic differences and skills possessed.
There are only two classes – the haves and the have nots.	There are 4 such classes.
For Marx, class has to be understood in the framework of an individual position in the structure of production.	For Weber, class needs to be understood in the framework of the individual's position in the context of the market of exchange.
Marx viewed class in terms of ownership or non-ownership of forces of production.	Weber says ownership is not the lone factor as there is value of skills as well in the market.
Intermediate classes will polarise as capitalism matures.	According to Weber, there is no evidence of polarisation of classes as grievances of members can be vented out in a number of ways. Further, middle class will swell, and not deplete as Marx predicted, due to rise of bureaucratic organisations.
Proletariat will unite and will lead the proletariat revolution, leading to establishment of communism.	Weber emphasised that classes are not communities and this is also the reason that they are unlikely to unite as Marx predicted.

It may also be noted that those people whose fate has nothing to do with the chance of using goods or services for themselves in the market such as, the slaves do not form a class in the technical sense of the term. They constitute the status group.

Other than the class, Weber proposed the concept of *status groups*. Status groups differ from classes in being *communities*. Weber said that status situation is determined by positive or negative *social estimation of honour*. While class refers to unequal distribution of economic rewards, status refers to unequal distribution of social honour. Status is an *effective claim to social esteem*. This honour may be for any quality that is shared by the people and held in esteem. Possession of property is not always associated with social honour and is, therefore, not essentially a qualification for acquiring status. Income, family background, education and all those criteria that are valued may be identified as markers of status. Status relates to consumption of goods produced, whereas class relates to economic production. Class and status may overlap, but not necessarily. In fact, due to different status positions, a class may be divided. Unlike classes, members of status groups are almost always aware of their common status situation. Weber argues that status groups reach their most developed form in caste system.

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In addition to stratification by class and status, Weber proposed the concept of *party*, as the third element, according to which society is stratified. While classes exist in the economic order and status groups in the social order, parties can be found in the political order. To Weber, parties *are always structures struggling for domination*. The people who constitute a party are those who have a goal towards which they strive collectively and in a planned manner. The goal may be a cause, i.e., a party may seek to realise a programme for ideal or material purposes or the goal may be *personal* e.g. honour for the leader or followers of the party. Weber thought of parties very broadly as including not only those that exist in the state but also those that might exist in a social club. Parties usually, but not always, represent class or status groups. Parties may pursue interests that are determined through class situation or through status situation. He identifies two types of parties – *parties of patronage* and *parties of principle*. Whatever they represent, parties are oriented to the attainment of power. They may even recruit members from them. They may not, however, be fully class parties or fully status parties. They may be neither of the two.

According to Cellia Heller, on one hand, Weber says that economic order and status groups are different, and on the other hand, he says that they are very often correlated. Ulrich Beck says that today inequalities are rooted in risk position. Ulrich Beck in his *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity, 1992* contends that inequalities in modern society are a function of risk taking capability, risk consciousness and risk avoiding capability and not due to class and status per se. Beck and Baudrillard gave the concept of individualised inequalities, a concept in stark contrast to limited framework provided by Weber and others.

Dimensions – Social Stratification of Class, Status Groups, Gender, Ethnicity and Race

Societies are stratified on the basis of numerous inequalities. Forms of inequalities and stratification change from time to time. For example, once there were feudal strata in Europe, but now they are not there. One form of inequality may not exist at other place as well.

Social Stratification of Class

Despite a lack of consensus over its definition, class is broadly perceived as a social group having identical skills, incomes, wealth and material well- being, in general. A narrower conception views class in terms of occupational status only. Classes in society existed long before the definitions were conceptualised. Aristotle had conceptualised society in terms of three broad classes, but class as a concept, in its contemporary understanding, has its origin in industrial society when wealth based economic inequalities became more pronounced. Marx popularised this concept in Sociology and he perceived it as a social group which has similar position vis-à-vis mode and forces of production, in terms of their ownership and roles. He identified only two broad classes. It differs from other forms of stratification in terms of the following characteristics –

I. Class stratification is fluid and open. There are no legal or traditional sanctions on mobility between different strata.

II. Class positions are in some part achieved and not ascribed.

III. Class has an economic basis.

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Weber defines class as '*A body of people having identical position in a market situation.* He broadly defines class structure in terms of four classes –

I. Propertied upper class

II. White collar workers

III. Petty bourgeoisie

IV. Manual labourers

He rejected Marxist idea that different classes tend to polarise towards two dichotomous classes. According to him, inequalities are highly dynamic. Besides *class,* there is also *status* and *power* dimensions to inequalities.

Various other scholars also make various classifications. For example, Bottomore differentiates four types of classes, i.e., upper class, middle class, working class and peasantry.

According to Giddens, there are three main sources of class power which are the possession of property, qualifications and physical labour power. These tend to give rise to a three-class structure, a dominant/upper class based on property, an intermediate/middle class based on credentials, and a working/lower class based on labour power.

Post modernists also argue that class stratification is no longer segmentary, but is along a continuum of individualised inequalities as a result of almost infinite division of labour, skill sets and consumption patterns. Pierre Bourdieu in his *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology, 1992* also shed some different light on class. According to him, lifestyle choices, rather than class, are more important today.

According to Ralf Dahrendorf – '*Class stratification is not so much rife with antagonism as Marx has visualised*'. New techniques and methods of directing the class struggle have been developed both in industrial and in political sphere.

Goldthorpe, in his empirical study in England, indicates that in even European countries, mobility is limited to only among the immediate classes and mobility from a class is significantly distanced in hierarchy from another, which is lower, i.e., long range mobility is difficult. A few decades later, similar conclusions were drawn by Ken Roberts in his *Class in Contemporary Britain, 2011.* According to him, even in the developed societies like Britain, class has not been fragmented. In fact, the stranglehold of the upper class has only got stronger. Unlike Marxian concept of class, this upper class is dubbed as the most powerful, but not the most dominant class.

THE AFFLUENT WORKER STUDY

It was a landmark study organised by Goldthorpe and Lockwood to test the Embourgeoisement thesis, which was popular in 1960s, in which, many sociologists suggested that Marxian idea of Proletarianisation was not happening and the opposite was happening, i.e., working class labor was becoming more affluent and moving towards the middle class status. Goldthorpe and his team chose an upscale area of England to test this thesis and ultimately found that Embourgeoisement was actually not happening on the ground.

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Social Stratification of Status Groups

> **SOCIAL CLOSURE**
>
> It is a phenomenon in which some people or groups are excluded from the membership or participation in a particular status group. Caste system, apartheid, etc. are the typical examples of such a phenomenon.

While class is broadly perceived as grouping on the basis of economic criteria, status is based on prestige, goodwill, fame, personal qualities and social capital of an individual. Status is often seen in terms of the social position. Earlier, status was seen in terms of ascriptive values, e.g. caste, nobleman, clergy and estate owner. Today, the term status is wider. Status is both achieved as well as ascriptive. Apart from economic criterion, another point of difference between status and class is that while the members of a status group are generally conscious of their affiliation to that group, class membership is more difficult to trace. For example, one is generally aware about one's caste, religious and occupational status group, but it might be difficult for one to identify with a particular class group as the membership criteria of class groups are not always well defined and classes are merely heuristic devices of study of society. Status groups are generally more closed as compared to class groups.

As a society becomes modern, status is also redefined. New occupations and new opportunities for mobility lead to opening of strata. Mobility in status based groups is more in modern capitalist societies and less in less developed modern societies.

Status is one of the dimensions of stratification, according to Max Weber and he differentiates it from class as *social estimation of honour*. Status is associated with consumption and not production. According to Weber – '*Caste is the most developed form of status based stratification*'.

Pakulski and Waters, in their *Death of Class, 1996* argue that status dimension is becoming more important in post-industrial societies. Consumption is now based on status and not on the basis of occupation or economic well- being. Rising consumerism has promoted status and eclipsed class.

W L Warner in his *The Social Life of a Modern Community, 1941* emphasises on *social status,* instead of economic class. He considers three variables which are education, occupation and income as determinants of status. Other criteria which determine status are friendship, membership of voluntary groups and leisure activities.

Pierre Bourdieu in his *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology, 1992,* also proposed that lifestyle choices, rather than class, are more important today. Individual identities are now more shaped by lifestyle choices rather than by more traditional indicators like occupation. He made a departure from class to status and enumerated four dimensions of status as cultural capital, economic capital, social capital and symbolic capital.

In the context of India, processes of Sanskritisation and Westernisation were attempts to make a shift from one status group to another.

Social Stratification of Gender

Stratification based on gender is one of the most fundamental forms of stratification. Both in Eastern and Western societies, the long held view was that men are breadwinners and women are expected to take household chores. Often, their status was linked to the status of their husbands or fathers. This has been termed *natural* by functionalist sociologists like Murdock and Parsons. Biological theories of

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sexual division of labour also support this form of stratification. However, this *natural roles* thesis has come under an attack, as women enter the labour force and the traditional patriarchal division of labour is slowly being turned on its head.

Women are attached to a two-fold stratification, i.e., in relation to men and in relation to other women. And it operates at two levels which are within the family and outside the family. The unequal accesses to resources, opportunities and rewards and the rights between men and women are legitimised by patriarchy across societies and cultures. It is reinforced through patriarchy and its institutions, gendered division of labour and social institutions like marriage, dowry, property, inheritance and subordination.

Marxist school of thought has led to the conceptualisation of sexual division in terms of the *place* of female labour within the class structure and of its *functions for capital.* They see female subordination as a result of private property, emergence and consequent adoption of monogamy. However, both Marx and Engels believed that one of the positive fallouts of capitalism is the increased participation of women in the workforce which will lead to her improved status within the family. Both of them also believed that gender stratification can end only in communism when women will also communally own the forces of production, along with all men.

Some others like Blood and Hamblin, in their *Effect of the Wife's Employment on the Family Power Structure, 1968*, also argue that gender stratification is not significantly altered by more participation of women in economic roles. They take decision making power inside the family as the main criterion of empowerment. According to them, despite women taking more participation in employment, important family decisions are still made by men. Mother-housewife role still remains a primary one. As long as patriarchy remains, gender inequality will remain.

Blackburn and Stewart in their *Women, Work and Class Structure, 1977* also argue that women's going to work itself doesn't ensure gender equality, but it rather enforces it as women enter only a specific market which is reserved for females only. In developing countries also, women are more likely to engage in agriculture and service, instead of industrial production. Women are often employed in part time and low paid jobs. Occupational segregation reinforces stratification in society. Top positions are still out of reach of women. As a result, stratification which prevailed within the family is now extended to the workplace as well.

Even in communist countries like Russia, though workforce participation of women has increased, women are still being restricted to certain *feminine* roles only.

Similarly, in Kibbutz also, though there is a theoretical equality between man and woman, a study by Lionel Tiger and Joseph Shepher, in 1970s,

KIBBUTZ

Kibbutz in Hebrew means *clustering*. It is a particular agrarian social organisation which is found in Israel. 2.8 per cent of Israeli population lives in Kibbutz and Kibbutz accounts for 8 per cent industrial output as of 2016, according to Kibbutz Program Center. It is basically a socialistic communal unit, in which, capital and property are collectively owned by its members. Even family is managed in an unconventional manner as children in Kibbutz are a responsibility for all. Children live in communal dormitories separated from their parents and are taken care of by caretakers. Kibbutz are also viewed as an alternative to the classical notions of family and, hence, even challenge the universal existence of family. Kibbutzism ideology has many other positive features like it emphasises sexual equality and rejects traditional Western parental role, especially the role of a mother. However, its current form is radically changed from the original concept of 1910s and is even diluted to considerable extent.

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reveals that Kibbutz are also highly polarised and male take agriculture, construction, etc. and women take roles like nursing, infant teaching and kindergarten.

While nature created sexual differences, gender is a social construct, according to feminist sociologist Ann Oakley. She rejected biological basis as offered by Tiger and Fox, Parsons, etc. According to feminists, women are oppressed as a class by men and patriarchal structures are geographically and historically almost universal.

Frank Parkin in his *Class Inequality and Political Order, 1972*, however, dismisses the idea of women being a *class*. According to him, woman is a part of a family as a whole and family and not individual are actually, a basic unit for analysis of stratification. Similarly, Helen Mayor also dismisses class notion attached to women and instead terms them as a *minority*.

Gender stratification has also moved beyond conventional male-female debate and increasing focus on transgender, bisexuals, gays, lesbians is also there. Many countries have now officially recognised and given legitimacy to such groups. As of January 2017, nineteen countries have legitimised same sex marriages. Their problems are also now becoming a part of the mainstream stratification debate. Gay Pride, Gay Liberation Front, etc. have highlighted the issue of rights of such groups globally. Even in India, Supreme Court, in 2014, acknowledged the hardships that these groups face and even asked the state to consider them as *backward* and take affirmative steps for their upliftment.

Post- modernist theorists like Jacques Derrida and Lacan reject the claim that there can be a single grand theoretical framework that can explain gender stratification in society. According to them, patriarchy and class are not the only basis of stratification.

Recent mobility studies show that women are doing considerably better than ever before. In India, more and more women are getting into employment. Increasing automation in industry and rising share of service sector has led to a change in the nature of work, which has seen more participation from women as well. In India, educational attainment among women has improved significantly in percentage terms as compared to men in 2011 census. As birth frequency decreases and child-gap increases, more women can now take up full time jobs. Mechanisation of domestic work like washing machines and packaged foods has also reduced some burden on women and she can devote more time to her career. Love marriages and romantic relations have also altered the nature of domestic division of labour. Right to property has also given some security to women in traditional societies like India. New laws like Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013, will promote a safe working environment to encourage women participation. Coupled with institutional measures and social movements, women are claiming more space in male dominated areas. This is certainly making stratification less skewed.

Social Stratification of Race

Race is a complex concept which has different every day and scientific meanings. In every day usage, race, as a biological concept and refers to a large category of people who share certain inherited physical characteristics like colour of skin, type of hair, facial features and size of head. However, with advancement in technology, this notion of race is debunked with use of DNA fingerprinting, etc. and it is now well established that all humans have small variations along a continuum and there are no clear cut lines separating them. In modern times, the focus on racial aspects first began when Europeans came into contact with other cultures and they collectively named them as *non-white* race. They tried

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to segregate the whole world into certain distinct groups and various theories of racial origins and racial superiority/inferiority also emerged.

For sociologists, a race is a group of people, who are perceived by a given society as biologically or culturally different from the others. Some sociologists claim that people are assigned to one race or another by public opinion, which is moulded by that society's dominant group, rather than on any scientific basis. Sociologists, thus, view race as merely an ideological construct, based on physical differences. It was also used as a tool of domination, discrimination and spreading inequality in the form of racial stratification.

In the 18th Century, many anthropologists and researchers tried to give a scientific colour to the existing idea of race. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, in the middle of 19th Century, gave first major racial classification in terms of three distinct groups which were White (Caucasian), Black (Negroid) and Yellow (Mongolian). He also attached notions of superiority and inferiority with these races. White race was termed as supreme race. Such ideas of scientific racism also influenced colonial rulers and they, at times, tried to justify their colonial sojourns on the basis of such ideas. White Man's Burden theory of Rudyard Kipling was also rooted in racial notions. Adolf Hitler too, adopted supremacy of Aryan race into a political ideology, which led to annihilation of millions of Jews and the worst global war in the history of mankind.

Many theories are also offered to explain racial stratification like –

I. One theory says, differences were already there for centuries, but they acquired a racist shape with the arrival of racial nomenclature and terminologies which coloured those physical differences as racial differences. White race supremacy is the result of one such early theory.

II. Ethnocentrism is another explanation which is actually a suspicion of outsiders with a tendency to evaluate the culture of others, with terms of their own culture. It creates notions of *in-groups* and *out-groups*. Use of exclusionary devices like ghettos, intermarriage restrictions and social distance maintenance gives a practical shape to ethnocentrism. The group which is powerful, marginalises the others in this process. This happened in the case of Blacks, in both America and South Africa.

III. From conflict perspective, according to O C Cox, in his *Class, Caste and Race, 1959*, racial stratification is seen as a product of the capitalist system in which ruling class used slavery, colonisation and racism as tools for exploiting labour.

IV. Another theory says that racism is a result of highly unequal and exploitative relation that whites established with the non-whites. Slave trade was a consequence of this approach. Whites used racism as a tool to justify colonialism and decline of political rights like citizenship to non-whites in their colonies further strengthened racial stratification.

V. Another reason is attributed to migration of ethnic minority to Western countries. When developed countries witnessed periods of economic hardship, native populations started blaming the *outsiders* for usurping their employment opportunities and economic space.

Racial stratification has affected different societies differently and *racism* is the worst form of racial stratification. An extreme example is Apartheid in South Africa, which once segregated whites and

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blacks in a highly discriminated manner. Traces of this practice are still galore in South Africa. India, too, has witnessed racial stratification in the past during the colonial rule. Criminal Tribes Act was a result of such a skewed racial perception.

After declaration of equal civil rights in USA in 1960s, official abolition of Apartheid in South Africa in the early 1990s and similar steps by other countries, racial stratification and racism now operate in more subtle ways than the earlier open blatant racism. It is termed as *new racism*. Discriminatory attitudes still persist. Developed countries like USA also suffer from *racial profiling* incidents. Angela Davis, in her *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Prisons, Torture, and Empire, 2005*, even goes on to argue that state is also complicit in perpetuation of racial and ethnic discrimination. According to her, mass imprisonment is a modern tool of the American state to impose repression and discrimination upon African American and Hispanics in USA. Massive uproar in America over the killing of Black youths by White cops in 2015 re-ignited racial discrimination debate across the globe and US police killed at least 258 black people in 2016, as per a report by The Guardian, which tracks police killings in America. Ideas of cultural differences instead of biological ones are now used to disguise racism. Those cultures, which refuse to assimilate into the dominant culture, face threat of marginalisation and are discriminated on various grounds. Ban on turbans, *hijab*, Islamic headscarves, etc. in European countries are such attempts which have a political backing too.

Social Stratification of Ethnicity

While *race* is perceived as biological, *ethnicity* is purely cultural or social in its meaning. An ethnic group may have a common language, history, national origin or lifestyle and hence, different nomenclatures like ethno-religious and ethno-linguistic are also used to further classify sub-categories. Ethnicity is a purely social phenomenon, in which, people learn their ethnic differences as a process of socialisation and with the use of exclusionary devices like marriage.

Historically, ethnic differences have also led to situations of conflicts. Balkanisation of Europe is largely attributed to the ethnic problems and the contemporary conflicts in Africa, which also have ethnic overtones. India is also not untouched in terms its share of ethnic incidences. Cultural and developmental issues of North-eastern states in India are also rooted with ethnic identity to some degree.

While racial identities remain same, ethnic identities are revised over time. Migration, on a massive scale in the last century provided sociologists, an opportunity to examine the fate of ethnic identities. For example, the Chicago school of sociologists found that over several generations, ethnic identities were lost and later revised.

One ethnic group may be subsumed by another, under different situations. For example, while India itself has hundreds of ethnic groups, when Indians move to the West, all such groups are subsumed into one tag of *Ethnic Indians*.

Ethnic stratification depends upon the processes which a society has undergone. Such processes can be assimilation, melting pot, pluralistic co-existence or antagonistic co-existence. During the process of assimilation, new immigrant groups adopt the attitudes and culture of the existing dominant group. In melting pot, different ethnic groups merge together. The USA is such an example, where, many ethnic identities have merged to a great extent. Example of pluralism would be a society like India

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Antagonistic co-existence is best exemplified in a society which suffers from ethnic conflicts. Such societies best demonstrate the existence of sharp ethnic lines. Sri Lanka is such an example where ethnic Tamils and Singhalese exist in the form of distinct strata.

Some theorists argue that modernising influence will lead to blurring of ethnic lines across the globe. But, incidents like lynching of North-eastern student Nido Tania in Delhi in 2014, response of Western European states towards ethnic migrations from the Middle East in 2015, failure of the Sri Lankan government to implement the longstanding 13th Amendment and annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 on ethnic grounds are some of the signs that ethnicity is hard to die. Glazer contended that ethnicity will not fade away, but will resurge as a reaction to modernisation.

Social Mobility

Social mobility means transition of individuals or groups from one position, in the social hierarchy, to another, i.e., from one stratum to another.

The concept of social mobility is closely linked to the concept of stratification. As hierarchical patterns evolve in a society, a tendency of shifting these patterns at individual and structural level also evolves. Mobility, thus, can be at an individual level or at a collective level, which is termed as structural mobility. Functionalists like Parsons believed that mobility is a result of the process of differentiation in society and role filling by those who suit them the most. Marx, on the other hand, believed that the high rate of social mobility, embourgeoisement, will weaken class solidarity. He foresees downward mobility in capitalism when petite bourgeoisie will sink down into the proletariat class. Those like Frank Parkin and Dahrendorf believe that social mobility also acts as a safety valve in the society as the built-up frustrations are vented through the route of social mobility.

Ken Roberts, in his *Class in Contemporary Britain, 2011*, has highlighted two important reasons for studying social mobility in modern societies –

I. Mobility is an indicator of a meritocratic society and the degree to which a society lives up to the ideals of fairness.

II. Mobility is also an indicator of the stability of class architecture in a society.

Instances of mobility in traditional societies are low. In pure cultural context of traditional societies, where stratification was mostly ascriptive, mobility was also limited. Andre Beteille in his *Caste, Class and Power, 1971* has shown how mobility, in a closed and stratified caste system, is difficult. M N Srinivas, in his study of Coorgs, showed that in such a system, alternate methods like Sanskritisation are evolved to move up socially, but it affects only the cultural aspects and not the structural aspects.

Mobility in industrial and modern societies is more widespread. In the developed countries, inter-generation mobility is much higher than in developing and traditional societies. This happens because, industrial societies lay emphasis on formal qualifications at the time of recruitment. Children of working class parents often gain the qualifications before they set out to look for employment.

As a society makes a transition from traditional to modern, it becomes more fluid. One of the first comprehensive accounts of mobility in such societies was given by Sorokin in his book – *Social Mobility,*

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1927. He argued that mobility, is in fact, functional for society as it promotes efficiency and social order. He compared vertical mobility to *stairs and elevators* and as *blood streams in human body.*

Further, upward social mobility is more common than downward social mobility because the demand for unskilled manual labour has declined significantly in the wake of technological advancement and the shift from the need for industry workers to service providers calls for specialisation.

From a functional perspective, Davis and Moore in *Some Principles of Stratification, 1945* theorised that it is the reward system of the society that facilitates individual mobility in the society. Earlier studies on social mobility in modern societies were mostly narrowly focused on occupation. In 1960s and 70s, the new perspective evolved.

Social mobility breaks the exclusiveness of classes and makes them open. It makes social hierarchies more fluid and less rigid. Equal access to all strata becomes an extension of the idea of equality in modern societies, where, absolute equality cannot be achieved, but mobility, at least ensures that there is equal opportunity to all. Mobility also helps in making the best possible use of available talent as positions are filled by those who are the most suitable for them.

There are also evidences that the concept of social mobility is over-hyped in modern societies and there may not be so much mobility as is claimed. In a 1949 study by David Glass in England, *Social Mobility in Britain, 1954,* he found out that mobility was low as there was rampant elite self-recruitment and as a result, there were only middle management and lower level positions which were left for others. Further, most of the mobility was *short ranged,* i.e., in the immediate adjacent occupational groups. There were rare instances in which bottom people moved to the top and vice-versa. Similar conclusion was reached by Duncan and Blau in their *The American Occupational Structure, 1967* which was one of the largest mobility study ever conducted in America with a sample of 20,000 people. They also concluded that *long range* mobility is rare.

It is also argued that the very acceptance of mobility, as a social process, strengthens existing classes in the society. It reinforces the status distinction as individuals put different values on different roles. It is argued that the focus of social change should be social equality and not social mobility.

There can be some dysfunctions also associated with mobility for example, there may be disruptive reactions from the members of a stratum when it is intruded by others. Secondly, high rate of social mobility may lead to state of social anomie.

Social Mobility – Open and Closed Systems

Open systems are those systems which offer free mobility from one stratum to another and there are no barriers which cannot be overcome. Modern societies are considered such open systems, at least theoretically, as one may reach any social position by the dint of one's hard work, skill, knowledge and efforts. It is generally said in the USA that anyone can travel the path from the *log cabin to the Whitehouse.* In India also, we have recently seen many, not so well off personalities, making their mark in the industry, politics, and education. Open systems function like this because such systems treat individuals equally and it is also pre-supposed that people ought to have equal access to all opportunities.

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Closed systems, on the other hand, are marked by rigid boundaries which are unassailable. Individuals cannot cross their strata in ordinary circumstances. Often this is facilitated by the ascriptive nature of membership to particular strata or exclusivity of membership. Caste system, gender stratification, ethnic stratification, etc. are examples of such closed stratification.

	Basis	Features
Age	Age sets	Masai Tribes in Africa is one such example where ranking on the basis of age is a criterion for the exercise of the authority. The ranks, determined on the basis of age are called *age-sets*. All the persons (basically men), born within a range or number of years, belong to one set.
Caste	Ritual status	It is a system peculiar to India. Caste status is defined by birth and each caste has its own set of attributes and privileges.
Gender	Male-female	This type of stratification exists almost everywhere. It is more acute in patriarchal societies where gender roles are more strictly defined.
Ethnic	Race and physical features	Examples can be seen in Sri Lanka and South Africa. In Sri Lanka, ethnic cleansing of Tamilians by Singhalese majority and of blacks in South Africa by the white minority groups is glaring illustration of ethnic stratification in society.
Slavery	Master and slave, ownership	Ancient form of slavery and modern slavery in USA, Europe etc. Ancient slavery was prevalent in ancient Rome and Greece. Here, slaves were usually foreign prisoners of war. In this system, the slave was designated as the master's property.
Estate	Clergy, nobility and commoner	It prevailed in France and some other European regions. Though this system was less rigid than the caste system, it was also characterised by hereditary transmission of social position. Each estate had a clearly defined set of rights by law.

Sources and Causes of Mobility

First comprehensive account of mobility in modern societies was given by Sorokin in his book *Social Mobility, 1927*. He defines it as '*transition of an individual, object or value, which is of human creation, from one social position to another*'. He compared vertical mobility to *stairs and elevators* and as *blood streams in human body*. According to him – '*There are certain primary factors that affect mobility in all societies, and secondary factors that are specific to particular societies at particular times*'. He argued that no society can be regarded as either completely closed, denying any mobility, nor can it be completely open, as there are always barriers to mobility.

Sorokin listed four primary factors affecting mobility, namely –

I. *Demographic factors* – Factors like age, sex and race affect social mobility. Older people have reduced chances as compared to the younger people. Similarly, it has been observed that poor families have more number of children and it further depletes their resources and chances of mobility become low.

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II. *Talent and ability* – Sorokin notes that usually, abilities of parents and children do not match. Popular pressure may force-individuals to vacate positions they are unsuited for them. Even in ascriptive societies, there are scopes for mobility of individuals in the upward direction. Pareto also argues that these are the chief reasons for social mobility in society.

III. *Faulty distribution of individuals in social positions* – Sometimes, structural factors can force people to land into wrong positions and it hampers their chances of mobility.

IV. *The change of the social environment* – Industrialisation, legal restrictions, etc. can lead to structural changes and can lead to collective mobility. According to Sorokin – '*Change in social environment is one of the major factors of social mobility*'.

Later on, social mobility was defined in a much broader context and other elements like Pierre Bourdieu describes four types of capital in his *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology, 1992* that place a person in a certain social category economic capital, social capital, symbolic capital and cultural capital, etc. These broadened the scope and the meaning of social mobility. At the same time, he also observed that cultural factors also hinder social mobility of individuals. Poor have poor cultural capital, which is inherited by the young ones and it limits the avenues of mobility.

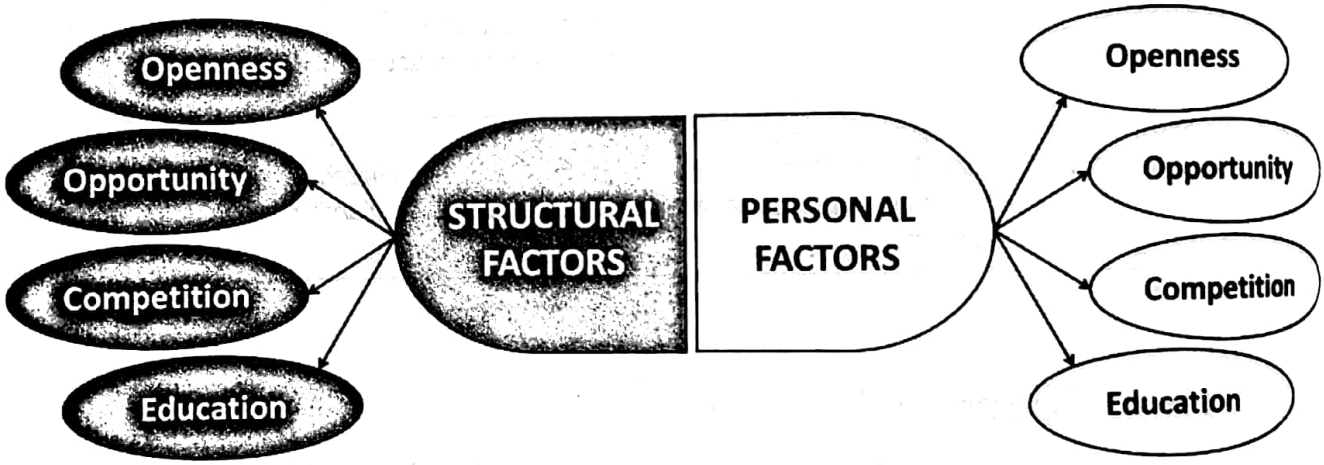

Fig. 5.2 Factors Affecting Social Mobility

David Glass conducted an empirical study in the British society and concluded that there is both upward and downward mobility, to and from the middle class and lower class, but due to *elite self-recruitment*, there is little downward mobility among the elite. Goldthorpe, in his mobility study in Britain, concluded that mobility largely happens in the immediate ranks in the hierarchy and absolute mobility, which happens from the lower ranks to the higher ranks, is extremely low.

In general, factors affecting mobility can be both personal and structural, some of which are –

I. *Industrialisation and urbanisation* – Lipset upheld that industrialisation led to high mobility rates in England and it is true for the rest of the world as well. This is better known as the *Lipset-Zetterberg Thesis*.

II. *Education* – Duncan and Blau, in their study of America, found that mobility is higher among the blue collar workers and white collar professionals and they attributed it to high levels of popular education in the United States.

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III. *Social Capital and Social Status* – Giddens and Bottomore in their *closure thesis*, argue that those who occupy the superior positions seek to retain them for their own selves and for their kins. Social capital is used to monopolise the occupational positions.

IV. *Occupation* – It is one of the major sources of inter-generational mobility in the modern times, as occupations are relatively open.

V. *Social and cultural values* – Society as a whole may have liberal or conservative values. Caste system, for example, had little scope for mobility due to conservative values.

VI. *Environmental changes* – They may provide for both upward and downward mobility. Natural disasters lead to downwards mobility. Favourable changes like good rain and good weather support economic activity and agriculture, leading to prosperity.

VII. *Social movements* – They also help in collective mobility. Dalit movements in India and Black Rights Movement in the USA are such examples.

VIII. *Law and constitution* – The concept of positive discrimination for the deprived, weaker and minority sections helps in social mobility of these sections.

IX. *Migration* – People migrate from rural to urban areas, from under-developed countries to developed countries for greener economic pastures.

X. *Physical features* – Sally Loverman indicates that other factors remaining constant, physical looks also provide an edge.

XI. *Technology* – Industrialisation in Europe had a major impact on collective mobility.

XII. *Subjective factors* – Individual and collective aspirations also play an important role. As Veblen's book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class, 1899* shows that individuals will always seek to be well thought of in the eyes of their fellow men. Thus, they will aspire for those positions which the society deems to be worthwhile. The process of Sanskritisation shows a similar desire of people. Merton has also written about the importance of the reference group in determining social behaviour.

XIII. *Cultural factors* – Sorokin, in his American study, concluded that racial and ethnic lineage also helps or retards mobility.

XIV. *Political factors* – Democracy, dictatorship, theocracy, etc. provide for, or restrict for that matter, different avenues of social mobility.

More recently, Wilkinson and Pickett, in their *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger, 2009, on the basis of an empirical research in many developed countries, concluded that there is a* relationship between high social inequality and low social mobility. Similar conclusions were made by the Nobel laureate Paul Krugman in his *The Great Gatsby Curve, 2012*. He found out that the countries like Denmark, Norway and Finland, which have lower levels of inequality, had some of the greatest mobility, while countries like Chile and Brazil, which had very high inequality, had some of the lowest mobility. David *Grusky et al, in Social Mobility in a High Inequality Regime, 2016, make a critical analysis of the American society which is considered as a very open society. They argue that mobility in American society is much more difficult than popular perception and is becoming difficult over the years.*

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Types of Mobility

On a broader level, mobility can be classified in various types like –

I. **Horizontal and vertical mobility**

Classically, Pitirim Sorokin defines vertical social mobility as the relations involved in a transition of an individual (or a social object) from one social stratum to another. According to the direction of the transition, there are two types of vertical social mobility, ascending and descending, or *social climbing* and *social sinking* respectively, according to Sorokin. Upward and downward mobility are two subtypes of vertical mobility. This may happen due to change in one or more than one basis like status, class and power. This is the most talked about mobility in sociological literature.

Examples of vertical social mobility are for too many. A promotion or demotion, a change in income, marriage to a person of higher or lower status, a movement to a better or worse neighbourhood, etc. serve as examples of vertical mobility. Downward mobility is also not very uncommon. Its examples can be due to layoffs, corporate downsizing, accidents and psychological sufferings.

Horizontal mobility involves moving within the same status or class category. An example of this is a nurse, who leaves one hospital to take a position as a nurse at another hospital. According to Sorokin, horizontal social mobility means the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another, situated at the same level. Other examples are transitions of individuals from the Baptist to the Methodist religious group, from one citizenship to another, from one family (as husband or wife) or another by divorce and remarriage and from one factory to another in the same occupational status.

II. **Intra-generational and inter-generational mobility**

Intra-generational mobility, also termed as career mobility, refers to a change in an individual's social standing, especially in the workforce, that occurs when an individual works his way up or down for that matter, in the occupational ladder. Career progression of an individual in work is considered to be an example of this type of mobility. Intra-generational changes are easier in societies which are relatively modern and have achievement orientation.

Inter-generational mobility refers to a change in social standing across generations. For example, it occurs when a person from a lower-class family graduates from a medical school. This is of the greatest interest to sociologists and in modern society, education is considered as one of the strongest means of inter-generational mobility.

III. **Structural and individual mobility**

Structural mobility represents the major upheavals and changes in society and they can enhance opportunities of a large number of people to move up the social ladder at the same time. It may lead to movement as a whole stratum or even the whole nation.

In his concept of dominant caste, M N Srinivas shows how possession of resources like land leads to shifting of a whole stratum in a local hierarchy. Similarly, discovery of oil in the Middle

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East led to the upliftment of the whole society. This form of mobility is termed as structural mobility. Industrialisation, increase in education, and post-industrial computerisation have allowed large groups of Indians, since 1990, to improve their social status and find higher-level jobs than their parents did.

Individual mobility is a micro view of social mobility. Individual characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, level of education, skills, determination, occupation, place of residence and health determine individual mobility. Opportunity for individual mobility can be restricted by several factors. For example, for women, certain ethnic groups or disabled person, etc., opportunities for upward mobility are limited.

IV. **Absolute and relative mobility**

Absolute mobility measures whether and by how much, living standards in a society have increased or decreased, often measured by what percentage of people have higher or lower incomes or social well- being than their parents. The more the absolute mobility, the better off the population is than their parents.

Relative mobility refers to the fluidity of a society. In other words, if one person moves up in relative terms, another, by definition, must have moved down, i.e., it is zero sum proposition. In contrast, absolute mobility is not a zero-sum game.

For example, if a person's income increases from Rs 32,000 at the beginning of his career to Rs 76,000 a decade later, whereas most other people who began their work life around the same time experienced a larger increase, that person has experienced absolute upward mobility but downward relative mobility.

Question Bank

1. What is inequality? How does it affect society?
2. Inequality and exclusion are two social facts which feed on each other. Comment.
3. While society can exclude people, people can also exclude themselves from society. Illustrate with the help of examples.
4. Inequalities can be natural, but hierarchies are essentially manmade. Substantiate with the help of examples.
5. Hierarchy is the necessary evil in the society. It pervades from family to global communities. Illustrate.
6. Deprivation has manifested as well as latent forms. Illustrate with examples from contemporary Indian society.
7. Poverty is a curse and it has wasted generations of promising youth. What are the limitations of poverty alleviation strategies adopted by various governments, including that adopted by the Indian Government?

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8. How is a status group different from a class group? Are they mutually exclusive? Is caste a status group or class group in 21st Century India?
9. Davis and Moore suggested a theory of stratification which sounds compelling, but suffers from numerous tautologies which Tumin has rightly highlighted. Elaborate.
10. Weber provided a multi-pronged view of stratification which clubbed the best of functionalist and conflict view, but still left much to be desired. Elaborate.
11. Mobility is a myth. Societies continue to remain instruments of those at the top and limited mobility avenues act merely as vents to prevent explosion of pent up social frustrations. Comment.
12. What is horizontal mobility? Explore the scope of social change that it brings with the help of some illustrations.
13. Has modern democracy succeeded in providing the proverbial free avenues of mobility to all? If not, what has prevented so? How has Indian democracy faired on this count?
14. Caste is as closed as a system of stratification as class is and is like just another form of stratification. Comment.
15. Is gender a class, status or community identity? Is this identity natural and immutable? How has gender stratification affected the welfare of half of the global population?
16. How can inequality in India be attributed to the rigid social stratification system that existed for many centuries?
17. Horizontal mobility brings incremental small changes, but vertical mobility brings real social changes. Comment and substantiate your arguments with the help of examples.

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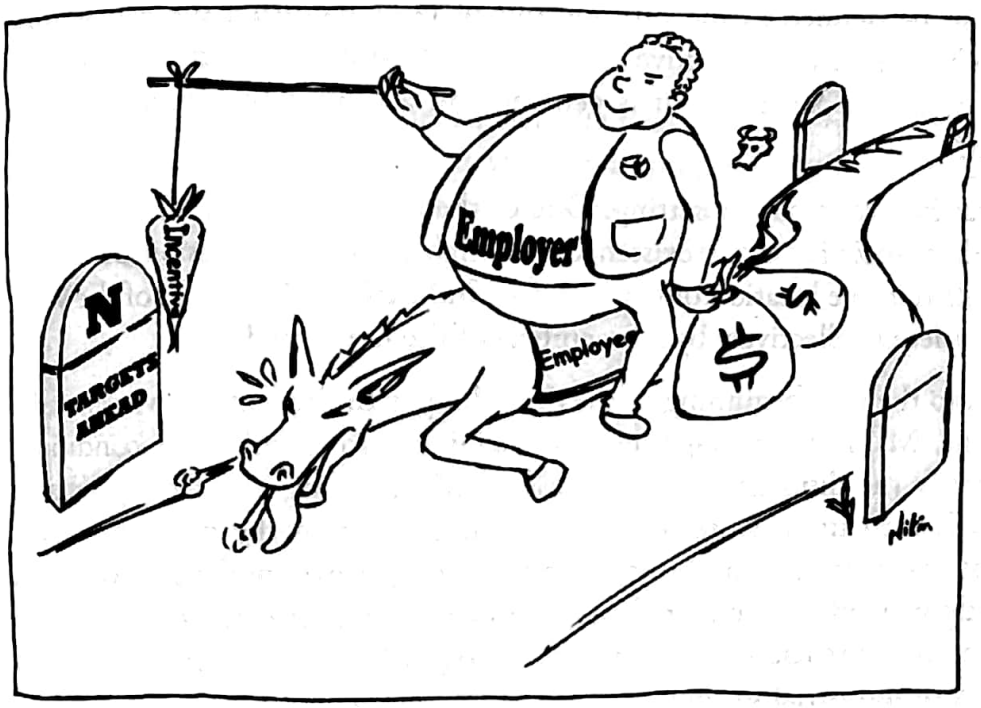
Work and Economic Life

6



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the social organisation of work
2. Explain the need of work in society
3. Establish a relation between work and economy
4. Informal and formal work in society

Notion of work in Sociology is different from that in natural sciences. It is not simply the expenditure of energy. In Sociology, work is a social activity performed in a group. It is about power relations, social dynamics, functions performed, conflict and so on. In fact, one school of sociological thought led by Marx, traces its origin with Industrialisation and workers-owners relations. In fact, Industrialisation and Modernisation, together led to the foundation of the discipline of Sociology. Marxian materialistic conception of history is essentially about economic relations. In a materialistic world, economic relations have spill over effects in the other areas of social life as well. We carry our work-lives to home and vice-versa. Workplace is an integral part of our persona. Recent focus on the human resource management and the workplace satisfaction has accentuated the importance of workplace sociological studies even further.

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Work is integral to human existence. Biblical teachings deem it as a result of sins committed by the first man and woman, in the Garden of Eden, by plucking the forbidden fruit. Calvinists deem it as a calling and a possible way of being the *chosen one*. Notion of *Karma* in Hindu philosophy is also closely linked to work in the material world. To Marx, work or production of goods and services is an avenue of expression of creativity and hence, a way to happiness and satisfaction. When workers lose control over it, they are alienated. According to Durkheim – '*Work is an integrating force in the modern society and forms the basis of organic solidarity*'. In the modern world, we spend more of our time doing work than any other single activity.

Work, in the simplest terms, can be defined as the carrying out of tasks requiring the expenditure of mental and physical effort, which has as its objective as the production of goods and services that cater to human needs. But in economic Sociology, it is generally an activity which results in paid employment, reward or contract.

Earlier, work was simple and was in a community setting. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the economic system of modern societies is the existence of a highly complex division of labour. Modern society also witnesses a shift in the location of work. Before Industrialisation, most of the work took place at home and was completed collectively by all members of the household.

The sociology of work goes back to the very beginning of the discipline, with the seminal works of the founding fathers of the discipline. Marx was perhaps the first sociologist to examine the conditions of work in factories and to identify the dimensions of alienation and deskilling in a factory setting. Durkheim, on the other hand, looked upon work as an integrating factor in the modern society. Weber analysed the development of new types of authority with the emergence of modern bureaucratic organisations of work. The study of work is a major focus area of sociology because economy and production influence all other parts of the society, irrespective of the type of society viz. hunter-gatherer society, agricultural feudal society or industrial society.

Importance of work in modern societies is for several reasons like –

I. It is a source of income and living. We live in a money market and it is work which fetches money for us.

II. It provides direction to energy of human beings to be utilised in a constructive manner. It is the medium of acquiring more skills and capabilities.

III. It breaks the monotony of domestic life.

IV. It enhances opportunities of expanding social contacts and helps in building social capital.

V. It also gives identity to a person. In industrial societies, people are known by what they do.

Concept of work is also associated with Industrialisation and growth of capitalism. Initially, the term *worker* was used for those who worked in factories. Worker is a person who enters into employment out of his own will. He has contractual relations with the employer. In contemporary sense, worker is the one who is not in a managerial job. In strict sense of meaning, worker is also differentiated from *labour*. The term labour denotes a worker who lacks choice for any reason. Child labour, rural labour and bonded labour are *labour* and not *worker* as they lack choice and are often forced into work, irrespective of their willingness. Workers are generally in a contractual relation with the employer while labour on

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the other hand, is in feudal or ritual relation with the employer. A person can be a worker by one's own sweet will as well. Work is also different from other similar sounding concepts like employment. Employment, as a concept, is narrower than work.

Over the last decades, there has been a shift to what is often called *flexible production* and *decentralisation of work*. It is argued that in this period of globalisation, it is the growing competition between firms and countries that makes it essential for firms to organise production, suiting the changing market conditions. With the advent of internet and e-commerce, virtual workplaces have also popped up. As technology pervades workplace, nature of work also changes. Robert Blauner has concluded that increase in the use of technology leads to higher degree of alienation. Frank Hull et al, in their *The Effect of Technology on Alienation from Work, 2016*, re-examined the argument given by Blauner and found that it is more than true. In fact, the relationship between technological advance and alienation is more negatively linear than curvilinear, as proposed by Blauner. Organisation of work in modern post-industrial societies cannot be clubbed under any single classification. Diverse service industry, increasing entrepreneurship, automation, inter-disciplinary working, etc. have opened many new areas of study.

Social Organisation of Work in Different Types of Societies – Slave, Feudal, Industrial/Capitalist

Organisation of work refers to patterning of activities which involves a technical as well as a social component. Technically, it may be called as division of labour and socially, it may reflect the normative structure of the society. It was different in different societies like slave, estates/feudal and capitalist. At a particular time also, different societies might have different organisation of work. While capitalism was in offing in Europe, Asia had *Asiatic Mode of Production*, according to Marx.

Social organisation reflects the normative structure at workplace in the form of stratified order in the society, power relations, social mobility, and alienation. Modern societies have secular or technical component as the dominating one while in traditional societies, work is organised more on normative lines. Factory system and Jajmani system are two contrasting examples of different organisation of work.

Value system of simple pre-industrial societies is marked by particularism, affectivity, diffuseness, etc. On the other hand, value system of an industrial society is marked by universalism, achievement, affective neutrality, etc. Kinship groups play important role in production in pre-industrial societies. Pre-industrial societies are marked by the absence of scales in production and organisation. Economic activities take place in smaller groups. Economic organisation of simple societies is aimed at meeting subsistence needs of the society and hence, there is little surplus. Alienation at workplace is low in pre-industrial societies as there is community feeling among the members of the society. Pace of change is also very slow.

Modern industrialised societies are marked by different features. First of all, their political systems are different. Unlike simple societies, such societies are marked by presence of a cohesive nation-state, which can support the existence of big enterprises and then also facilitate wide commerce. There is a uniform legal system to provide stability into the economic system. Educational framework also undergoes

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changes and religious education is replaced by scientific education. Education also becomes mass based as large skilled workforce is required. Industrialisation also leads to change in family and kinship structures. Industrialisation requires a geographically mobile family and this leads to nuclearisation of family. Family ceases to be a unit of economic production and is reduced to a unit of consumption and instead, individuals in the family become a unit of production. Skills are not acquired as a part of hereditary learning, but formal institutions imbibe such skills.

Various dimensions of analysis of organisation of work in different societies can be analysed by using a general schema which has the following elements –

I. *Activities of production* – They can be hunting gathering, agriculture, mass production and so on.

II. *Nature of work* – Simple or complex, formal or informal, etc.

III. *Source of power* – Land, capital, etc. Classical elite theories locate source of power in individual qualities. Marx sees source of power in control over the mode of production.

IV. *System of stratification* – It was a master-slave in ancient mode, in feudal, lord-serf, haves-haves not in capitalism, in caste system *chatur-varna*. Stratification is a result of pattern of inequalities which exist in society. The basis of such inequalities is explained through various theories of stratification.

V. *Social mobility* – Avenues of social mobility are also different in different modes of production. When division of labour is low and the work is ascriptive in nature, mobility is poor, as in the case of feudal and ancient mode of production.

VI. *Degree of alienation* – According to Marx, it peaks in capitalism and according to Weber, it is a result of increasing rationalisation of work.

This schema will be used to analyse the social organisation of work in different types of societies. Apart from these features, there can be various specific features of organisation of work in terms of gender roles, age roles, individualisation, communal organisation and so on.

In primitive societies, man was overwhelmed by the forces of nature. So, natural events like sunshine, rain, floods determined the social organisation as well. Forces of production were at their lowest level and material density was low. Family was a self-sufficient unit of production as well as of consumption. Organisation of work in a primitive *slave society* is marked by the following features –

I. *Major economic activity* – Hunting and food gathering.

II. *Mode of production is ancient* – Where some have mastered over the skills of hunting and gathering, etc. and others are enslaved by them.

III. *Low division of labour* – Simple societies have low division of labour.

IV. *No specialised economic organisation* – The occupational differentiation being limited primarily to birth, sex and age, these societies have no specialised economic organisation.

V. *Little or no surplus* – Due to poor specialisation, productivity was also low and hence, little surplus was there.

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VI. *Low stratification* – As inequalities are low and most of the people are in similar activities, stratification is simpler.

VII. *No private ownership* – Private ownership of means of production is also almost non-existent.

VIII. Religion dominates economic life. Economic activities are not rationally organised and religion interference in economic activities is considerable.

IX. *Low level of innovation* – As needs are simple, no new innovations are there.

X. *Family role in production* – Family plays an important role in production as production process is mostly community based.

XI. *Source of power* – Animated source of power is used in the form of human labour and animal power.

XII. *Low level of alienation* – Alienation from work is low as workers enjoy fruit of their production.

XIII. *Simple economic system* – There is no clear separation between domestic economy and community economy.

As the knowledge of usage of land grew, agriculture became a dominant mode of production. Land was also slowly privatised. Exchange of commodities also developed in a rudimentary barter manner. However, family still remained the predominant unit of production and despite emergence of personal property concept, ownership was still largely communal. Organisation of work in a *feudal agrarian society* is marked by the following features –

I. *Major economic activity* – Agriculture is the major economic activity.

II. *Mode of production is feudalistic* – It is based upon control over land.

III. *Division of labour is enhanced over slave society* – There are three estates which are nobility, clergy and serfs.

IV. *Surplus is there, but not much* – Markets are slowly emerging.

V. *Social mobility is very low* - As society is almost closed in nature, roles of clergy, nobility and serfs were defined by birth and hence, were ascriptive in nature.

VI. *Alienation was still very low* – Workers have significant autonomy in work in the absence of strict organisation of work and lesser specialisation.

VII. *Religion still dominant in workplace* – Religion was still an important part of life and family still played a part in production.

Feudal system matured with increase in production, rise in surplus, rise in trade, commodities handicrafts, etc. As the scale of production increased with the usage of mechanical instruments, new markets were sought. New possibilities further demanded setting up of industries. Instead of being controlled by nature, man now tries to control the nature. With emergence of factories, family loses its primary position in production. Organisation of work in a *capitalist or industrial society* is marked by the following features –

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I. *Major economic activity* – Production is mass production of goods in factories.

II. *Complex division of labour* – As specialisation increases, division becomes complex.

III. *Centrality of capital* – With the arrival of factory production, more importance is given to capital and less to labour.

IV. *Production is for exchange and profit* –Earlier, production was for self- consumption. According to Marx, earlier goods had a *use value*, now they have an *exchange value*.

V. *Production is based on competition and not on cooperation* – As demand increases, more players arrive and they compete against each other.

VI. *Alienation is high* – Workers lose control over the produce and monotony of work is also very high.

VII. *Multiplicity of economic institutions* – New services are needed and for that, new institutions like factories banks and markets emerge.

VIII. *High surplus* – As of now, production is for market, not for self- consumption.

IX. *Arrival of money economy* – Money economy replaces barter system and even labour is commoditised. Use of money made it possible to make large scale transactions with ease.

X. *Use of inanimate power* – Inanimate power replaces use of labour, leading to higher production on one hand and reduced human role on the other.

XI. *High occupational mobility* – There is high mobility of workforce as means of communication improve.

XII. *Work life separation* – Domestic and commercial activities are clearly separated as community based production is destroyed by the factory system.

XIII. *High levels of innovation* – Level of innovation is high as an individual has more freedom to be creative.

XIV. *Secular economic settings* – Laws in such society are no longer repressive and religion no longer influences economic activities. Work is also organised rationally and not on the basis of customs and values.

In the context of modern societies also, social organisation of work is not as simple as described above in form of an Ideal typical framework. There are different ways of organisation across developing and the developed societies. Developed countries are generally industrialised and service dominated, developing countries, on the other hand, are still engaged in agricultural activities in a big way. For this reason, it is argued that countries like India still have to come out of the feudal mode of social organisation of work. Social organisation of work also depends upon the cultural values of societies as highlighted by Weber in his famous *Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism*. Political systems also affect social organisation of work. For example, in Japan, after Meiji Restoration, rapid industrialisation took place and it made a rapid shift from a feudal agrarian economy to industrial economy. Geographical factors also determine social organisation of work. In case of India, different regions have different social organisation of work. Tribals of north east have different organisation than those living in Delhi.

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Organisation of work in modern industrial society is viewed differently by different schools of thoughts. Harry Braverman, in his *Labour and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century, 1974* provides a critical analysis of scientific management at workplace from a Marxist perspective. He argues that work in capitalist organisations is exploitative and alienating and workers are coerced into servitude in a factory system.

Social Determinants of Economic Development

Economic development depends upon various social factors also. Uneven economic development of various societies proves this. Max Weber in his *Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism* shows that social factors profoundly affect economic development.

Various social factors that affect economic development are –

I. Education system.

II. Religious beliefs.

III. Social stratification like caste and class.

IV. Personal values like asceticism, hard work and enterprising.

V. Demographic composition and dependency ratio.

VI. Scientific advancement.

VII. Spread and penetration of money economy.

VIII. Level of urbanisation.

IX. Secularisation.

In case of India, despite considerable availability of material resources, social resources were not conducive for economic growth in modern times. Caste system rendered the society fragmented. Religious practices of both Islam and Hinduism promoted worldly asceticism. Joint family system also focused more on affective aspects and less on liberal enterprising values. Later, there was also lack of political unity in the post Mughal period.

Industrialisation and Social Change

Industrialisation is defined as a shift from animate (humans or animals) to inanimate (coal, electricity, etc.) source of power. Industrialisation, best defined as the rise of factories and the use of machinery in the production of goods, first occurred in England in the late 1700s and the particular phase was termed as *Industrial Revolution* by Arnold Toynbee. It led to the following changes –

I. *Occupational shifts* – The more industrialised a society, the smaller is the proportion of the labour force engaged in agriculture. After industrialisation, occupational patterns made a shift from agriculture to industry.

II. *From ascriptive to achievement based division of labour* – Communal and family division of labour gave way for scientific division of labour. In India also, institutions like Jajmani system were broken. Occupation was no longer linked to caste.

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III. *High division of labour and opportunity for mobility* – Due to division of labour, stratification increased and more opportunities of social mobility also opened up.

IV. *Changing power relations* – With the decline of estate system in Europe and the rise of capitalism, power equations changed. Land, no longer remained as a dominant source of power and instead, industry and trade emerged as new sources of power.

SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT

Also called Taylorism after its founder F W Taylor, it is a theory of work-management that analyses workflows and tries to optimise them. Its main objective is improving economic efficiency, especially labour productivity by various principles of scientific management. It became a buzzword in the early 20th Century with its principles of rationalisation of work, standardisation and division of labour.

V. *New forms of conflicts* – Trade unionism, lock outs, labour mobilisation become the chosen modes of class struggle.

VI. *Demand for skilled jobs and educational changes* – Education, as an agent of social change, also gets a boost as it becomes a facilitator of skill development.

VII. *Changing family structure* – Industrialisation required a mobile family and it led to the arrival of nuclear family.

VIII. *Revolution and Marxian thought* – Industrialisation and capitalism lead to the real change, i.e., arrival of socialism.

Industrialisation also resulted into more jobs. It also led to more prosperity in cities as disposable incomes increased gradually. More facilities ensured a better standard of life as well. Communication improved and production processes became more efficient. It led to the overall transformation of some societies and as a result, some regions like western Europe emerged as more prosperous regions than the rest of the world.

Formal and Informal Organisation of Work

According to Amitai Etzioni – '*Our society is an organisational society*'. Organisations are different from other social units like family, kinships and friends. Organisations are social units which have specific objectives and goals to achieve. Organisations existed in one form or another since time immemorial, from Harappan urban organisations to modern business houses. Rise in division of labour has also been accompanied by the consequent rise in various types of organisations. Political, economic and other functions are now performed by distinctive organisations.

Formal Organisation of Work is the one in which the worker is governed by the formal rules and regulations. Rules and regulations may be defined by a contract between the employee and employer or by various legislations, statutes and rules of the government. A formal organisation is rationally designed. It has explicit objectives and for them, there are explicitly defined means as well. One of the most prevalent formal organisations of work is bureaucracy, which is based on rational organisation of work, where workers work on the basis of a legal rational authority structure. Industrialisation and

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democracy led to the development of organisations which were based on formal authority structure. Formality is also often required for a legal standing. Formal organisation of work is a feature of societies where rule of law prevails. Formal organisation of work tries to balance the interests of the workers and employer. It helps in prevention of exploitation of workers by defining their duty, rights and liabilities. It is the most common type in modern developed countries. Formal organisation of work also provides better control of work and also better accountability. It is also characterised by protective laws at workplace like Factories Act, 1948, Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Gratuity Act and Shops and Establishments Act.

Informal Organisation of Work is the one in which workers are not governed by fixed rules, but by directions of employer. Sometimes, it is also synonymously used with the term *unorganised sector*. A few centuries ago, most of the organisations were based on such organisational structure. Today, the term generally includes casual labour, contract labour, child labour, domestic labour, etc. Informal organisation is based on social contracts, in which, rules are implied rather than stated. Informal organisation also escapes the legislations and rules of the land. They may also be organisations which are developed on the basis of personal linkages and rapport. It is largely a feature of the society where labour supply is higher and workers accept whatever is given to them in any conditions of work. Such type of work organisation also makes workers, especially women and children, prone to exploitations. Developing countries have relatively larger population under informal organisation. In India, more than 90% of the workforce is in the informal sector. Informal workforce has low social security as terms of employment are uncertain and little benefits are given to the employees in case of exigencies. Beyond the workplace, informal organisation can be viewed as an amalgamation of a set of personal relationships, social networks, communities of common interest like caste or creed based, and even as an emotional sources of motivation.

At the macro level, work is informally organised in traditional societies, but in modern societies, work is formally organised. Distinction between the two can also be understood in terms of intrinsic characteristics of work. Sometimes, formal organisations develop, within itself, informal structure and vice-versa. Further, from theoretical point of view, formal and informal organisations cannot be strictly separated from each other. According to Peter Blau, in his *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy, 1963* – *'Informal structures exist even in formal organisations'*. Similarly, small informal organisations when they grow big, require formal rules and procedures of working for better management of tasks. Informal relations exist at all levels, even in modern organisations and especially at the top. Despite formal provisions of board meetings, shareholders' meet and employee consultation mechanisms, actual decisions are taken

THE HAWTHORNE STUDIES

The Hawthorne studies were conducted with the workers at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company by Elton Mayo and his team in the 1920s to analyse the human behavior in formal organisational settings. The studies suggested that employees have social and psychological needs also – along with economic and financial needs – which must be met in order to be motivated workers. The findings of these studies gave a big impetus to a new thought of organisational science called 'Human Relations' school and it emphasised the informal aspect of the workplace as well. Work satisfaction and performance is not a function of formal rules and working conditions alone, informal culture of the groups and organisation also plays a big role in it. The studies were also landmark in demonstrating the use of experimental method in social research.

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only by a handful of people. According to Meyer and Rowan, in their *Institutionalised Organisations: Formal Structures as Myths and Ceremony, 1977* '*Formal rules and practices are often quite distant from the practices actually adopted by the members of the organisation*'. Formal rules are like myths which people profess to follow, but have little relevance. Formal rules and practices are followed in a ritualistic manner and people do them just for the sake of doing and use them as a means of approving what they have actually done.

Informal organisation is also used in a different context to refer to the *informal sector* of the economy or the unorganised sector of the economy, in a country. ILO came up with a concrete definition of informal sector in 2002 *The informal sector is broadly characterised as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services, with the primary objective of generating employment and income to the persons concerned.* According to ILO – '*This sector encompasses a range of vulnerabilities and deficits in decent work*'. The term *informal sector* was actually coined by Keith Hart, a British anthropologist in 1970s. He identified certain characteristics of the workers which are specific to this sector like low skills, easy entry, low paid employment and primarily immigrant labour. Some writers attribute withdrawal of state from employment market, entry of market and capital economy and lack of legislative protection as the primary reasons for the growth of the informal sector.

A 2012 working paper titled *The Informal Economy: Definitions, Theories and Policies* by Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising identifies four theoretical strands that explain the existence of informal sector –

I. *The Dualist School* – It views the informal sector as comprising only of some marginal activities, which provide income for the poor and a safety net in times of crisis. This school argues that informal workers are excluded from modern economic opportunities due to an imbalance between the population growth rates and industrial employment growth rates on one hand, and a mismatch between people's skills and the structure of modern economic opportunities on the other.

II. *The Structuralist School* – It views the informal sector as subordinated economic entities and workers that serve to reduce input and labour costs and, hence, increase the competitiveness of large capitalist firms. It is an essential feature of a globalised free market system.

III. *The Legalist School* – It views the informal sector to be made up of small entrepreneurs who choose to operate informally in order to avoid the costs, time and effort of formal registration. In countries like India, convoluted and outdated laws also force such entrepreneurs to operate informally.

IV. *The Voluntarist School* – It also focuses on informal entrepreneurs who deliberately seek to avoid regulations and taxation but, unlike the legalist school, it does not blame the bureaucratic processes and instead, does an overall cost-benefit analysis to remain formal or informal.

Formal and informal organisation of work also depends upon the task which is to be accomplished. Tasks which are to be accomplished in a project or mission mode have a greater scope of informal working as the team has to improvise new strategies, make new plans and have to work in a flexible manner. Even in formal organisations, there are ad-hoc committees which work informally at critical

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times. Informal organisation working offers more flexibility over formal organisation working. Informal organisations also have their own limitations. By way of informal decision making and working, some individuals may usurp more power in the organisations and may undermine its goals and principles. Informal relations can also be exploited to promote vested interests. Corporate scams, insider trading, monopolistic practices, collusive bribery, etc. are some of the ill consequences of informal organisation of work within formal organisations.

Labour and Society

Concept of labour is an old one, but in modern sense, it arrived with the growth of capitalism and industrialisation. Often, a worker is differentiated from a labourer in terms of choice as a labour doesn't have a choice. In a narrow sense, a labour generally lacks choice, either due to lack of work elsewhere or due to social exploitation. Terms like child labour, agriculture labour and bonded labour are used in different sense than industrial worker.

In a broader sense, labour also has various broad classifications like industrial labour, rural labour, feminine labour, child labour, formal labour and informal labour. In modern industrial societies, human labour is only one dimension of work as the other is taken over by machines. One important characteristic of industrial societies is the marketing of human labour. Another characteristic of labour in modern societies is its high division. Further, labour in modern societies has left the atmosphere of home and has shifted to *workplaces*. Labour is now sold in market and not used solely for domestic production.

Labour is also a process, an activity, which is explained by Marx as *labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which, man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature*. According to Marx, labour is peculiar of human beings only and animals are not capable of producing it and our labour creates something in reality that previously existed only in our imagination, i.e., it is *objectification of our purpose*. Secondly, this labour is material, according to Marx, as it works with the more material aspects of nature. Marx's use of the term labour is not restricted to economic activities; it encompasses all productive actions that transform the material aspects of nature, in accordance with our purpose. Labour, for Marx, is the development of our truly human powers and potentials. It satisfies our needs as well as creates new ones. Furthermore, labour is a social activity. Labour does not transform only the individual; it also transforms society. According to Marx– '*Labour in capitalism is not owned by workers*'. To survive, workers are forced to sell their labour time to capitalists. Contrary to Marx, Hegel viewed labour in non-material terms or in terms of ideas only. He looked at labour as mental labour.

Another view is provided by Marxist writer Harry Braverman in his *Labour and Monopoly Capital, 1974*, according to which, Fordism and automation has actually led to deskilling of labour force. Labour has lost control over its skills and due to specialised production, they learn just a part of the whole production activity and they become more dependent on the capitalist system.

Michael Burawoy rejects Marxian argument that labour is always in a disadvantaged position. He rejects Marx's explanation that workers work hard due to coercion. The advent of labour unions and

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other changes largely eliminated the arbitrary power of management. To Burawoy, workers, at least in part, consent to work hard in the capitalist system, and at least, a part of that consent is produced in the workplace.

Durkheim saw division of labour as a process of evolutions in the society and it leads to an interdependency in the modern world which serves to integrate the society. According to Durkheim– *'In an industrialised society, where mechanical solidarity is poor, labour relations and interdependency thereof, provide for new forms of integration'.*

Another aspect of labour in modern society is its high division in factory and workplace which is suitable for modern mass production. It is sometimes also referred as *Fordism* or *Taylorism*. Labour, in modern workplaces, is more and more standardised and work processes are pre-defined and less flexible. It is also argued that Fordism is on decline and we are entering in Post-Fordism era, where a renewed focus on customised production is there. There is more flexibility at workplace and there is also more differentiation of work at the same time.

Feminist perspective views labour in society in terms of female participation. According to Ann Oakley, industrialisation led to confinement of women at home. Workforce participation was limited as women were forced to take the role of a housewife. Recent studies have however shown that workforce participation of women is increasing, but there is also an occupational segregation.

Increasing share of service sector in economies has also changed the traditional definition of labour. Labour is not just physical labour now. As the works of Arlie Hochschild, in her *The Managed Heart, 1983*, based on her study of Delta Airlines, show that the service industry requires more and more manipulation of emotions. Marxists see such a trend as pinnacle of commodification of labour power. Another aspect of rise of service sector is the decline of older factory production. One of its consequences is decline of trade-union movement as less number of workers are employed in traditional factories and it has significantly eroded the bargaining power of labour in the modern world. Flexible production, liberal labour laws and intense global competition are other factors which have eroded the bargaining power of the labour force.

Handy, in his *The Empty Raincoat, 1994*, argues that organisations, today, require workers with multiple skills and hence, labour is *flexible labour* today. Such workers are not specialised in one task, rather, they have a *skill portfolio* and such workers are termed as *portfolio workers*. On one hand, this situation offers workers choice and they can enjoy different work, on the other hand, it has also given the capitalists, the power to hire and fire at their will.

Increasing use of technology and IT at the workplace has also enhanced control at workplace as these places are now continuously under surveillance. Face to face interactions are cut and life is restricted to a cubicle. As a result, work has become more mechanical.

Globalisation of labour is another aspect of labour in post-modern times. Labour, today, is marked by high mobility, trans-boundary movement, etc. World becomes increasingly competitive as industries also shift in search of cheaper production. It also leads to degradation of labour as it is evident in the rise of sweatshops in China and other emerging economies.

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Question Bank

1. What do you mean by social organisation of work? How it is different from economic organisation of work?
2. Organisation of work has internal as well as external dimensions. Illustrate with the help of an example.
3. What are the factors which have affected the change in the social organisation of work over centuries? Make a qualitative analysis of differences between organisations of a hunting gathering society and a modern industrial society.
4. What are the factors that differentiate an informal organisational setup from a formal organisational setup? Is formalisation of organisation always good?
5. What are the factors which have contributed towards high informalisation of Indian economy? What are the repercussions of this?
6. What is the take of Marxian and Durkheimian perspectives on the position of labour in society?
7. Industrialisation was the most disruptive event in the history of the labour? Comment.
8. How has the democracy helped in protecting the interests of labour in society? What are the steps that Indian government has taken to ameliorate the conditions of workers? Have these steps helped labour in the informal sector also?
9. What has prevented the growth of feminine workforce in Indian economy? Is this in line with the global trends? What steps should the Indian government take to promote gender balance in the workforce?
10. Communist form of organisation of work will never arrive because workers will never unite. Comment.
11. What changes has India witnessed in the form and structure of Industrial organisation of work in the last Century? How has liberalisation and globalisation of Indian economy affected the organisation of work?
12. How has liberalisation and globalisation promoted feminisation of labor in the workforce? Is it really helping the cause of gender equality in workforce?
13. How has organisation of work in the Indian society affected the institution of family and kinship?
14. How does the formal and informal organisation of work influence labour's mobility? Explain with examples from the Indian job market.

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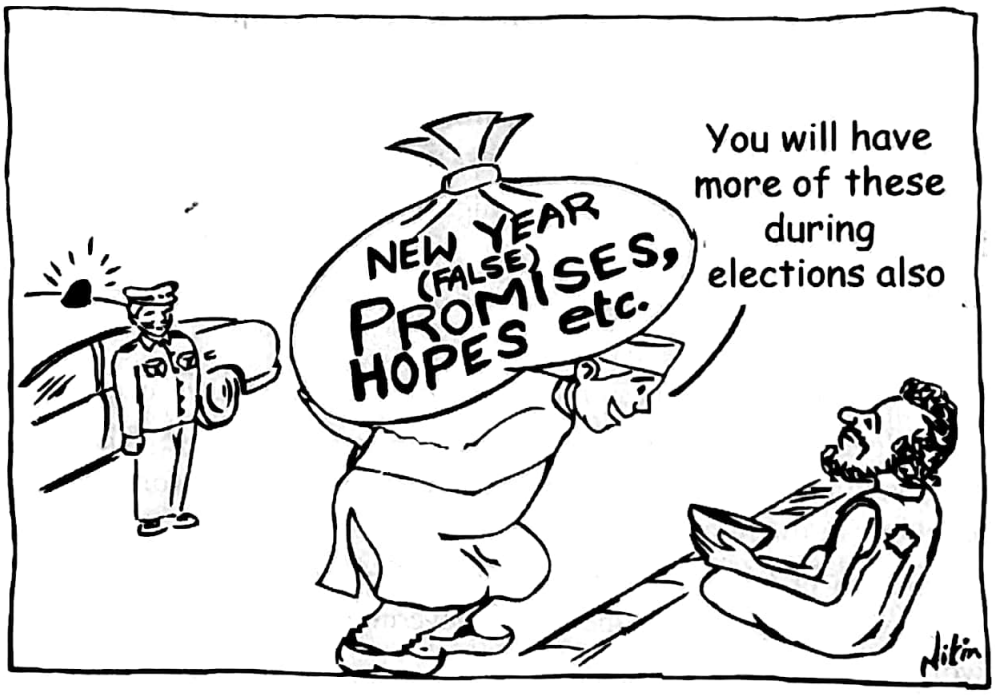
Politics and Society

7



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Explain the role of Politics in society
2. Know about the concept of Power Elite
3. Appreciate the concept of bureaucracy in theory and real life
4. Become familiar with the concepts of nation, state and citizenship
5. Understand the notions of Social Movements and other related concepts

Sociological study of political life includes study of various social relations and social groups involved in political activities. It is different from various other similar sounding disciplines like Psephology, which specialises in prediction of election results and polling behaviour. Instead of predictive analysis, Sociology tends to understand the whole mechanism itself. Central to sociological understanding of politics is power. Power relations and their implications on participants create different kinds of social organisations. In this context, Marxian notion of communism and socialism have found prime spots in political discourse where they talk of dilution of power in the hands of a few and hand it over to the masses. Weber's Ideal Type of bureaucracy is another widely discussed model of authority structure and he tries to explore various forms of power and authority. Sociologists also study political behaviour in terms of group dynamics, ideology and leadership as well. Social movements are another dimension of studying collective behaviour in power negotiations.

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According to T B Bottomore – *'Political institutions are primarily concerned with division of power in the society'*. Political systems have evolved over the years from primitive communal groups to ancient city states and from medieval feudal states to modern nation-states. Modern political systems are a part of larger governments which work on the principle of separation of powers. Politics is all pervasive in modern societies and it touches upon, not only the public life, but private lives as well. Prakash Jha, the noted Bollywood director, known for his vocal socio-political movies, once noted in a national daily that *all relations are political*. His statement might be an exaggerated one, but has truth as well, as power dynamics affect the private relations as well. Sociologists, however, concern themselves with the broader patterns of power and politics in society and one of such broader conceptual framework was provided by a set of classical sociologists who came to be known as the *power elite theorists*.

Sociological Theories of Power and Power Elite

Power is the ability of individuals or groups to carry out their will, even when opposed by others. It implies that those who hold power do so at the cost of others. Power refers to the ability or capacity to control others and it may reside in an individual's status or position, in relation to the status and position of the other individuals. Weber famously defines power in his *Economy and Society, 1922* as – *'The chance of men, to realise their own will, in a communal action, even against the will of others, who are participating in a social action'*. Power can be of two types which are coercion and authority.

Weberian definition presupposes that power is a constant sum game, but functionalists view it as a variable sum game. Functionalists also say that power is exercised by a few, but it is for the good of all and it leads to collective well- being. Higher the well- being, more is the power. Parsons regarded power differential as necessary for the effective pursuit of goals of the society.

Authority is that form of power, which is accepted as legitimate, that is, right and just. It means that the master has the right to command and can expect to be obeyed.

On the basis of various sources of power, the classification can be personal power, knowledge power, prestige power, emotional power, community power, power of the elite, class power, organisational power, power of the unorganised masses, etc.

Various classical theoretical perspectives on power are –

I. Weber has seen power as a *constant sum game* in which, one exercises power at the expense of the other. According to him – *'Power in a system is constant and hence, it is limited in quantum'*. When one person or group exercises it, others

MICHAEL MANN ON POWER

He identifies multiple bases of power in terms of overlapping socio-spatial networks of power. He views power as the ability to pursue and attain goals through mastery of the environment. Power is held by individuals as well as collectivities which are called *distributional* and *collective* power respectively. The ways such powers are exercised are classified as *extensive* power, i.e., the reach of power and the *intensive* power, i.e., impact of the power. Further, when such power is manifested and is deliberately followed, it is called *authoritative* power. If it is subtle and spontaneous, it is termed as *diffused* power. There can be four types of sources of power which are economic, ideological, political and military. Critics of this framework argue that in a globalised world, transnational companies and organisations also exercise significant power.

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have to relinquish some of their powers. He described three bases of power as tradition, charisma and legal rational.

II. Functionalists see power rested with society and as a *variable sum game*. They argue that as collective welfare increases in society, amount of power held by the society also increases. Power is not possessed by individuals, but by society. According to Parsons, since it is very difficult for society to exercise power by itself, social positions are created which are functionally more important and power is exercised through them. Power is used in society to achieve collective goals and this benefits everyone and everyone wins and there are no *winning elites* or *losing masses*. This further forms the basis for cooperation and reciprocity in society, which is essential for the maintenance and well- being of society.

III. Marxists see power not in the form of *authority* (with legitimacy), but in the form of *coercion* of *the haves* over *the have nots*. It is not a societal resource as claimed by functionalists, held in trust by those in authority, but is rather used as a tool by the dominant groups to subdue the commoners. The interests of *the haves* are in direct conflict with those who are subjected to power. From Marxian perspective, source of power is economic infrastructure, but it extends beyond economic infrastructure, to all other aspects of life as well. Though the ruled class accepts the power of the ruling class, but, it is due to a false consciousness. The only way to return the power to the people involves communal ownership of force of production and it is possible only through revolution.

IV. Elite theories are the foremost theories of power. They broadly fall in two categories which are Classical elite theories and Pluralistic elite theories. Mosca, Pareto and C W Mills fall under the classical elite theorists. Karl Mannheim, Schumpster, Anthony Downs and Robert Dahl are from the pluralist tradition.

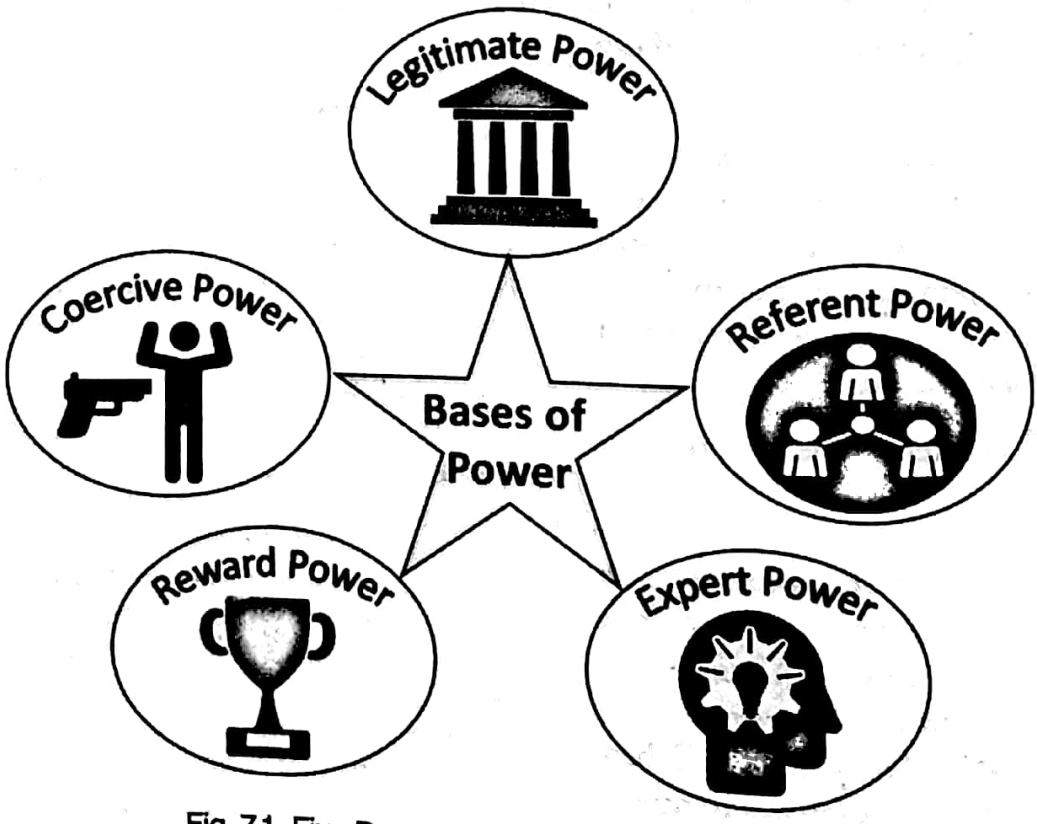

Fig. 7.1 Five Bases of Power (French and Raven)

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Apart from these perspectives on power, there are various other views on power, its sources and its manifestations. French and Raven famously gave five bases of power, viz legitimate, referent, expert, reward and coercive power. Legitimate power results from the belief that a person in power has the formal right to make demands, and to expect others to be compliant and obedient to his or her demands. All institutions, sanctioned by the government, have such power. Reward power comes from the ability of a person to favourably compensate another person for compliance of rules, targets, etc. Supervisory authorities have such powers in organisations. Expert power rests upon a person's high level of skill and knowledge. In a knowledge economy, such power is valued greatly. Referent power is the result of a person's attributes which result into, in words of French and Raven, perceived attractiveness, worthiness and right to others' respect. Coercive power comes from the belief that a person can punish others for non-compliance. Police and judicial authorities have such power in all the societies. They also differentiated power from influence as power makes the likelihood of desired response more imminent and real. Later on, they also added one more dimension which is called information power.

Some social thinkers have recently tried to put some other interesting perspectives on power. For example, Gene Sharp, in his *From dictatorship to democracy: A conceptual framework for liberation, 1994*, asserts that all power structures rely upon the obedience of their subjects. If subjects refuse to obey, leaders have no power. His work was very influential in the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic, in the 2011 Arab Spring. Tim Gee, in his book *Counterpower: Making Change Happen, 2011*, concludes that power is also possessed by the oppressed as well in the form of a *counter-power* which is used to countervail the power of elites. Such power especially becomes manifest at times of social movements, protests, etc.

Classical Elite Theory

The term Elite refers to *those who excel.* Elite theory developed in part as a reaction to Marxism and its impact on European society. It rejected the Marxian idea that a classless society, having an egalitarian structure, could be realised after class struggle in every society.

Classical Elite Theory was propounded by two Italian sociologists, Pareto and Mosca. Both Pareto and Mosca believed that personal qualities are the basis of power and they rejected communism as a utopia and Marxism as an ideological bias. Vilfredo Pareto made the classic critique of Marx by comparing his words to a fable about bats, that when someone calls them bird, bats will say that they are mice and when someone calls them mice, they will say they are birds. The Classical Elite theorists identify the governing elite in terms of superior personal qualities of those who exercise power.

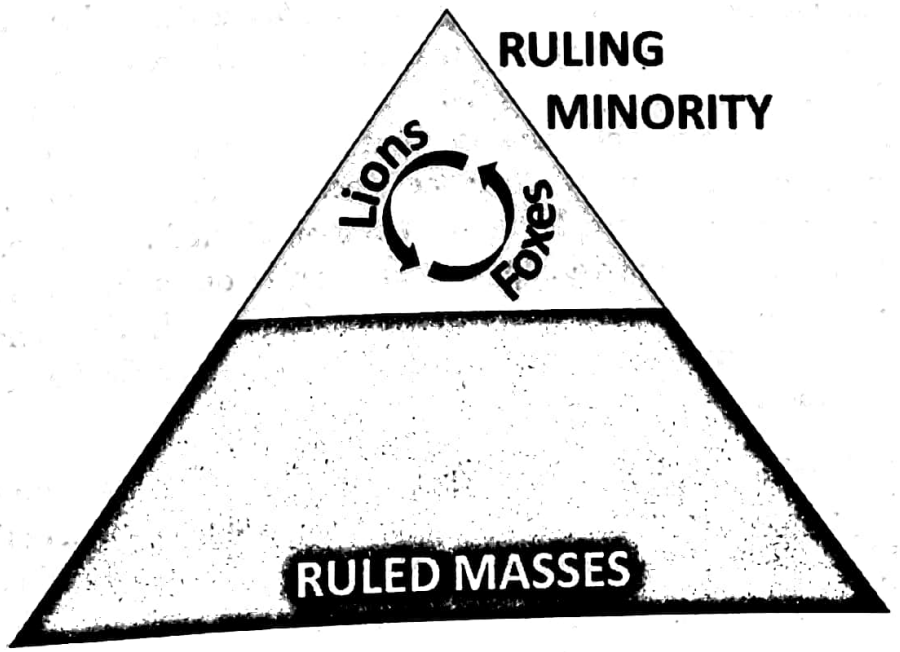

Fig. 7.2 Classical Elite Theory

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However, later versions of the Elite Theory place less emphasis on the personal qualities of the powerful and more on the institutional framework of the society. They argued that the hierarchical organisation of social institutions allows a minority to monopolise power.

Elite Theory argues that all societies are divided into two main groups which are a ruling minority and the ruled. This situation is inevitable. If the proletarian revolution occurs, it will merely result in the replacement of one ruling elite by the other.

Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto claimed in his *Mind and Society, 1935* that personal qualities separate the rulers and the ruled and they are the same at all times. According to Pareto, there is a *ruling minority* and the *ruled majority*. According to him, this situation is inevitable as even in communism, such polarisation takes place where a section of *the have nots* occupy a dominant position. According to Pareto, there are two types of governing elite which are lions and foxes (he borrowed this concept from Niccolo Machiavelli). Lions rule by force e.g. dictators and foxes rule by cunningness e.g. Chanakya and Chandragupta, 19th Century European democracies etc. They replace each other in a process which Pareto calls as *Circulation of Elites*.

Elites rule over the masses of people because they are dominated by non-rational forces and lack rational capacities. This is the reason that the masses are unlikely to be a revolutionary force. Social change occurs when the elite begins to degenerate and is replaced by a new elite, derived from the non-governing elite or higher elements of the masses. All elites tend to become decadent. They *decay in quality* and *lose their vigour* as they become complacent. In this situation, the other elites seize the power. Each type of elite lacks the qualities of its counterpart, qualities which are essential to retain the power in the long run. For example, an elite group of lions lack the imagination and cunningness necessary to maintain its rule and they recruit foxes from among the masses, who grow stronger over the time and ultimately replace the lions as the rulers.

He even saw the modern democracies as just another form of elite domination. He is, however, criticised for not making distinction among various forms of rules like dictatorship, democracy, fascism, and communism.

Gaetmo Mosca in his *The Ruling Class, 1939*, like Pareto, believed that a minority rule is inevitable, but unlike Pareto, he didn't believe that qualities of elite remain the same all the time and in all the societies. According to him, they vary from society to society and from time to time. He, however, also believed that democracy is also another form of elite rule. According to both Pareto and Mosca, decisions in democracies actually reflect the concerns of the elite and masses are a group of passive, apathetic and unconcerned people. Mosca, however, differed from Pareto as he admitted that elite in modern democracies are open groups and elites may be drawn from a wide social background and hence, views of various strata are represented to some degree in the decisions taken by the various elites. To Mosca, democracy may be a government *of* the people, even *for* the people, but can never be *by* the people as elite rule is inevitable.

Another Elite theory is given by C W Mills in his *The Power Elite, 1956*. He didn't believe that elite rule is inevitable. According to him, this is a recent phenomenon of the American society. According to him, today power among elites in the US is institutionalised and is not psychological and hence, rejected the view that some members are superior to others in terms of qualities. Institutes, and not individuals,

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today wield the power and those who are at the top of these institutes, monopolise the power. Unlike Pareto and Mosca, who gave a general theory, Mills focused his analysis to the USA alone. Certain institutions occupy key pivotal positions in the society and elite are those who hold these command positions in these institutions. Three such key institutions according to Mills are –

I. Military

II. Federal government

III. Major corporations

According to him interests of elites in these institutions are similar and together they form a minority called *Power Elite*. Thus, *power elite* is a coincidence of economic, political and military power. Cohesiveness of the power elite is further strengthened by their similar social background. Further, members interchange among each other. For example, the Board rooms of big corporations have members from elites from other two institutions as well.

Power elite have unprecedented power, but they have little accountability. He cites the example of unilateral decision of political elite to go into the Second World War and drop nuclear bombs.

Mills' theory is also supported by Floyd Hunter in his *Community Power Structure, 1963* and he claims that power rests with a small decision making group which is dominated by the business class.

The ideas of the three power elite theorists can be summarised in the adjacent table.

The Power Elites		
Pareto	**Mosca**	**C W Mills**
Mind and Society, 1935	The Ruling Class, 1896	The Power Elite, 1956
Elite rule is historical.	Elite rule is historical.	It is a recent phenomenon.
It is due to a dialectic process between two contrasting personal qualities which remain the same.	Personal qualities may vary.	It is a phenomenon in existence due to powerful institutions.
In Modern societies, however, power is more dispersed due to varying specialisation. There are also altruistic motives. Gandhi, Martin Luther King Junior, etc. are examples. Bases of power also don't remain static.		

However, power elite theorists are also criticised on several grounds like –

I. According to Robert Dahl in his *Who Governs? 1961* power is actually dispersed in society and arguments of Mills only have a circumstantial evidence.

II. Mills theory is also criticised for having a narrow view as it was based on his observations of the American society only.

III. Rise of specialists has further diffused power in the society.

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IV. Classical elite theory is simplistic in conception and ignores the differences between various types of ruling system like modern democracies and feudal societies.

V. Pareto and Mosca also fail to provide a method of measuring and distinguishing between the supposedly superior qualities of elites.

VI. According to T B Bottomore – '*Elite circulation may not be always there*'. In Indian society, Brahmins survived for long as elite due to closed nature of caste system.

VII. Altruistic motives also exist and power alone is not the guiding force in society.

VIII. Public opinion also matters these days and even elites have to listen to it.

IX. According to Westergaard and Resler, power does not lie with those who make the decisions, but, is visible through its consequences. Whoever reaps the largest rewards in the end, holds the maximum power.

Pluralist Thesis of Power or Community Power Thesis

This theory arose against the Elite Theories and it, in a way, tried to defend the modern institutions like democracy to certain extent as the elite theorists didn't make any distinction between democracy and other political forms of governance. But at the same time, this theory also recognises the place of elites in a democratic framework instead of totally rejecting them. So, while elite theorists see elitism incompatible with democracy, pluralist thesis argued that they are both compatible. In modern democracies of 21st Century, pressure groups are practical exemplification of the pluralistic theory.

Pluralists (or the Pluralist Thesis) challenged the main elitist contention that a society is marked by the existence of a single centre of political power. It is in contrast to elite and Marxist theorists who argue that power is concentrated in hands of a few. This theory is a bid to explain the power distribution in modern democracies, especially Western democracies. Modern democracies have dispersed sources of power. They argued that in a society, there are multiple centres of political power.

It begins by an observation that industrial society is increasingly differentiated into various social groups and sectional interests. There are diversified occupations and power is held by each. Formation of groups like trade unions, pressure groups and professional associations also complicate the situation. Absence of a single dominant group leads to bargaining and compromising. Since different groups cannot vie for power collectively, they field their representatives who act as elites and presence of such multiple elites creates situation of elite pluralism. Government acts like a broker to mediate between different elite groups and according to Raymond Aron, *Government becomes a business of compromise.*

Robert Dahl was one of the proponents and pioneers of this perspective. Robert Dahl argued that the elite theory confuses potential control with actual control. In his empirical study *Who Governs? 1961* he found that local politics is a business of bargaining and compromise, with no single group dominating the decision making. He used his *decision making model* in political decision making process and showed that economic factors are not the sole factors in decision making.

Arnold M Rose in his *The Power Structure, 1967* also echoes similar views as Dahl's and gives a *multiple influence hypothesis*. He goes one step further and argues that economic and political elite don't work hand in glove, as proposed by Mills.

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Karl Mannheim argues that though a policy may be seemingly formed by the purported elite, but in a democracy, there are various pulls and pressures that actually shape a policy. People make their aspirations expressed at regular intervals including at elections, which keep the elites in check.

According to Anthony, Downs in his *An Economic Theory of Democracy, 1957,*, as the producers and consumers defend their interests in the market, trade unions, associations, etc. play similar roles in politics to defend the interests of their members and workers.

Multi-party political democracies like India are also an example of similar contention. Public, in their respective constituencies, directly influences the respective political parties. With fragmented votes, parties also cannot rely on a single vote bank and have to accede to demands of various sections. The phenomenon of non-political groups, called pressure groups, also reflects plural centers of power. According to pluralist thesis, political parties and pressure groups have made democracy a true representative of large complex societies.

Pluralists are however, accused of ignoring non-decision and safe decision making. Elite concede to only those demands which do not threaten their position and retain the power in those decisions which threaten their interests. They also ignore results and consequences, as according to Westergaard and Resler, power is manifested in its consequences. As Roberto Michels highlights, representatives of people may ultimately usurp power and act in their own vested interests, ignoring the interests of public at large.

Bureaucracy

According to Amitai Etzioni, in his *Modern Organisations, 1964* – *'Our society is an organisational society'*. We live in a world where organisations accompany us from cradle to grave. Bureaucracy is an organisation which, in the simplest terms, is a rational action in institutionalised form. Modernisation has glorified rationalism and as a result, there has been tremendous growth of organisation based on legal rational authority, i.e., bureaucratic organisations.

Bureaucracy is a form of organisation which is most popularly associated with Max Weber, though he didn't coin the term. It is seen as a result of rise of large organisations, democracy and capitalism. Bureaucracy is defined by Max Weber as – 'The purest type of exercise of legal authority with a hierarchy of paid, full time officials, who formed a chain of command'. According to him, *from a purely technical point of view, a bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency, and is in this sense, formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability*. Bureaucratic institutions are dominant form of institutions in industrial society which require high degree of division of labour and high efficiency in rationally organised work environment. According to Weber – *'Expansion of bureaucracy is inevitable in modern societies as bureaucratic authority is the only way of coping with large scale administrative requirements in such societies'*. It also suits democracy as it is a rational organisation which treats everyone in equal terms.

Weber described it as a dominant form of organisation in the modern world. Earlier, it was not seen in a very favourable light. Vincent de Gournay called the developing power of the officials as an illness

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called *bureaumania*. Similarly, French novelist Honore de Balzac called bureaucracy as a *giant power wielded by pygmies*. Even today, it is most commonly associated by common man with inefficiency, red-tape and apathy. This is especially true in case of developing countries like India.

Weber describes bureaucracy in terms of his famous heuristic devise of Ideal Type. He links it to his theory of social action and says that it is that type of organisation which is based on legal-rational action/authority. Like his other Ideal Types, he defines bureaucracy also in terms of a *pure type* with various elements or characteristics which he highlighted in his *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* as -

I. It is an organisation which is based on legal rational authority.

II. There is a division of complex tasks into manageable parts with each official manning those parts, specialising in a particular area and hence, has clearly defined area of responsibility.

III. Organisation of officers is done on the basis of hierarchy with clearly defined responsibilities.

IV. Bureaucrats are permanently employed and they are paid in cash, not in kind.

V. Officials separate personal life and work. Duties are performed in an impersonal manner, without any affective or traditional influence.

VI. Officials are selected on the basis of merit, technical knowledge and expertise.

VII. Officials follow rules and regulations.

According to Weber '*Bureaucracy will be the most widely adopted form of organisation due to its efficiency, impartiality and objectivity*'. Bureaucracy emerges due to its technical superiority over other organisations, based upon charismatic or traditional authority.

INFORMAL BUREAUCRACY

This concept is adopted from the works of Peter Blau and Alvin Gouldner in the wake of over-formalised structure of Weberian bureaucracy. According to them, Weberian bureaucracy is only a theoretical construct and in reality, a more workable proposition exists in the form of informal bureaucratic structures.

In his study of federal law enforcement agency in Washington, Peter Blau, in his The *Dynamics of Bureaucracy, 1963*, argues that the presence of both the formal and informal structures in the organisation may together enhance the performance of the organisation. Presence of formal structures alone may even hinder the achievement of organisational goals.

Similarly, Alvin Gouldner, in his study of Gypsum plants in the USA, proved that formal organisations don't work with equal efficiency in all situations. Some organisations work more efficiently in a informal environment. He found that work in Gypsum mines was hampered when totally formal organisational rules were implemented.

Similarly, Burns and Stalker implied, in their study of 20 industries in Scotland and England, that certain industries like electronics industry which change very quickly, are unsuitable for formal bureaucratic structure.

Weber was, however, also aware of the limitation of working under fixed rules in a strictly rational manner, and ignoring values. According to him, it produces *specialists without spirit*. According to him, excessive rationalisation will ultimately snatch the discretion of individuals and they will be trapped in an *iron cage of rationality* and it is inescapable too. Man will be reduced to little cogs in a big machine. Thus, he saw bureaucracy as detrimental to individual's creativity.

Weber believes that only a strong parliamentary form of government could control state bureaucracy. He suggested that state bureaucrats should be made directly and regularly accountable to parliament for

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their actions and this can be done through parliamentary committees. He also says that professionals like politicians, scientists, intellectuals and even capitalists, who stand outside the bureaucratic system can control it to some degree.

According to Marxists, state bureaucracy will ultimately represent interests of the ruling class as state bureaucracy is shaped by a capitalist infrastructure. Its control can be eliminated only by a change in the infrastructure. One solution to eliminate the technical hurdles, according to Lenin, is that administrative tasks should be simplified to the point where basic literacy and numeracy are sufficient for their performance. According to him, mass participation should be encouraged in administration which would involve control and supervision by all.

Roberto Michels, in his *Political Parties, 1911*, calls bureaucratic system in democracy as *iron law of oligarchy* as bureaucrats usurp all the power. He challenges Marxist hopes for a truly democratic system as even in the utopian democracy, there will be a representative system and hence, organisations will be required and these organisations will be manned by bureaucrats, who will ultimately usurp the power. Peter Blau, in his *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy, 1963*, says that bureaucracy, in working, is different from bureaucracy in concept as there is an informal organisation as well. According to him, Weber focused too much on formal structures in an organisation. Peter Blau, in his study of Federal Law Enforcing Agencies, mentions that there are informal hierarchies also in bureaucracy to deal with unforeseen issues. Merton, in his *Social Theory and Social Structure, 1957*, says bureaucracy leads to dysfunctional aspects also, as excessive focus on means leads to rigidity and *goal displacement*. Bureaucracy becomes rule oriented and as a result, the objectives are side-lined. Alvin Gouldner, in his *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, 1954*, mentions his study of a gypsum plant in USA and contends that bureaucracy exists in varying degrees in different organisations. Some institutions are more bureaucratic than the others.

Despite criticism of bureaucracy, there are others who defend it as well. Paul Du Gay, in his *In Praise of Bureaucracy, 2000*, argues that bureaucracies have an unmatched ethos which includes equal treatment of all despite race, colour and caste. Their various limitations are not of bureaucratic framework, but are due to their increasing politicisation. According to Stewart R Clegg, Martin Harris et al, in their *Managing Modernity: Beyond Bureaucracy?, 2011*, in the contemporary world, almost all organised institutions rely on bureaucratic structures to manage information and administer complex systems, despite the fact that there is a decline of paperwork due to widespread use of electronic platforms and it has significantly altered the way modern bureaucracies function.

Pressure Group and Interest Groups

Pressure groups and interest groups are often used interchangeably. Pressure groups are forms of organisations which exert pressure on political or administrative system of a country to extract benefits out of it and advance their own interests. Pressure groups are formed by both dominant groups and the deprived ones as the former push states for economic concessions, the latter demand basic amenities in a competing environment. They have come up largely in the wake of scarce resources and competing interests. Another explanation for their rise is inability of state to satisfy the needs of all sections of the society due to lack of both capacity and resources. They are different from political

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parties in the sense that they don't aim at capturing power and have more flexibility in terms of mobilisation of support.

Existence of pressure groups in society is validation of Pluralistic Elite Theory, given by Robert Dahl, Hunter and others and pressure groups act as multiple power centres in modern liberal democracies.

Pressure groups act as vehicles of mobilisation of masses and hence, promote political and administrative participation. They have, in a way, deepened the roots of participatory democracy. Voluntary action is the soul of democracy as this medium secures the active involvement of the people from policy-making to implementation of social services. They help in social integration, political articulation and act as a catalyst for change. They, in many ways, provide alternative to inadequacies of political parties and government. In India, pressure groups are formed not only to promote and preserve economic interests, but they are also used to protect and promote linguistic, cultural and religious interests. In countries like the USA, they are well established sources of election funding during the elections as well as grass-root mobilisation.

Some of the interest groups are transitive in the form of social movements and others are more in an institutionalised form. After the formation of multilateral organisations like UN, some interest groups have internationalised themselves. For example, World Social Forum was established in 2001 in Brazil as a counter-narrative to the World Economic Forum. Recent trends include expansion of interest groups on the social media frontier. The reach and speed of social media provides a platform to interest groups to mobilise public opinion quickly.

Pressure groups are also classified in various manners by different sociologists, depending on their objectives, organisation and working as-

I. *Maurice Duverger mentions two types of pressure groups – Promotional* and *Protective* pressure groups. Trade Unions, professional associations like ASSOCHAM and CII are examples of protective groups. PETA, Greenpeace, etc. are examples of promotional groups as they promote some cause. These usually have wider membership base than protective groups who protect the interests of a narrow group.

II. *Gabriel, Powell, etc. on the other hand talked about – Institutional, Associational* (including trade unions, business organisations, etc. which pursue limited goals), *Non-Associational* and *Atomic* pressure groups (in the form of movement, demonstration and signature campaigns).

Methods used by the pressure groups vary from cordial rapport with a political party to agitation based methods. Memoranda, writing of letter, putting forth of views before legislature, etc. are regular practices adopted by the pressure groups. Other ways can be civil disobedience, protests, etc. Expert knowledge can be another form of putting pressure. Bribery and political funding are other dubious methods. In countries like India, where corporate funding of elections is not encouraged, backdoor funding is the modus operandi. In the USA, such funds are openly given during fund raising campaigns during the election times. Attracting attention through mass media is another way of putting pressure. Concept of pressure groups reflects actual working of democracy which is not in a direct fashion *by the people*, rather indirectly via pressure and interest groups.

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Such groups also suffer from certain limitations –

I. Though they represent interests of certain groups, this sometimes make representative democracy biased in favour of some sections at the expense of interests of other deprived sections.

II. Unlike the pressure groups of the west, which are invariably organised to safeguard economic, social, cultural interests, etc., in India, these groups are at times, also organised around narrower basis like religious, regional, caste and ethnic.

III. Further, lack of resources makes such efforts sporadic and short lived.

Although, pressure groups differentiate themselves from political parties, pressure groups may develop into political parties by adopting a more open, less restricted platform and some pressure groups may have a special relationship with a political party, as illustrated by trade unions and the Labour Party in Britain. Similarly, in India also, Akali Dal is an example of a religious pressure group turning into a political outfit.

Political Parties

Weber defined a political party as – '*An organised structure which promotes candidates, contest elections for the aim of capturing power*'. However, Gluckman added that this definition doesn't capture difference between *factions* and *parties* which are different in terms of organisational characteristic, goal orientation and durability. In general, a political party is defined as *a group of people, politically organised with the objective of securing or maintaining for its leaders, the control of a government.*

Some of the common characteristics of a political party are –

I. It is an organised form of people.

II. It generally has an ideology and principles.

III. It works under the existing constitutional structure of a nation.

IV. It aims to form government through legitimate means like contesting elections.

V. It also plays a role in mobilising public opinion, while in opposition keeping the ruling party in check through constructive criticism and disciplines the representatives.

According to functionalists, political parties are the guardians of power in the society and they use it for the collective well- being of the society.

Political parties have become important in modern democracies because, democracies today, are in the form of representative democracy and political parties are the medium which provide uniform representations and ideologies. Large populations in political systems of today cannot be governed by disparate groups. Political parties provide stable alternatives to individual leaders. Political parties also provide an organisational framework for carrying out political activities in large democracies.

According to Robert Dahl in his *Who Governs? 1961*, political parties act as a linkage between the government and people and provide a platform for interest articulation and a conduit for pressure

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groups. Political parties mobilise opinions and people.

Roberto Michels in his book *Political Parties, 1911* indicates that all parties, whether in democracy or autocracy, are organised and key decisions in these are taken by only a handful of people and this is not democratic. So, democracy is merely an illusion as direct participation is impossible and organisation and representation is necessary. Bureaucracy soon evolves into a technical organisation and starts to behave in an oligarchic manner which Michels terms as *Iron law of Oligarchy*.

From the perspective of people themselves, Lester Milbrath classified four types of political participation in a political system –

I. *Political apathetic* – In this kind of system, people are totally unaware of the political activities in the state. Political apathy is more likely to be seen in those political systems where public participation is discouraged. Autocracies are such examples. In autocracies, people may feel powerless and start to shy away from political participation.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

Indian democracy adopted a multiparty parliamentary form of government after independence. Congress ruled the roost for almost 40 years as a single biggest political party, but the unique federal system of India and the regional aspirations have given Indian political system a distinct flavour in form of numerous political parties which sometimes lead to unstable government and coalitions as well. As India has a federal system, political parties in India are of two types which are national parties and regional parties.

Political parties in India are also driven by caste and region. For example – Bahujan Samaj party vouches for interests of Dalits, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha championed the cause of separate state of Jharkhand and Telangana Rashtriya Samiti for Telangana region. There are ethnic parties also as in the case of parties of northeastern region of India.

Indian political parties, on one hand, represent interests of wide diversity in India, but they sometimes pose a challenge to the integrity of the nation and work as a roadblock to development as well. Multi-party system of India is challenged by scholars like Paul Brass as he cites lack of internal democracy in parties, lack of firm ideology, lack of spirit of nation building and rather characterised by opportunism, horse trading, dynasty rule etc.

II. *Political spectators* – In this, people take part in polling and general discussion only. People generally indulge in this type of political behaviour when political systems are either stable or there is a lack of choice.

III. *Transitional activist* – They attend political meetings and raise funds as well. Often, times of turbulence and hope goad people to become politically active. During and after the *Jan Lokpal* movement of Anna Hazare in India, people exuded such behaviour.

IV. *Gladiators* – They are the ones who enter the political arena and contest elections.

Political parties are also defined in terms of *serving interests*. According to this theory, people take the membership of political parties or vote for them to achieve their individual or group interests. However, others argue that people also join due to ideology, interest, prestige and to make sacrifices.

Some like Dye and Zeigler term the political parties and election process as a means to divert attention of masses and pacify them. According to them, *they are for the creation of excitement, similar to Roman circuses, to divert attention of masses from true nature of elite rule. Elections create false illusion that power rests with majority by creating a false impression of representation.*

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Concept of Nation, State and Citizenship

Nation is a sort of large-scale community. It is a community of communities. Members of a nation share the desire to be a part of the same political collectivity. This desire for political unity usually expresses itself as the aspiration to form a state. In its most general sense, the term *state* refers to an abstract entity consisting of a set of political-legal institutions, claiming control over a particular geographical territory and the people living in it. In Max Weber's well-known definition, a state is a *body that successfully claims a monopoly of legitimate force in a particular territory.*

Nation and Nationalism

Max Weber defined a nation as a *community of sentiments.* A *nation,* unlike a state, is not a territorial or purely political concept, but associated with sentiments, aspirations and consciousness rooted in a common identity, based upon a common ideology, common culture, history, etc. Today, most of the states are *nation-states* so, often, the two are deemed as same. The main distinction between nation and state is that the basis of a nation is psychological and cultural unity, while that of a state is physical and political unity. Hence, there can be nations without states and vice versa. For example, as of 2017, Kurds in various countries of Middle East (mainly Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran) considered themselves belonging to a single nationalist identity, despite the fact that they belonged to different states.

Due to lack of consensus among sociologists over a single universal definition, nation as a concept, is often *described* and not *defined.* For example, despite diverse cultural groupings, Chinese share common sentiments based upon a common ideology and hence, constitute a single nation. Similarly, in the USA, poly-ethnic nationalism is present. Coercive nationalism was present in some of the erstwhile communist dictator regimes. Israel has religious-nationalism. Indian nationalism can be considered as composite-culture nationalism. Thus, a nation has diverse bases. Further, a nation may precede a state or vice-versa. A nation needs a state for its sovereignty, while state needs a nation for emotional integrity and internal harmony. Quest for a national identity is an evolving one with changing needs like political, emotional, cultural and survival needs.

Nation, as a concept, is also differentiated from other community based concepts like race and ethnicity. Anderson has made distinction between race and nation, while Thomas Eriksen has differentiated the concept from ethnicity in his book *Ethnicity and Nationalism, 2010.* He draws similarity between the two concepts as both the concepts

ANDERSON ON NATIONALISM

He views nationalism as a metaphysical concept which lies in our collective imagination. He rejects the proposition that nationalism will decline. He attributes three core features to the concept of nationalism –

I. It is an imagined community as members of this meta-community never come face to face and despite the prevailing inequalities amongst themselves, they have a feeling of cohesion.

II. It is limited and exclusionary as no nation in the world is global in its nature and includes some people and excludes the rest of the world.

III. The concept also presupposes sovereignty as all nations strive to preserve their independence and self-governance.

IV. He differentiates nationalism from the concept of race as race is based on classifying the groups on the basis of fixed biological characteristics and hence, it is a closed group. Races always try to preserve themselves while nations may seek to expand themselves.

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have underlying belief that the groups are based on common beliefs and cultural symbols. The two concepts diverge when a nation has multiple ethnic identities in it.

Nationalism can be defined as a set of symbols and beliefs providing the sense of being a part of a single political community. It is an ideology based on the belief that a community of people with common characteristics such as language, religion or ethnicity constitutes a separate and distinctive political community. Thus, individuals feel a sense of pride and belonging, in being *British, Indian, Indonesian* or *French*. Probably, people have always felt some kind of identity with social groups of one form or another for example, their family, clan or religious community. Nationalism, however, only made its appearance with the development of the modern state. According to Ernest Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism, 1983*, nation, nationalism and nation-state are all modern concepts starting from the late 18th Century. Pilkington, in his article *Cultural Representations and Changing Ethnic Identities in a Global Age, 2002*, also supports the view of Gellener. According to him, before industrialisation, human habitations were largely isolated. It was only when communication media spread and people identified *others* as totally distinct from them. So, the presence of the *other* is a precondition for the rise of nationalism according to him. Anthony Smith in his *Ethnic Origin of Nations, 1986* argues that nationalism is not necessarily a modern phenomenon and many modern nations emerged from erstwhile ethnic communities. Unification of Germany and Italy are such examples. Similarly, Jews form a cohesive unit for more than 2000 years. Gellener defines nationalism as – '*Nationalism is a political principle that holds that national unit (nation) and political units (state) should be congruent*'. Bennedict Anderson, in his *Imagined Communities, 1983*, argues that nationalism is rather an imagined feeling and nation is an abstract imagined idea because its members can, even without knowing most of their fellow members, conjure up the image of their communion.

Hans Kohn in his book *The Idea of Nationalism, 1945* has distinguished *Western Nationalism* that emerged in France and other European countries in 1600-1800 from *Eastern Nationalism*. Western nationalism emerged as a justification for already united political structures. In eastern countries, on the other hand, nationalism aimed at justifying the creation of new nation-states and newly adopted political systems. Thus, he claims Western Nationalism to be more authentic. Further, the spirit of nationalism in European countries also helped in the growth of imperialism and colonialism. Andrew Pilkington also suggests that nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon in his book *Racial Disadvantage and Ethnic Diversity in Britain, 2002*. However, he doesn't differentiate between the Western and Eastern nationalisms.

NATIONALISM IN INDIA

India experienced different kinds of nationalisms over a period of time. The nascent Indian nationalism was territorial, anti-colonial and led to the creation of a nation-state through a national movement. Its territorial boundaries were defined partly by the colonial conquest and administration and partly by the strong dynastic states that ruled the territory from time to time (Maurya, Gupta and Mughal Empires, etc.). The second major nationalism was a rival to Indian nationalism. This led to the creation of Pakistan. Pakistani nationalism was strangely based on religious unity, but territorial disunity. The result was the emergence of a breakaway nationalism in 1971 as third nationalism. The fourth category is that of aspirant nationalism, forces for Khalistan in Punjab and Azad Kashmir in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, are some of the examples. Over and above this broad framework, there is no accepted definition of nationalism in India. Revivalist groups associate nationalism with purported ancient glory, while liberals associate it with the constitutional values.

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Liah Greenfield distinguishes between *Civic Nationalism* and *Ethnic Nationalism*. Civic nationalism is associated with citizenship and is mainly defined in political and legal terms and hence, can be acquired or lost. Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, is *inherited* nationalism and is a biological necessity and hence, cannot be changed.

Both liberalists and the Marxists have contended that nationalism is likely to lose its existence. Marxists view classes playing a dominant role in future and class dynamics will eclipse the national identities. Liberalists, on the other hand, attribute the fall of nationalism to the rise of globalisation and weakening of national borders.

Nationalism also has its critiques and Guru Rabindranath Tagore was one of the foremost among them. According to him – *'I am not against this nation or that nation, but against the idea of nation itself'*. He placed society above nation as society does not have an ulterior purpose and is a natural regulation of relationships and the spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being. The nation is an organisation of people with a mechanical purpose, founded on greed, jealousy, suspicion and the desire for power. It replaces the living bonds of society with mere mechanical organisation. According to him, nation is an outcome of a long history of progressive privileging and fetishisation of competitive accumulation. According to him, it takes away the freedom of individuals and it is exclusionist and jingoistic. Citizens of a nation live under the delusion that they are free, but they sacrifice their freedom everyday on the altar of this fetish called nationalism.

State

Mankind, for most of its life, well more than 99 percent, lived happily without a state, but today, state is one of the most important and the highest level of human collectivity. Its origin is often traced in Greek city-state called *polis*. The modern term *state* has been derived from the word *status*, earlier employed by the Teutons. It was Niccolo Machiavelli who first used the term *state* in political science in its modern sense. In political science, various theories are given for its existence like Evolution theory and Social Contract theory. Liberal theorists like Locke and Hobbes put individual at the centre of the state formation and according to them, modern states, regarded as an agency of human welfare, will secure life and property of man and state and is regarded as a contributor to moral and social development of man. According to them, man enters into a social contract in a reciprocatory manner and state merely acts as a neutral arbitrator. They argue that state is for society and not otherwise.

State is defined as a political apparatus, including governments, administration, etc. and ruling over a given territory, with an authority backed by some form of law and having the power to use force. State comprises

WELFARE STATE

Welfare state, as a concept emerged in the post-war policies of Britain and other countries and it implies that state provides for certain measures which are used to promote the well-being of citizens in both, social and economic life. It also has, in it, the implicit assumption that state intervenes against the market forces as well. All the modern states are welfare states, but their forms and degrees vary. T H Marshall described the modern welfare state as a unique combination of democracy, capitalism and welfare. Marxist term the modern welfare states as shams while neo-liberals also criticise these for having poor allocative efficiency of resources. Neoliberals criticise the welfare state for being a reincarnation of the defunct socialist ideology. Neoliberals also argue that welfare state creates perverse incentives in society and hence, leads to dependency culture as well.

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of various institutions of national and local government, which include the legislative, executive and administrative branches of the government.

Citizens cannot fulfil all their needs themselves and depend upon the state for at least two basic functions –

I. Collective welfare of the community as a whole.

II. Maintenance of law and order.

The state may be viewed as both a concrete thing and an abstract idea. A concrete thing means that it is a specific human group or association with a geographical boundary. In abstract terms, it is a corporation possessing a juristic personality. The state is composed, therefore, of both physical and metaphysical elements. These elements are –

I. *Population* – A group of human beings who shape the collective identity of the state.

II. *Territory* – A territory on which the people permanently reside.

III. *Sovereignty* – It includes internal sovereignty and independence from foreign control.

IV. *Government* – A political organisation or agency, through which, the collective will of the population is expressed.

State is differentiated from other institutions in the sense that it alone possesses coercive authority. Weber defines state in terms of *monopoly over legitimate use of violence*. So, state is the fountainhead of all legitimate power over its people. Bertrand Russell defines state as – *'A Repository of collective force of its citizens'*.

Marx believes that state is an instrument of exploitation *as a committee for the management of the whole affair of the bourgeoisie*. Gramsci uses the Marxist framework, but he divides the state into two arenas which are political society and the civil society. Political society is what generally state stands for. Civil Society, on the other hand, consists of those institutions which fall in private arena. He viewed state not in terms of a set of particular institutions, but in terms of the activities of the dominant class which maintains its dominance not through the use of force, but through ideological devices which Gramsci terms as *hegemony*.

Functionalists, on the other hand, believe that state performs the functions of integrating its inhabitants. Some early philosophers like Aristotle also gave precedence to state over individual and said *State is prior to individual*.

Saul Newman, in *The Politics of Postanarchism, 2010*, presents the concept of the state from anarchists' perspective also. Anarchists claim that state is an apparatus of exploitation and repression. But unlike Marxists, they reject the idea of replacement of the ruling party with another set of forces. Instead, they reject the concept of state altogether.

Harold Laski defined state as – *'A way of organising collective life of a society'*. When society and other associations and institutes are integrated into a one single unit, it is termed as a state. While nation is an emotional manifestation of a society, state is a result of desire for political unity and it act as a

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supreme regulating structure of the society. Today, the state exists for the performance of two broad sets of tasks, positive and negative. The former includes welfare measures and the latter includes security and maintenance of social order.

State may take various forms and shapes like sovereign, federal, autocratic, secular, hegemonic, theocratic and anarchist. Despite such variations, most of the states in the 21st Century are in the form of a modern *nation-state*.

Nation-States

Nation-state is a relatively new concept which is used to describe the new political units of modern day. Nation states are closely associated with the rise of nationalism. Today, almost all societies exist in the form of nation-state as boundaries of *nation* and *state* coincide. Nation-states are states which confer citizenship rights as a means of political unity and in return, citizens declare themselves as a part of a single nation, thus giving emotional integrity to the political unit. Modern nation-states have three major characteristics which are sovereignty, citizenship and nationalism.

There is no one single definition as the concept is of very recent origin. It was not true in the past that a single state could represent only one nation, or that every nation must have its own state. For example, when it was in existence, the Soviet Union explicitly recognised that the people it governed were of different *nations* and more than one hundred such internal nationalities were recognised. A different example is provided by *dual citizenship* laws.

Nations without State

The persistence of a well- defined ethnic community within established nations leads to the phenomenon of a *nation without state*. In such cases, many of the essential characteristics of a nation are present, but those who comprise the nation, lack an independent political community. Separatist movements in Chechnya, Kashmir, Scotland, and erstwhile states of USSR manifested such symptoms. An advanced stage is reached with the rise of nations which have a fair separate identity, but not recognised by world unanimously. For example, Kosovo and Palestine.

There can be different types of nations without a state like –

I. When nation state may accept the cultural differences found among its minority or minorities and allow them a certain amount of active autonomy for community development, as in the case of Scotland and Wales in Britain. These areas have separate parliament and educational system, but still, greater power remains with the larger nation state.

II. In some cases, nation state may allow a higher degree of autonomy. In Quebec in Canada, regional political parties have the power to take major decisions without actually being fully dependent.

III. There are some other nations without states, which completely lack recognition from the larger nation state. In such cases, larger nation state uses force or propaganda in order to deny recognition to minority. Palestine, Tibet and Kurds in Iraq and Syria are such examples.

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Citizenship

While the concept of citizenship is often defined as a set of rights and duties by the virtue of membership to a society, it, in its current form, emerged with the emergence of nation-state concept. Earlier, in traditional societies, people used to have little concern over who ruled them and they had a little feeling of being a part of a larger whole. An important precondition for the rise of citizenship is a collective feeling of being a part of a single national identity. Early political thinkers like Plato, Aristotle and Machiavelli argued for a limited citizenship to a few, based on certain criteria like education, wealth and lineage. Thus, ancient Greek city-states had only limited citizenship. According to the historian Geoffrey Hosking, in his 2005 *Modern Scholar* lecture – '*Citizenship in ancient Greece arose from an appreciation for the significance of freedom in a society where slavery was prevalent*'.

As per the Social Contract Theory, citizenship brings along with it, both rights and duties. T H Marshall also defines citizenship, in his *Class, Citizenship and Social Development, 1973*, in terms of membership of a community which brings three types of rights and duties which are Civic, Political and Social. Civil citizenship emerged as a result of the rise of the concept of property ownership as it required certain mutual obligations to respect each other's property rights. Political citizenship emerged when free speech developed and everyone was treated equal by means like universal adult franchise. Social citizenship embodies notions of rights for welfare and responsibility for collective provision of social benefits. Marshall regarded the right to social welfare as an important safeguard against sections of the population being enfranchised in the theory, but in effect, excluded from the society by poverty. Marshall believed that the three components are acquired in the order set out above. However, feminist authors have noted that women's acquisition of citizenship entitlements has not necessarily followed that order. For example, voting rights in many countries were given before they were given full equality before the law or the civic equality. He also argued that contemporary capitalism is antithetical to citizenship which inherently treats everyone equally, but capitalism leads to gross inequalities.

Similarly, Marxists argue that citizenship, as a concept, is a myth as there is no equality in a capitalist society. True equality can only be there if forces of production can be collectively owned. A capitalist society can only have classes of citizens like first class citizens and second class citizens.

In a heterogeneous society, where many cultural values divide the members of society, citizenship acts as a common denominator that binds people. According to Derek Heater, in his *A Brief History of Citizenship, 2004*, it is also viewed as a democratising force as everybody possesses it in the same manner, irrespective of status and position.

Citizenship has also been seen in other perspectives as well. Citizenship is increasingly seen in responsible terms. Mark Smith, in his *Ecologism: Towards Ecological Citizenship, 1998*, highlights that the time has come now to stress upon the concept of *ecological citizenship* in the wake of global ecological crisis. It involves obligations towards not only fellow beings, but towards non-human animals and future generations of humanity as well.

Ramchandra Guha contends that while in the west, citizenship was awarded in a phased manner, with a demand from below, in the east, it was awarded suddenly as countries got independent and hence,

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people often fail to appreciate citizenship rights and duties. According to Gail Omvedt, citizenship in India has been paradoxical as it theoretically grants equal rights, but caste dynamics make Dalits lesser citizens when it comes to enjoying democratic rights. Similar is the case with sexual discrimination. She contends that patriarchal society thwarts constitutional gains. Similarly, poverty is also a great handicap.

Bryan Turner, in his *Handbook of Citizenship Studies, 2002*, contends that modern citizenship is largely a passive citizenship as there is lack of direct democracy. Representative democracy narrows down the scope of exercise of various rights and duties. As a result of globalisation, migration and frequent travel, cosmopolitan outlook is making great strides and new concepts of *global citizenship* are emerging, which cut across nation-state boundaries. Citizenship of European Union is already a live example of such trans-national citizenships.

Democracy

Democracy is derived from the Latin roots, *Demos* meaning people and *Kratos* meaning rule. So, it is a government or rule by the people. Democracy, as a concept, informally existed earlier also as illustrated by Greek City States and ancient Indian Village Republics. Cleisthenes, a Greek noble, is credited with coming up with the first democracy in Athens in 508–507 BCE. But, as a modern political concept, it emerged in Europe. It means different things to different people. Earlier, scholars didn't see it in a favourable light. In fact, Plato equated it with Mobocracy and Machiavelli too, rejected it in favour of a strong state. Hobbes and Locke were perhaps the first scholars to popularise it as a positive and desirable concept. The concept was further celebrated by Montesquieu, who spoke about separation of power, demarcation of responsibility on the basis of formal rules. It became more popular in Europe in the wake of excesses of autocratic and feudal rules.

It is famously defined by the US Black Rights champion president Abraham Lincoln as *a government for the people, of the people and by the people*. Its basic tenet is that people themselves are sovereign and irrespective of religion, creed or caste, all are equal and are capable of governing themselves. Its fundamental tenet is the right of self-determination. Democracy makes people masters of themselves. It makes struggle for power more civilised, organised and open to all. Generally, it is understood in terms of political equality, promoting individual liberty, rule of law, defending common interests and so on. In some places, democracy is limited to a political concept only, while in others, it is extended to broader areas of social life.

Democracy as a form of governance did not arrive all of a sudden. According to Larry Diamond, in a The New York Times article *Timeline: Democracy in Recession, 2015*, democracy has arrived in a series of *waves of democracies,* which were results of successive wars, decolonisation, revolutions and other socio-religious and economic circumstances. Over the years, as size of populations increased, *indirect democracy* or *representative democracy* becomes the predominant mode of governance and *direct democracy* or *participative democracy* is exercised on a few occasions like referendums and plebiscites or in smaller countries like Switzerland, where many important decisions are taken by popular participation. Today, most of the democracies are also *liberal democracies*, as they offer choice to the citizens regularly in terms of whom they should elect as their ruler and how they should govern themselves.

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Pluralists see it a plausible form of governance in the modern context where some elites represent the interests of all and are partially controlled by masses through pressure groups, etc. However, T B Bottomore rejects pluralist view of modern democracies as a conservative view. According to him, western governments are imperfect realisation of democracies as those forms permanently exclude many in any form of participation in government activities. According to him, democracy is much more than ritualistic regular elections. True democracy is the one in which democratic ideals become an established feature of day to day life which would involve establishing social democracy where people directly participate in local governments and workers participate in management of their workplaces. In India, such an experiment is exhibited in the form of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Some social thinkers argue that democracy is only one of the many devices to ensure governance in society. According to Roger Scruton, in his 2013 BBC show, *A Point of View: Is democracy overrated?* – '*Democracy alone cannot lead to personal and political freedom and the institutions of civil society also need to be strengthened*'. Joseph M Bessette coined the concept of *deliberative democracy* and argued that decisions in democracy shouldn't be made merely by aggregating the votes, but should be deliberated upon for the merits and demerits of the ideas.

Marx, however, saw democracy and capitalism in symbiotic terms. According to him, though democracy espouses equality, still it tolerates inequality in economic and political forms. Similarly, Roberto Michels, in his *Political Parties, 1911*, considers current form of democracy as a puppet in the hands of oligarchs. He argues that big nations can never have direct democracy and representative system leads to concentration of power in the hands of a few who exploit the situation. Hans Kelsen contends that democracy allows for the rule of majority by way of elections and hence, it leads to tyranny of majority and oppression of the minority. Despite its apparent superiority, its penetration is also poor. According to a recent study of the *World Forum on Democracy*, electoral democracies represent only 120 of the 192 existing countries and it constitutes just 58.2 percent of the world's total population, implying that almost half of the worlds' population is still deprived of electoral democracy.

However, despite its apparent limitations, as Churchill said, *it is the worst form of government except all other forms which have been tried till date*. Democracy has given voice to voiceless by their sheer numbers and today, voters collectively act as effective pressure groups shaping their own lives.

Civil Society

Civil Society, as a term, has been in use since ancient times, but its meanings have changed over a time. The concept of *societas civilis,* from which the word itself originates, is Roman and was introduced by Cicero. In the ancient European classical period, the concept was used as a synonym for the *good society* and was not distinguished from the state. It was the Hegel, the German philosopher, who gave the word, Civil Society, the meaning that we understand today. He contrasted the concept from the concept of state. According to him, civil society, in opposition to the state, lays the moral foundation of society. In his book *Philosophy of Rights, 1821*, he considers the civil society as one of the moments of ethical life, the other two being the family and the state. Civil Society is an important stage in the transition from the unreflective consciousness of the family, to conscious ethical life.

Civil Society is an umbrella like organisation which lies in between family, market and state. Hence, it is a non-market based, non-state based and non-kin based part of the public domain, in which

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individuals get together voluntarily to create institutions and organisations. It consists of voluntary associations, organisations or institutions formed by groups of citizens. It includes political parties, media institutions, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious organisations, and other kinds of collective entities. The main criterion for inclusion in civil society is that the organisation should not be state-controlled, and it should not be a purely commercial profit-making entity. Civil Society is also the sphere in which social movements become organised. It has come into prominence since 1970s when New Social Movements emerged, which saw a wide participation in a peaceful manner.

In its narrower conception, civil society is taken synonymous with the non-government sector, which primarily consists of NGOs and similar voluntary organisations. In case of India, according to B S Baviskar Mukherji, in his 2000 All India Sociological Conference presidential address, civil society organisations gained momentum only in late 1980s, primarily due to withdrawal of state from public welfare activity, demise of developmentalism and the advent of post-developmental neo-liberal political economy. Another reason for the rise of the civil society is the eroding faith of the people in the state and its organs due to corruption in public life. This led to a void which was filled by the civil society. Initially, the Indian state was indifferent from the civil society organisations, but the stance changed since Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plans, when government started to give open encouragement to these organisations. Today, as a 2015 Supreme Court directed first ever NGO mapping report by CBI reveals, there are more than 31 lakh NGOs in India, a figure double than the number of schools in India.

The issues taken up by civil society organisations are diverse, ranging from tribal struggles for land rights, right to information, legal reforms, devolution in urban governance, campaigns against rape and violence against women, rehabilitation of those displaced by dams and other developmental projects, rehabilitation of pavement dwellers, campaigns against slum demolitions and for housing rights, primary education reform, distribution of land to Dalits, etc.

Civil Society is a bastion of culture against the state, the law and capitalism. The fact whether there exists a civil society or not depends on the nature of the relationship that society has with the state. According to Locke – '*The civil society was born to secure the rights which were already available in the state of nature*'.

Marx sees civil society as an extension of bourgeoisie, but Gramsci differs from him. In Gramscian sense, civil society is the terrain where the state, the people and the market interact and where people wage war against the hegemony of the market and the state. Marx insists on the separation between the state and the civil society, Gramsci emphasises the inter-relationship between the two.

The civil society is considered both complimentary and sometimes as a substitute for the state institutions. In fact, De Tocqueville studied the reasons for the existence of democracy in America and its absence in France, in terms of presence or absence of civil society. According to him, civil society complements democracy. In India also, growth of democracy and Panchayati Raj can be seen in this light. Decentralisation of power is the basis of formation of civil society. The decentralised units of power are inclined towards trust, association and democracy. Democracy and civil society are inseparably related to each other. A healthy liberal democracy needs the support of a vibrant civil society. The existence of civil society also indicates the extent of democracy in a society. Civil Society

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is an arena of contestation and debate. Civil societies have been viewed as a force for democratisation, counterweights to the state and economic power and have emerged as alternative vehicles of citizens' participation at both, the national and transnational levels of governance.

In the emerging scenario of post globalisation and liberalisation, the emphasis has been on the increasing roles of the civil societies to take the burden off the state, by involving citizens and communities in the delivery of the collective goods and on strengthening the abilities and opportunities of local communities to ensure the process of empowerment of the marginalised sections in society. There has also been a process of involvement of civil society organisations along with the state in the formulation and implementation of developmental initiatives. According to Cohen and Arato – *'Civil society has long been playing a pivotal role in influencing the state's policy on social welfare, articulating views on current issues, serving as the voice of constructive debate, providing a forum for the exchange of new ideas and information, initiating social movements by way of creating new norms, identities and institutions'.*

The basis of the formation of civil society is secular. Caste and kinship linkages, religion or tribal mobilisation, etc. are not the basis of the formation of civil society and according to Neera Chandhok, they are *counter* to civil society.

Certain typical characteristic features associated with civil society are –

I. First, civil society is the realm of organised social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least, partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.

II. Second, civil society is concerned with public ends rather than private ends. It is an intermediary phenomenon, standing between the private sphere and the state.

III. Third, civil society is related to the state in some way, but does not seek to control the state nor be controlled by it.

IV. Fourth, civil society encompasses pluralism and diversity. It encompasses a vast array of organisations, formal and informal, including economic, cultural, informational and educational, interest groups, developmental, issue-oriented and civic groups.

But, civil society organisations have their own limitations as well. Generally, they are also found to be lacking on the very same parameters which they espouse for the larger society. Many of the organisations promote democratic decentralisation, but are controlled by a single person. Some of them suffer from the leadership deficit and revolve around a single charismatic leader. Their financial sources are also often shady and there are poor disclosure records in India. In 2016, less than 10 per cent of the NGOs complied with the requirement of submitting balance sheets and income-expenditure statements with the Registrar of Societies, with which these are registered.

In recent years, there has been a phenomenal proliferation of the civil society based groups all over the globe due to an increase in the penetration of information technology. It is becoming increasingly easier to mobilise people in a very short duration through internet and mobile phone. It has emerged as the sphere of active citizenship, where individuals take up social issues, try to influence the state or make demands, pursue their collective interests or seek support for a variety of causes. At times, the state is beleaguered with a legitimisation deficit that jeopardises the conditions of its stability, paving the way

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for the arrival of civil society. The loss of faith in the state due to its failures revived the interest in the civil society and it was seen as an alternative to state as in the case of Soviet disintegration of 1990, National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) movement in 1996, led by a coalition of organisations, Jan Lokpal movement of 2011-12, Arab Spring of 2012 and democracy movement in Hong-Kong of 2014.

Ideology

It originated from the Latin word *Eidos* meaning *science of ideas* and is agreed to be coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in 1796. It refers to a set of particular ideas which present a partial view of reality. It allows the viewer to view society in a particular manner. It has following general elements – beliefs, doctrines and symbols. Ideology can be seen as a basic drive for human actions, good or bad. So, without ideology, a society will be akin to a human being without a heart. Ideology is often used as a guiding light for directing actions of individuals and is also used as a unifying force for collective actions. It provides a justification for the actions of the individuals even when they are apparently unjustifiable. For example, actions of German Nazi troops were justified by themselves by their ideological reasoning that Germans are pure blond Aryans and they are a superior race, which is born to rule. The concept of ideology is also closely related to power and dominance as it is used as a justification tool for the actions of a particular social group which adhere to a particular ideology.

Marx makes a distinction between true and false ideological consciousness. Similarly, later Marxists like Althusser also talk of *hegemonic ideology* as the imposed ideology by the ruling class. However, Marxists too believe that ideology is essential for social change and hence, instead of capitalist and hegemonic ideology, they advocate socialism and communism. Marx also terms ideology as central to proletarian revolution. Marxist scholar Louis Althusser proposed the conception of ideology in his concept of *ideological state apparatus*. According to him, the institutions and the rituals in which an individual takes part, produce the ideas in mind of the man to which he submits himself to. Though institutions like schools, NGOs and hospitals are outside the state's direct control, but they promote the values promulgated by the state and it leads to the reproduction of relations of production which capitalists controlled state wants. In contrast to Marxism, Functionalism is viewed as the ideology of the ruling class. Postmodernists find flaws in both these ideological standpoints and instead, contend that a multiplicity of ideologies exist in society.

Karl Popper, in his book *Open Society and its Enemies, 1945*, indicates that every ideology is totalitarian as it is blinded by ideological bias and hence, indifferent to plurality of viewpoints. Hence, ideology is antithetical to objectivity. Others even talk of death of ideology in modern money centric economies and assert that it is economics which reigns supreme over ideology. Nigel Harris puts a milder view in his book *Beliefs in Society, 1971*, but still holds that it is value loaded. According to him *our reality is next man's ideology and vice versa.*

Feminist sociologists argue that patriarchal ideology has led to gender discrimination in society. Similarly, in Indian society, Brahmanical ideology has led to suffering of the depressed classes for ages. For this obvious limitation of a single dominant ideology, scholars like Amartya Sen call for a society with pluralistic and inclusive ideology which should guide the public discourse.

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Collective Action

Collective actions are understood as actions by a group of people with specific goal or objective. They have their own subjectivity which is different from subjectivity of individual participants. They may entail either of cooperation, conflict, competition or accommodation in general. They can either be organised or unorganised and institutionalised or non-institutionalised. Structure of a collective action is also defined by its organisation, ideology, goals and leadership. Protests, agitations, revolutions, social movements, NGOs, mass production, etc. are some popular forms of collective actions. One of the most famous classifications of collective actions is given by Herbert Blumer in his *Critiques of Research in the Social Sciences, 1939* in the form of four types of collective actions –

I. *The Crowd* – Neil Smelser, John Lofland, and others associate three forms of emotions with the crowd, which are panic, i.e., an expression of fear, craze, i.e., an expression of joy and the hostile outburst, i.e., an expression of anger. Further, the crowd may be either a compact or a diffuse crowd. Hence, there can be six types of crowd on the basis of the above criteria.

II. *The Public* – It is different from the crowd in the sense that crowd is formed on the basis of a single emotion while public is formed on a single issue. Hence, unlike the above classification of crowd in six types, public can be classified in as many forms, depending upon the number of issues.

III. *The Mass* – It differs from both, crowd and public in the sense that it is not defined by the form of interaction, but by the efforts of those who use a particular mass media like printing, to address an audience.

IV. *The Social Movement* – He classifies various types of social movements as *active* social movements, *expressive* social movements and so on. An active movement tries to change the society and on the other hand, an expressive movement tries to change its own members. For example, Jan-Lokpal movement of Anna Hazare and India Against Corruption will be classified as an active movement while Transcendental Movement of Mahesh Yogi will be classified as expressive movement.

Protest

It is a social process of opposition against any person, group or even wider society. It may occur at individual or collective level, manifest or latent level and may involve action or inaction as a tool of protest.

Opposition is central in protest, while a purpose is central in an agitation. Protest, thus, pre-supposes a prior event, against which, a protest is done. For example, fast until death by Mahatma Gandhi against British policies is an instance of individual level protest, opposition of India against the terms of WTO, which are unfavourable for developing countries is an example of collective protest.

Protests can also be distinguished on the basis of mode of protest. This could be candle and torch light processions, use of black cloth, street theatres, songs, poetry, violence and vandalism. Gandhi adopted novel ways such as *ahimsa*, *Satyagraha* and his use of *charkha* in the freedom movement. While modes

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adopted by Gandhi were largely peaceful and non-violent, modes adopted by revolutionaries, Jihadis, Naxalites and separatists are often violent. In general, agitation and protest have only subtle differences. While protest is a reaction to an event which has already occurred, an agitation can also be a future course, which is seen as desirable or undesirable.

In modern societies frequency of protests varies. In democratic societies, freedom of expression is tolerated and protests are acceptable. Protests also depend on factors like competition for limited resources, discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, religions, etc. and autocratic behaviour.

Protests are also different from social movements which are generally oriented towards change. However, protests can be used as a tool for the furthering of the objectives of a social movement.

Agitation

It is a social process which involves intense activity undertaken by an individual or group, in order to fulfil a purpose. Purpose is central to agitation, unlike *opposition* which is central in protest. Further, dissatisfaction is also central to agitations, while dissent is central to protests. Agitation is manifested through activities like strikes, mass leave, *raasta roko*, *rail roko*, rioting and picketing. It can be either organised or unorganised and is generally non-institutional, but can be institutional as well.

Like protests, their frequency of occurring is contingent upon the type of structure of the society, culture and the political system in place. Both protests and agitations can be due to actual as well as relative deprivation of agitators/protestor or their affiliate groups. Agitations may also aim to acquire power.

Further, unlike social movements which are marked by a degree of organisation as well as sustenance, agitations are generally spontaneous and ephemeral. However, both protests and agitations can be institutionalised and become social movements. For example, early protests against sati system were later transformed into a full- fledged social movement, leading to passage of legislations and social change as well.

Social Movements

A social movement is defined as a sustained collective action, aimed at bringing or resisting social change outside the sphere of established institutions. A social movement requires sustained collective action over time and hence, totally spontaneous and ephemeral collective actions cannot be termed as social movements. Collective action must be marked by some degree of organisation and also has certain ideology. This organisation may include a *leadership* and a *structure* that defines how members relate to each other, make decisions and carry them out. Social movements arise due to some latent need, as a symbol of protest or to bring or resist some change. According to Charles Tilly, in his *Social Movements, 2004*, they are also a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics.

The two features of social movements, namely, sustained action and spontaneity operate simultaneously. Together, these two distinguish a social movement from other collective actions. For example, trade

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union movements and cooperative movements are not social movements because they have a well-defined organisational structure.

Life cycle of a social movement is generally seen in the form of five stages shown in the diagram and all of which may or may not occur. For example, death of a charismatic leader, achievement of goals, etc. may lead to abrupt ending. A movement may also witness rejuvenation due to some new events, re-statement of ideology or change in leadership. Various stages in the lifecycle are unrest, excitement, formalisation, decline and death. Blumer, Mauss, and Tilly have also given their own classification of stages that social movements often pass through. First stage is the emergence of a social movement. There are various theories which describe the causes of emergence of social movements. The movement then coalesces and develops a sense of coherence in terms of its membership, goals and ideals. In the third stage, the movement generally becomes bureaucratised by establishing its own set of rules and procedures. The process of institutionalisation of Brahmo Samaj from a tentative organisation to a formal organisation is an example of bureaucratisation process. At this point, a social movement can then take a number of paths, ranging from success to failure, the cooptation of leaders, i.e., appropriation of the leader as one of their own by the followers, repression by other power entities like governments or even the establishment of a movement within the mainstream. Social movements are not eternal entities and finally decline as well.

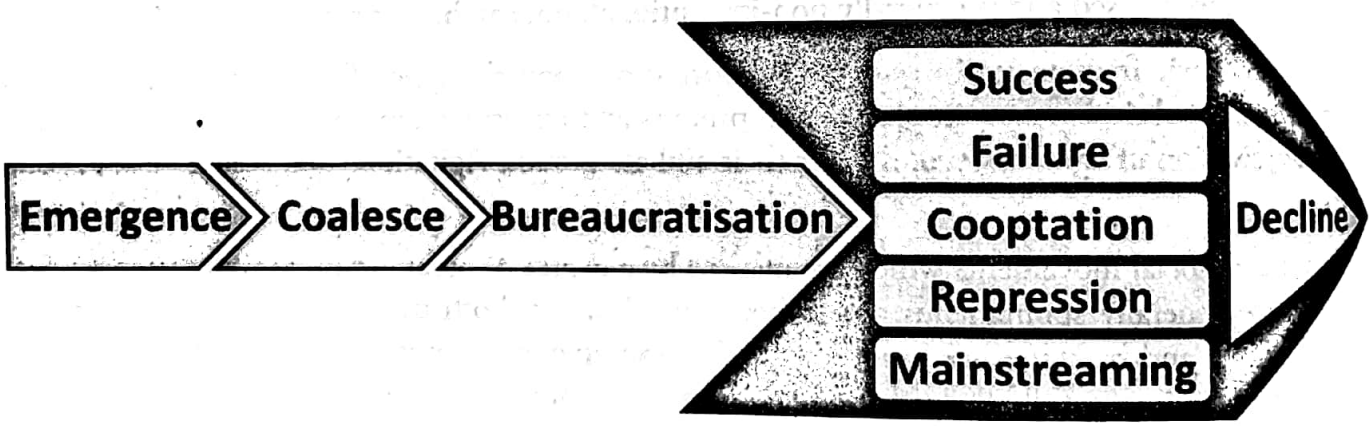

Fig. 7.3

Conventionally, ideology, collective mobilisation, organisation and leadership are identified as the vital elements or components or part of structure of social movements. Various theories about origin of social movements are also given like Strain Theory, Resource Mobilisation Theory, and Relative Deprivation theory.

I. *Social Unrest Theory* – It is generally associated with Chicago School, especially Herbert Blumer, who gave an interactivist perspective. Blumer saw them as collective attempts to change the existing social order. According to Herbert Blumer – '*Social movements can be*

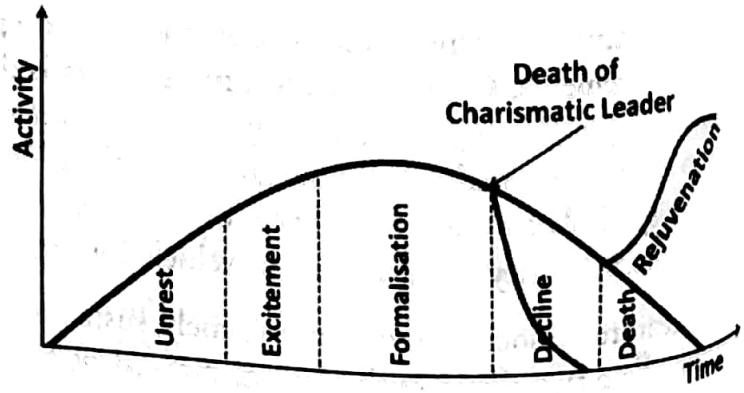

Fig. 7.4 Life Cycle of a Social Movement

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active, or outwardly directed aiming to transform the society or expressive or inwardly directed to change the people who are involved'. He also highlighted social movement in terms of its *life cycle*. This theory, however, fails to give an account for rational decisions and strategies of social movement.

II. *Relative Deprivation Theory* – A social movement usually starts because the people are unhappy about certain things. Babbar Khalsa movement is such an example. The limitations of this theory are that while the perceptions of deprivation may be a necessary condition for collective action, they are not a sufficient reason in themselves. A major section of the society always feels relative deprivation, but it doesn't spring into action.

III. *Structural Strain Theory* – It was a structural functionalist perspective given by Neil Smelser. All social movements do not arise out of relative deprivation. They can also originate from structural strain between values and structural means. When the prevailing value system and the normative structure do not meet the aspirations of the people, the society faces strain. What happens at this time is that a new value system is sought so as to replace the old. This leads to conflicts and tension. Smelser saw social movements as side-effects of rapid social changes. For example, where inter caste marriage is not permitted; we may still find a few cases of such marriage, in violation of the norms. However, only when such individual actions are replaced by collective action does a social movement takes place. He gave a multi-causal theory which rejected mono-causal explanations of social movements and to illustrate it, he also gave a concept of *value addition,* i.e., social movement emerges in the form of stages and each stage adds value to the next emerging stage and increases the probability that a social movement will result in the end. He named six stages in the emergence of the social movement viz, structural conduciveness, structural strain, generalised beliefs, precipitating factors, mobilisation for action and failure of social control. This theory is however, criticised as it assumes that social movements are started for irrational reasons.

IV. *Resource Mobilisation Theory* – It is a distinctively American version of studying social movements from a rational choice perspective and was given by Tilly, in his *From Mobilisation to Revolution, 1978*, and others in a reaction to the *social unrest* theories which attempted to portray social movements as irrational ventures. It fills the gap of *relative deprivation theories* by providing that apart from the feeling of deprivation, resources are also necessary to wage a movement. It argued that participants of a social movement behave rationally and apart from ideology and spirit, a social movement needs material resources to maintain a sustained effort. According to it, social unrest is always present in the society and hence, this theory renders unrest theories deficient in explanation. If a movement can muster resources such as leadership, organisational capacity, and communication facilities, and can use them within the available political opportunity structure, it is more likely to be effective. Critics argue that a social movement is not limited by existing resources. It can create resources such as new symbols and identities. As numerous poor people's movements show, scarcity of resources need not be a constraint. Even with an initial limited material resources and organisational base, a movement can generate resources through the process of struggle. This theory visualises social movements as operating within a *social movement industry*, within which, they compete for scarce resources. However, this theory fails to explain why social movements like Black Rights movement and Arab Spring took place despite a resource crunch.

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V. *Revitalisation Theory* – It was given by Wallace. Though social movements express dissatisfaction and dissent against the system, they may also offer a positive alternative. Indeed they may be started for revitalising the existing system which is undergoing structural strain. They, thus, provide alternative and are also called as *Positive Movements*.

VI. *Theory of Historicity* – It was given by Allain Touraine in his *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements, 1981*. It says that the cause of a social movement is rooted in historicity of a place and people from where the movement started. Each Movement is, thus, understood in terms of its specific historicity. Indian sociologist T K Oommen also thinks that historicity is one of the core features of a social movement.

VII. *Status Inconsistency Theory* – According to Broom and Lenski, objective discrepancy between people's ranking and status dimension, e.g., education, income, occupation generate subjective tensions in the society leading to cognitive dissonance, discontent and protest.

Social movements can also be classified on various other bases. A social movement may also be differentiated on the basis of the ideology as liberal, Marxist, fundamentalist, Gandhian, etc. On the basis of methods employed, it can be peaceful or violent. On the basis of goals also they can have different classifications.

According to Turner and Killian, social movements can be classified on the basis of their orientation which can be either –

I. Value Orientation

II. Power Orientation

III. Participation Orientation

Horton and Hunt classified social movement into six types which are Migratory, Expressive, Reformative, Revolutionary, Reactionary or Regressive and Utopian Movement. On the basis of nature of change, David Aberle has classified social movements into four types. Further, this classification of Aberle is an Ideal Type and actual social movement may differ and may be a combination of these. A Redemptive social movement aims to bring about a change in the personal consciousness and actions of its individual members. For instance, people in the Ezhava community in Kerala were led by Narayana Guru to change their social practices. Reformist social movements strive to change the existing social and political arrangements through gradual, incremental steps. Brahmo

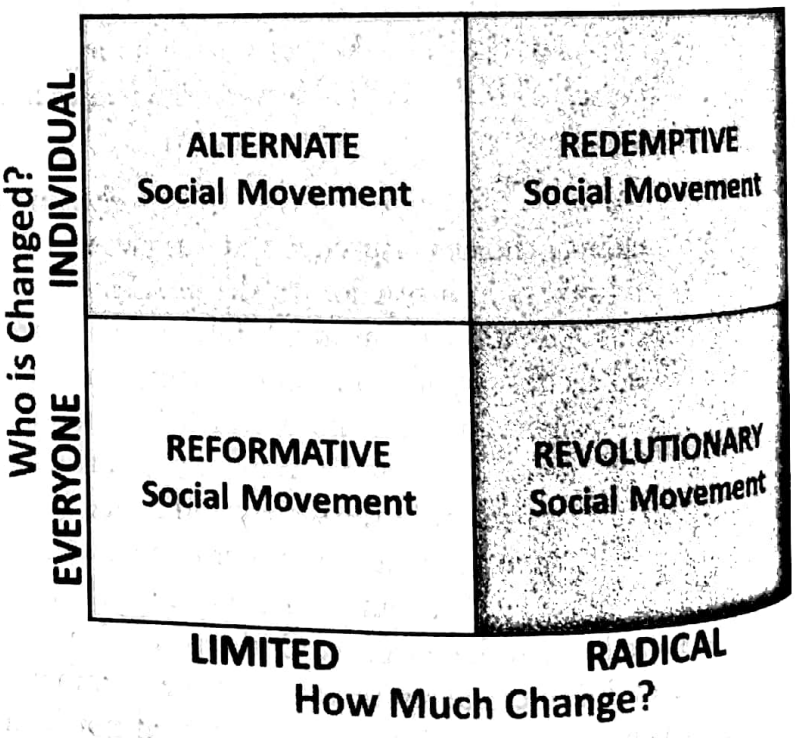

Fig. 7.5 Aberle's Classification of Social Movements

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Samaj, in the 19th Century and the recent Right to Information campaign are examples of reformist movements. Revolutionary social movements attempt to radically transform social relations, often by capturing state power. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia that deposed the Czar to create a communist state and the Naxalite movement in India that seeks to remove oppressive landlords and state officials can be described as revolutionary movements. Finally, alternate social movements have limited impact on individuals only. For example, birth control drives.

Recently, social media and internet has changed the way people are mobilised for a social movement. Jasmine Revolution in Egypt, according to Craig Watkins in his *Politics and the Media, 2012*, became the first *Twitter Revolution* as youth were heavily mobilised on social media.

Leadership in a Social Movement

Leaders are important for movements because they help clarify the issues and shape the movement. It is the leaders who provide guidance and direction to a movement. They prevent it from becoming a desperate, unruly collection of people. A movement can degenerate into a mob if it does not have a leader or a group of leaders guiding it.

The importance of leadership does not necessarily mean that it is all pervading, that people have no independent role to play and they are manipulated by the leaders. On the contrary, the leadership is expected to reflect the views of the people.

The most important aspect of leadership is that it tries to articulate the views of the participants in the movement. It is impossible for all people to give their views simultaneously. Leadership also acts as spokesperson of the social movement and negotiates on behalf of large number of people.

Leadership involves a two way process. On one hand, the leader tries to lead according to his understanding of the situation and the issues involved. On the other hand, the leader incorporates the views and ideas of the participants and articulates them in the process. A movement may degenerate if a leader only tries to impose his or her views without taking into account, the views of the participants in the movement or is solely guided by the demands of the members of the movement.

Ideology and Social Movement

While there can be many factors which lead to the start of a social movement, leadership and ideology are two important factors that sustain and give direction to a social movement. People follow the leader because of what he represents, i.e., the ideas that he places before them. There is something deeper, which makes people committed to it. An ideology is important as it makes people understand and justify the implications of their actions. Most importantly, it provides a justification to the actions of people involved even if they are violent.

Ideology provides a broad frame of action and collective mobilisation in the social movement. Ideology indicates the goals, means and forms of practical activities of social groups and of individuals. It supplies the justification for various social, political and moral ideals. Ideology also establishes identity of the group vis-à-vis other groups.

According to M S A Rao, it is one of the three most crucial aspects of a social movement, the other two being, collective mobilisation and orientation for change. Ideology is reflected in various themes of movements like rejection of religious identity, class conflict and millenarian themes.

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For the same end, different means may be used. For example, Bhoodan and Naxalism use different ideology for similar ends. Apart from helping us to distinguish one movement from the other, ideology helps to sustain a movement.

Old and new Social Movements

Since the late 1960s or so, there has been a spurt of social movements across the world and they include a diversity of movements like students movements of 1960s, feminist movements of 1970s, anti-nuclear movements of 1980s and gay right movements of 1990s. French sociologist Alain Touraine coined the term *New Social Movement* in 1975. They collectively fall under the category of New Social Movements (NSM). They are *new* because they have new issues, new organisation, new social constituencies and new methods.

The *Old Social Movements* clearly saw reorganisation of power relations as a central goal. The old social movements functioned within the frame of political parties. For example, The Indian National Congress led the Indian National Movement and The Communist Party of China led the Chinese Revolution. In the old social movements, the role of political parties or a political ideology was central.

NSM were not about changing the distribution of power in society, but about the quality-of-life issues such as having a clean environment. New Social Movements are significantly different from previous social movements of the industrial economy.

GLOBALISATION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Globalisation has made genuine global social movements possible. People are able to join together through networks of human rights organisations, internet, humanitarian group, NGOs, environmental groups and so on. Organisation of global level protests against Iraq War in 2003, protests against WTO, organisation of *World Social Forum* parallel to the World Economic Forum, public mobilisation against violence in Syria and Middle East in 2017, etc. are some examples of global scale of social movements.

I. According to Habermas in his *New Social Movements, 1981*, the new social movements are the *new politics* which is about the quality of life, individual self-realisation and human rights whereas the *old politics* focus on economic, political, and military security.

II. Some NSM theorists, like Frank Parkin, in his *Middle Class Radicalism, 1968*, argue that the key actors in these movements are different as well, as they are more likely to come from the *new middle class* rather than the lower classes. Thus, they have new social constituency belonging to artists, youths, students, middle income groups and so on.

III. The primary difference is in their goals, as the new movements focus not on the issues of materialistic qualities such as economic well- being, but on issues related to human rights and other liberal ideals of society (such as gay rights or pacifism). The new movements, instead of pushing for specific changes in public policy, emphasise social changes in identity, lifestyle and culture. They were not primarily constructed around social class or concerned with economic redistribution. Nor did they function like interest groups and they generally had quite broad agendas.

IV. The most noticeable feature of new social movements is that they are primarily social and cultural and only secondarily, if any, political. They didn't seek to take over state, but work at a cultural level to bring social change.

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V. They employed new organisational forms and means of mobilisation. Unlike pressure groups that have a formal organisation and *members*, NSMs consist of an informal, loosely organised social network of *supporters* rather than members in an organised manner. Paul Byrne described New Social Movements as *relatively disorganised* or *polycephalous* or multi-headed.

VI. Their methodologies were also different and they use a variety of them. They use methodologies from political lobbying to sit-ins and alternative festivals. But, the most distinctive feature of these is their non-violent and symbolic direct action. They aim to capture moral high ground and also use mass media extensively.

NSM are a testimony that while faith in traditional politics is waning, citizens are rising themselves to take direct action and becoming more participative. They have helped in revitalising democracy in its existing framework. New social movements have elements of old as well and one cannot put the two in watertight compartments. Gail Omvedt, in her book *Reinventing Revolution, 1993* points out that concerns about social inequality and the unequal distribution of resources continue to be important elements in these movements.

However, NSM are criticised because many of their features were also present in the old social movements as well. Further, many of social movements have institutionalised themselves as well, for example, in the case of PETA, Greenpeace and Gay Liberation Front.

Millenarian Movement

It refers to a class of movements, generally the religious ones, which often originate in times of turmoil and rapid change involving disruption of traditional norms. Situations of plague, famine, drought, etc. used to create such conditions in the past. They are also found in urban areas which are expanding rapidly and where traditional norms are undermined. They promise redemption or sudden transformation of the world and soon. Their ideology is derived from the religious beliefs or scriptures or cultic beliefs which hail arrival of a saviour. In Christianity, it is believed that Christ will descend on earth from heaven and will rule for thousand years. Similarly, Hindus believe that Vishnu will re-incarnate as a saviour in the form of *Kalki* in Kaliyug to end the evil order. Many other religions also have similar beliefs. An Islamic example is the support for the Mahdi in Sudan in 1880s.

As a result of prophetic events, adherents of such movements start to organise themselves in organisations to prepare themselves for prophetic changes. Millenarian movements prophesy a merger of the world of supernatural and the world of man, in a new order, free from pain, death, sin and all human imperfections. Such movements have occurred in many areas of the world and at all levels of society, but they are more common among the deprived group.

According to David Aberle – '*A sense of blockage, of the insufficiency of ordinary action is the source of more supernaturally based millenarian movements*'. Ghost Dance Religion of Tetons of Sioux, Cargo Cult of South Pacific Islanders, etc. are examples of such Millenarian Movements. In India, Birsa Munda led tribal movement is also an example of such a movement, in which, the tribals believed that Munda is their divine saviour. In colonial nations, such movements occurred frequently as they promised liberation from suffering.

Marxian view of religion as a response to exploitation and oppression also helps to explain such movements. According to Engels, '*Such movements are an indication of awakening of proletarian self-consciousness and they are an attempt of the proletariat to change the unjust order*'.

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Revolution

A revolution is also a type of social movement with radical overtones and far reaching outcomes. In socio-political sphere, the term revolution came into being in 1688 in England, when James II was replaced with William III and the event was termed as *The Glorious Revolution*. According to James M Jasper – '*Revolution is a social movement that seeks, as minimum, to overthrow the government or state*'. In the broadest sense it means a radical change and it is used in many sociological contexts like Green Revolution, Knowledge Revolution and Social Revolution, but they are more so in metaphorical sense. In a stricter sense, its context is political as in James M Jasper's definition of overthrowing an existing political order by means of mass participation and often accompanied by violence as well. It often leads to a fundamental change in social structure and social life, changes in political structure and increased participation of people in political life. It can also be seen as a particular form of social movement and social movements may become more radical and revolutionary, and vice versa, revolutionary movements can scale down their demands and agree to share powers with others.

According to Charles Tilly, in his *European Revolutions, 1993* – '*A revolution is also different from other similar sounding terms like revolt, uprising, rebellion or mutiny in the sense that the latter may not have a lasting impact on the society*'. A revolution leads to a fundamental change in the structure of the society, while the latter may be merely attempts at such a change. Thus, irresistibility and irrevocability are the core features of a revolution as revolutions are not sporadic events and have long lasting impact. According to Tilly, '*A revolution is actually an outcome of a power struggle between competing interest groups*'. Neil Smelser had taken a systems view of revolutions and according to him – '*When the equilibrium in society is disturbed, revolutions take place*'.

Theda Skocpol revived the Marxist narrative to explain her idea of revolution and expanded the definition of revolutions beyond the field of political power. She and other scholars like Barrington Moore expanded the scope of the term to include areas like agrarian and other forms of social conflicts in the definition of revolutions.

Revolutions are also associated with positive and desirable human values like emancipation, liberation and equality. They may be revivalist or reformatory in spirit as well, but never conservatory in spirit. This differentiates them from military coups and other large scale reactionary events.

Goodwin distinguishes between conservative (reformist) and radical revolutionary movements, depending on how much of a change they want to introduce. An example of a conservative revolutionary movement would be the American Revolutionary movement, or the Mexican Revolutionary movement. Examples of a radical revolutionary movement include French Revolution, Bolsheviks Revolution in Russia and most recently, Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt.

Revolutions can be further classified on the basis of ideology behind them. For Marx, revolution was an end to the class struggle. For Aberle, revolution is one of the four types of social movements. Causes of revolutions can be many and some explanations combine a variety of factors, as in the *J-curve theory of rising expectations*, which suggests that *revolutions are not the result of absolute, but of relative deprivation, occurring when long periods of rising economic prosperity are sharply reversed.*

The same social movement may be viewed differently depending on a given context (usually the government or culture of the country in which it is taking place). For example, Jack Goldstone notes

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that the human rights movement can be seen as a regular social movement in the west, but it is a revolutionary movement under oppressive regimes like in China and some Arab countries. Similarly, demand for equal rights for women is a social movement in country like the USA or India, but it is a revolutionary step in conservative Islamic states.

Conditions for the rise of revolutionary movement –

I. Mass discontent leading to popular uprisings.

II. Dissident political movements with elite participation.

III. Strong and unifying motivations across major parts of the society.

IV. A significant political crisis affecting the state reducing its ability or will to deal with the opposition (see political opportunity).

V. External support (or at last, lack of interference on behalf of the state).

	Social Movement	Revolution
Scope	Its scope is context specific.	Its scope involves a radical change.
Nature	Usually a social movement is long drawn, sustained and organised.	Abrupt in nature, though organised, but it is sui-generis.
Methods	Various forms of peaceful agitations, propaganda to violence are used.	Usually violent, but can be non-violent too.
Semantics	It is a broader term.	It is a particular type of social movement.
Orientation	Change *in* system.	Change *of* system.
Example	Peasant movements in India.	Arab Spring in Tunisia, French Revolution and Russian Revolution.

Question Bank

1. What is power? What are its various bases?
2. Power Elite is a fact of life in all hitherto known societies. Comment.
3. Democracy may be a government of the people, even for the people, but can never be by the people. Illustrate this statement in light of arguments offered by Power Elite theorists.
4. What is participatory democracy? In India, what are the various mechanisms instituted in recent times that make Indian democracy more participatory?
5. No form of governance, even democratic can rule out concentration of power. Power concentration is inevitable. Elaborate with examples from modern systems of governments.
6. Why is Weberian bureaucracy one of the most efficient forms of organisational working? Why does it fail to work so in real life? How it can be prevented to become dysfunctional?

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7. Interest groups are a necessity of large representative democracies, but they can lead to misappropriation of scarce resources in favor of a few. Illustrate with the help of examples from India.
8. Is caste an interest group? Why or why not. Substantiate your arguments with the help of sound logic and illustrations.
9. Bureaucracy in the real life is different from the Ideal Typical bureaucracy. In this context, what is the informal bureaucracy?
10. Political parties are different from interest groups in many aspects. Elaborate this statement.
11. Citizenship comes with some rights as well as responsibilities. What rights and responsibilities does Indian citizenship confer upon you? Are these rights and responsibilities absolute?
12. Nationalism like other ideologies is narrow and parochial. Do you agree?
13. Is nation-state a necessity of modern life? Why or why not? What can be the alternative forms of governance and organisation of populations?
14. State has performed the function of providing security to the individuals, but at a great cost. Why do some people call for a stateless society?
15. Civil Society is a guardian of collective morality. Comment and evaluate how it fared in the context of Indian political system.
16. Ideology is the fuel of every social movement. Illustrate it with the help of some recent social movements.
17. All forms of collective actions are interest driven and hence, exclusionary. They will always leave some groups less-satisfied than others. In this light, explain the life cycle of a social movement.
18. Agitations can be ephemeral, but protest may live long. Elaborate.
19. Millenarian movements have some inherent flaws which lead to their early deaths. Elaborate.
20. Revolutions are social movements, but all social movements are not revolutions. Illustrate with the help of a few examples.
21. Revolutions are easy to bring, but difficult to sustain. Explain this in light of the Arab Spring.

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Religion and Society

8



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the sociological theories of religion
2. Explain the types of religious practice
3. Differentiate between science and religion
4. Know about fundamentalism and communalism

Religion is a part of human society since time immemorial. Despite its various forms and features, sociologists have tried to understand it in the form of an institution. Functionalists see this institution as a beneficial entity, while conflict theorists view it as a device of *the haves* to ideologically subdue the have-nots. Early sociologists also made several bids at explaining the origin of this institution and as a result, various theories were also put forward. However, this speculative activity was soon deemed as futile and more emphasis was later laid on the present form, functions and dysfunctions of the religious activities. Today, religion is not considered a supernatural thing by the sociologists, but a collective human activity. With recent surge in fundamentalist activities, a shift in focus has also occurred and functionalist postulates have come under further criticism.

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Religion is about the realm of the sacred. Durkheim defines it as – *'A unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say that things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite them into a single moral community, for all those who adhere to them'*. In most cases, the sacred includes an element of the supernatural, reverence, awe, etc. Studying religion sociologically lets us ask questions about the relationship of religion with the other social institutions. Religion had, in the past, a very close relationship with power and politics. For instance, periodically, in history, there have been religious movements for social change, like various anti-caste movements or movements against gender discrimination. More recently, Peter Mandaville and Paul James, in their *Globalisation and Culture: Globalising Religions, 2010*, provide a definition which transcends the dualism of materialism/spiritualism and sacred/secular and even includes the metaphysical elements, which Durkheim and other classical sociologists ignored. *Religion is a relatively-bounded system of beliefs, symbols and practices that addresses the nature of existence, and in which, communion with others and otherness is lived as if it both, takes in and spiritually transcends, socially-grounded ontologies of time, space, embodiment and knowing.*

Like every social institution, religion is also evaluated as an institution for its utility in society and various social researchers have come up with its various functions and dysfunctions. Its functions can be seen at two levels, manifest and latent, i.e., its functions can also be seen at an individual level as well as at societal level. Functions of religion or role of religion in maintaining social order can be viewed as –

I. *Social change* – Social change can be brought about by religion, by new principles, new ideology, etc. Buddhism and its challenge to orthodoxy of Brahmanism is such an example. According to Weber, it was the religious ideology that led to the rise of capitalism. In his study of American Evangelical Protestantism, Tocqueville established that it helped in the growth of democratic spirit in America. Tocqueville proposed that Catholicism, with modifications, could foster democratic spirit in France.

II. *Integrative force* – As stated by Durkheim – *'Religion unites all those who believe in it'*. Especially in a time of crisis, religion acts as a uniting force and acts as an emotional support.

III. *Social control* – Every religion has the concepts of sins, virtues, heaven, good and bad. They guide the behaviour of those who follow the religion. Religious institutions like temples and churches also control the behaviour of individual in a different manner. Issuing of *Fatwas* is one such example. Festivals and preaching by the religious leaders also control behaviour.

IV. *Intellectual function* – It provides answers to many questions which are not answered by other bodies of knowledge. For example, the process of life and death, especially the uncertainty beyond death are explained in almost all hitherto existing disciplines.

V. *Normative role* – It is an ensemble of beliefs and practices which often act as moral guidelines as well. Most of the religions in the world have common tenets of peace, fraternity, love, etc.

VI. *Solace and comforting function* – Religion comforts people through illness, death, and other crisis. Malinowski saw religion as assisting the individual to cope up with situations of stress or anxiety.

VII. *Stabilisation* – Religion can change the social order or religion can stabilise the social order. Some sects in the past have done this, for example *Veershaiva* movement, led by Baswesvara in southern India, led to a struggle against the unreasonableness of Brahmins.

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VIII. *Ritual role* – Religious conventions and practices also direct marriages, mutual relations of family members and so on. According to Hindu philosophy, *Kama* is one of the four *Purusharthas*.

IX. *Social Control* – Fear of other religious norms also help in social control. Ideas of heaven and hell motivate people differently and help in limiting the desires also.

X. *Supplements empirical knowledge* – Religion can also supplement practical and empirical knowledge. '*Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind*', according to Einstein.

There are also dysfunctional things associated with religion like persecution, war, and terrorism. They can also be manifest and latent. Robert Merton introduced the concept of dysfunction. Talking about religion, for instance, he pointed out the dysfunctional features of religion in a multi-religious society. It becomes the cause of disorganisation and disunity. Conflict theorists like Marx also argue that religion acts as opium of masses and justifies the dominant ideology and exploitation. Religion hinders social progress and impedes social changes. Religion can make people dogmatic. Sometimes, it promotes evil practices also. People practice superstition in the garb of religion. Further, religion may also form the basis of communal behaviour. It makes an individual fatalist. Doctrines like that of predestination can make an individual feel too powerless and fatalistic.

Sociological Theories of Religion

Sociologists consider religion as a social phenomenon, both in terms of its causes and its consequences. Sociology of religion does not ask, whether God exists or not. Rather, Sociology of religion asks, *Whether people believe that God exists?, Why do they believe so?* and *How do they come to believe so?* This is also the fundamental difference between Theology and Sociology, while Theology takes existence of religion or God as given; Sociology aims at studying it like any other social phenomenon in a systematic manner.

Theories of religion can be divided into various categories like theories of origin, theories of evolution and contemporary theories regarding working of religion. Origin of religion is more of a calculated speculation rather than an empirically researched conclusion. Different thinkers have put forward different theories regarding the origin of religion. Evolutionary theories derive their understanding from studying of primitive societies like tribes and modern societies. Evolutionist understanding of religion seems to rest on two assumptions, namely Positivism and Intellectualism. Evolutionism is based on the intellectualist assumption that religion is a matter of knowledge. The intellectualists tried to prove that the primitives were rational, though their efforts to explain the natural phenomena were somewhat crude and false.

Comte was one of the early evolutionary theorists and he believed that the theological stage was the beginning, metaphysical stage was next and the scientific stage was the last in the evolution of human societies. As science advances and a contract-based society develops, religion centred on God head will fade away. Consequently, agnosticism (belief that nothing can be known about God) will be the religion of the scientific age. He gave the first systematic theory of religion from evolutionary perspective. Comte emphasised that religion will end after further growth of science. Herbert Spencer argued that religion arose from the practice of worshipping the ghosts of ancestors. This practice was universal, according to him, among primitive people. After this stage came polytheism and finally monotheism. Classical

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theorists also argue that polytheism is the religion of primitives and monotheism is the religion of complex societies.

Various classical or evolutionary theories regarding origin of religion can be grouped into two broad categories –

I. *Intellectual Theories* – They were the earliest theories of religion. They were based on primitive logic. These theories include Soul Theory by Comte; Dreams Theory of Spencer; Theory of Animism of Tylor and Mana Theory of R R Marett.

The Ghost Theory or Dreams Theory of Spencer – Spencer, in the mid-19th Century, in his three volumes of *Principles of Sociology, 1876-96,* constructed the first systematic theory of religion. Spencer showed the primitives to be rational, though with a limited quantum of knowledge. According to him, the primitives faced difficult questions related to life and death and dreams and awaken states. They deemed that humans have dual existence in these states. The primitives used to get the idea of a person's duality from dreams, which are considered as real life-experiences by the primitives. For them, the *dream-self* moves about at night while the *shadow-self* acts by the day. This notion of duality is reinforced by peoples' experiences of temporary loss of sensibilities. The event of death is also considered by the primitives as a longer period of insensibility. This idea of duality is extended by them to animals, plants and material objects. According to Spencer – '*The appearance of dead persons in dreams is taken by the primitives as the evidence of temporary after life*'. This leads to the conception of a supernatural being in the form of a *ghost*. According to Spencer – '*The idea of ghosts grows into the idea of gods and the ghosts of ancestors become divine beings*'. Spencer's conclusion is that *ancestor worship is the root of every religion*. He also took an evolutionary view and according to him, this primitive religious form is followed by polytheism and finally by monotheism.

Animistic Theory of Tylor – Animism means the belief in spirits/soul. Rather than focusing on the idea of ghost, Edward B Tylor emphasised on idea of soul in his *Primitive Culture, 1871*. Animism refers to a given form of religion in which man finds the presence of spirits in every object that surrounds him. This idea arose from two observations of primitive man which he explained with primitive logic –

a. What are those objects in dreams?

b. What differentiates the living from the dead?

Primitive man applied crude logic that it is the *soul* that differentiates living and dead. During dreams at night, it leaves temporarily and after death it leaves permanently. This idea of soul is then projected on to creatures other than humans and even to inanimate objects. Animals, plants and other objects, which help or obstruct man's activities, are also regarded to possess souls or spirits. The soul exists independent of its physical home the body, and therefore, arises the idea of belief in spiritual beings. Tylor says that these spiritual beings later develop into gods.

a. Man's ideas of spirits primarily originated from his dreams. In his dreams, man, for the first time, encountered his double.

b. Tylor argues that religion in the form of animism originated to satisfy man's *intellectual nature* to meet his need to make sense of death, dreams and vision.

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Like Spencer, Tylor also gave an evolutionary perspective on religion. He had an evolutionary view of the society in five stages and he extended this idea to religion as well. According to him, different religious practices prevailed in different phases of evolution of the society. Animism is the religion of simple hunting gathering societies and monotheistic religion is the religion of modern complex societies according to him.

II. *Psychological Theories or Emotional Theories* – These theories are based on a particular mental state like fear, anxiety and emotional stress. Malinowski gave a theory based on emotional stress, Sigmund Freud considered religion as a result of guilt, Frazer also gave a theory of *naturism,* Lowie considered it as a matter of feeling and foremost of them, Max Muller gave a theory based on emotional response of primitives to the forces of nature.

Emotional Stress Theory – Malinowski uses data from small scale non-literate societies to develop his thesis on religion and he chose Trobriand Island off the coast of Guinea for his field work. Like Durkheim, he saw religion as reinforcing social norms and promoting social solidarity, but he didn't see religion as a symbol of society. According to him, religion is concerned with specific areas of social life namely situation of stress which threaten social solidarity. Anxiety and tension tend to disrupt social life. Situations which produce these emotions include crisis of life such as birth, puberty, marriage and death. Death is the most disruptive of them all. At the time of death and funeral, members of society support the bereaved and this expression of solidarity re-integrates society. Second category is the events which are not fully predictable or controllable by man and hence, produce anxiety. For example, during fishing in an open sea, Trobriand islanders have apprehensions about storms and amount of catch. So, they make some rituals before going for fishing in the open sea. Such rituals help in reducing the anxiety as they provide confidence and a feeling of control. Like funeral ceremonies, fishing rituals are also social events. Religion promotes social solidarity by dealing with the situation of emotional stress. Malinowski is primarily criticised for exaggerating the functions of religion. For example, a function that religion performs in a particular situation, cannot be termed as the general feature of the religion.

Naturism or Nature Myth Theory – It is the belief that the forces of nature have supernatural power. Man used to see forces of nature with various emotions like awe, fear and respect. Max Muller developed the theory of naturism. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit and was also very interested in ancient Indian gods. He held that grand natural objects gave people a feeling of the infinite. Max Muller argued that with the passage of time, the symbolic representations came to gain an independent identity of their own and became separated from that, which they represented. The attributes or the symbols became personified as deities (*Indra Devta* for rain and *Agni Devta* for fire) According to Muller – *'Human beings and nature stand in a relationship of awe, wonderment, terror, etc'*. Early human beings could not understand or explain the world of nature. They ended up worshipping it out of fear and awe, out of dependency and as a token of respect.

James George Frazer also gave a similar explanation in his *The Golden Bough, 1890* and he held that primitive man was in a state of continuous struggle with nature. The chanting and other rituals were developed by him to control nature, which he thought of as magical. When man was overpowered by nature, he used to perform these to propitiate nature.

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Classical evolutionary theories deem polytheistic religion as the religion of simple societies and monotheistic religion as the religion of the complex societies. Classical theories are criticised on various grounds like –

I. Malinowski does not agree with Tylor's view of primitive man as a reflecting being. Malinowski maintains that the primitives are more preoccupied with fishing, gardening and tribal get-togethers and do not spend time *brooding over dreams and visions*. Malinowski held that both religion and magic originate and function under conditions of emotional stress. Magic is used by the primitive as we use scientific knowledge today for overcoming practical difficulties in their day to day life. His study of Trobriand islanders is the basis of his conclusions.

II. A major criticism against Tylor and Spencer was that they projected their own ideas regarding soul, etc. into the mind of the primitive people, whom they had not studied in their natural habitat and environment. Thus, the evolutionary theorists were arm chair scholars.

III. Frazer argued that rather than religion and related beliefs and practices, primitive people were actually more inclined towards magic and superstition.

IV. Andrew Lang points out that many of the simplest societies have monotheistic religions, which Tylor claimed was limited to complex societies only.

V. Earlier theories were mainly based on psychological and intellectual ideas only, later sociological theories of Marx, Weber and Durkheim offered new perspective regarding the origin and its function in society.

Later, more systematic *sociological theories of religion* followed. While classical theories viewed religion as a response to various *needs of man* (intellectual and emotional), functionalists viewed it as a result of *needs of society*. Durkheim gave a distinctive explanation of origin of religion and its functions for society. Weber also proposed his theory, in which, religion acts as a source of social change. Merton also viewed religion from his functional paradigm and explored its latent functions as well. Various later theoretical strands in the study of religion are –

I. *Parsons' Evolutionary Structural Functional Theory of Religion* – Religion, according to Parsons is a part of a cultural system which provides guidelines in the form of beliefs, norms, values, etc. for the social action to be performed. For example, in Christianity, there are Ten Commandments and in Islam there are sayings in Quran. Like Malinowski, he also views religion as addressing certain problems of society like unforeseeable events and uncertainty. Religion helps in calming down the anxiety and stress which threaten the normal course of life. It provides a range of answers and makes suffering meaningful. Functionalists like Parsons, however, ignored the instances where religion becomes a disruptive force. It gives little consideration to the hostilities as between Catholic and Protestants in northern Island and between Shias and Sunnis in many Arab countries.

II. *Marxist View of Religion* – Karl Marx viewed religion from a conflict point of view and termed it as opium of masses which numbs their sufferings resulting from class exploitation. According to Marx – '*Man makes religion, religion doesn't make man*'. Men are made into believing that power lies in the supernatural and not with the men themselves. Religion appears as the external

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force controlling man's destiny, but in reality, it is man-made. Religion is also a reflection of relationship involved in the process of production.

Religion doesn't exist in a communist society as the social conditions which produce it disappear. According to Lenin – '*Religion is a kind of spiritual gin, in which, the slaves of capitalism drown their human shapes and their claim to any decent life*'. He also gives example of Christianity as a movement of the oppressed, led by Christ against the oppressive rule of the Roman Empire. Religion dulls the pain of oppression by promising a paradise in afterlife, making virtue of suffering and by doling out hopes of supernatural intervention. Religion also justifies the position of a man in particular strata as in case of Hinduism, Karma theory justifies even a highly rigid caste system. Poverty and misfortune are depicted as divine will and punishment for sins of the individual. Religion, thus, makes poverty more bearable. Ruling class also adopts religious beliefs to justify their actions to others. In feudal England, there was collusion between feudal lords and the Church. While the former gave donations to the Church, the latter would often legitimise the powers of the lords from the pulpit.

Types of Religious Practices: Animism

Animism means the belief in anima or spirits. It holds that the world is driven by spirits. Animism refers to a given form of religion, in which, man finds the presence of spirit in objects or notions that surrounds him. Animism is considered as one of the most primitive ideas that gave birth to religion in society and as a religious concept, it is associated with primitive people. Even today, many tribals, cults and sects across the world, believe in this idea as a religious practice. Spirits are seen as benign as well as malevolent. Teton Sioux of America practice an animistic religion, in which, spirits play negative roles in their lives and they perform Ghost Dance ceremony to appease them. Evans Pritchard in his study of the Nuer of South Sudan found out that they have an elaborate theological idea of religion centred on *Sky Spirit* or *High God*. Even in modern times, many sects in India treat illness through witchcraft, sorcery, etc.

In a hunting gathering society, man faced enormous challenges. He came to believe that his happiness depends on the happiness of his dead relatives and ancestors. If some of their ancestors don't rest in peace, their lives will be miserable. In India also the concepts of *Pitra* and *Shraadh* among Hindus are associated with similar beliefs. Hindus make rituals and prayers to placate the souls of their ancestors and demand peace and happiness in their lives from their ancestors. This is also the reason that Animism Theory is also called as *ancestor worship* theory. Religions which have an idea of transmigration of soul as one of the central tenets also have an idea of anima inherent in that.

Edward B Tylor was the first sociologist who elaborated the concept in his famous book *Primitive Culture, 1871* and subsequently, he developed the distinction between magic, religion and science. Tylor associates animism to the primitive societies and it transforms into modern religion as society evolves. According to him, any type of spiritual phenomenon, that is souls, divinities, etc. which are animated and interpreted by man, explain the stage of animism. Man's ideas of spirits primarily originated from his dreams. In his dreams, man, for the first time, encountered with his double. He realised that his double or duplicate is more dynamic and elastic than his own self. He further considered that his double, though resembled his body, is far more superior in terms of quality from his body. He

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generalised further that the presence of soul in human body is responsible for the elasticity of images in dreams. Taking this fact into consideration, primitive mind considered that when man sleeps the soul moves out of the body temporarily and when he is dead, it leaves out of the body permanently. Thereafter, man generalised that every embodiment, which is subjected to birth, growth and decay, is obviously associated with spirit. Hence, trees, rivers, mountains, which are greatly subjected to decay and expansion, were considered as the embodiments in which soul is present. Realising this, man started worshipping these embodiments and animism, as a specific form of religion, came into being. According to Tylor '*The most ancient form of animistic practice is manifested in terms of ancestor worship*'. Tylor argues that religion, in the form of animism, originated to satisfy man's *intellectual nature* to meet his need of making sense of death, dreams and vision. Spencer also, like Tylor, associated the idea of soul with the dreams.

Graham Harvey, in his *Animism: Respecting the Living World, 2005*, also mentions a form of *new animism* which is an offshoot of an ethnographic study done by Irving Hallowell in Canada. Post-modernist scholars argue that contrary to Tylor's idea that only primitives animate their surrounding world, all societies animate their social world. According to them, all of us animate our surroundings in one way or the other be that our pets, toys or even abstract ideas by creating personal relationships with elements of the objective world. Thus, the post-modernist sociologists reject the dichotomy between natural or physical world and humans and Nurit Bird-David even claims that classical sociologists have projected their own mental state on the primitives.

Types of Religious Practices: Monism and Pluralism

Monism is a belief in single attribute, God or religious idea. It is centred on the belief of oneness of all existences or in a single god, ideology. The term was popular in all cultures, including Hinduism as *Advaita*, in western literature, it was coined by Christian Wolff, but was used in a narrow sense. Philosophers like Thales, Plotinus and Adi Shankara preached monism in one form or the other. Among modern religions, Islam is a monistic religion as its believers deny existence of any other power than Allah. Similarly, *Advait* philosophy of Hinduism also contends that there is no distinction between the disciple and God and they are one and there is ultimately a single being. Sufi saints also stressed upon this concept of a single all powerful entity. Some also believe that the monistic beliefs are symbol of a nascent religion. As different cults and sects emerge from original religion, it transforms into a pluralistic religion. E B Tylor, on the other hand, gave an evolutionary theory of religion, in which he contended that monotheistic religions are hallmark of modern societies and pluralistic religions are hallmark of primitive societies.

Pantheism is one popular western religious ideology which rests upon the belief that all of reality is identical with divinity and everything composes an all-encompassing god. Pantheists do not believe in a distinct personal or anthropomorphic god. Baruch Spinoza, a 17th Century philosopher, was a key influence in spreading the idea through his book *Ethics, 1677*, in which he opposed Descartes' mind-body dualism. Though the name Pantheism was popularised in the 17th Century, the idea was present in many religions of the east, including Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. and of Europe as well. Established religions of Europe, primarily Church, regarded this ideology as heretic. The ideology gained a great momentum in the 19th Century and had noted followers like William Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and later in the 20th Century, even Einstein.

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Pluralist religious practices, on the other hand, are those which accommodate different viewpoints, beliefs etc. Pluralism in the simplest terms can be defined as *respecting others as other* and is a counter-ideology to exclusivism. The ideology is different from *syncretism* which calls for mixing of the different beliefs etc. into one single output. The existence of religious pluralism depends on the existence of freedom of religion, fertility of ideas and mutual tolerance. Freedom of religion is when different religions of a particular region possess the same rights of worship and public expression. Hinduism, as a religion, is one such examples. In Hinduism, multiple philosophies and ideologies like *Vaishnaiv*, *Shaiv*, *Advait*, *Dwait* and even atheism thrive in parallel. Similarly, in Christianity also Calvinists, Methodists, Protestants, Catholics thrive in parallel. Religious pluralism is the belief that one can overcome religious differences between different religions and denominational conflicts within the same framework.

SEMITIC TRADITION OF RELIGION

In the Semitic tradition, religious experience is viewed as revealed and a commandment from God is sent through a divinely chosen mediatory between man and God. Christianity and Islam are such religions. Therefore, the Semitic tradition tends to be monolithic. This also helps in the organisation and spread of this type of religion. But, it sometimes comes in conflict with the political authority and other religions.

According to Steve Bruce – '*Religious pluralism results from a variety of sources and it has undermined the communal basis of religious orthodoxy as well*'. Modernisation and industrialisation are two key factors which are said to be causes of growth of social fragmentation and diverse cultural and religious groups come into contact of each other in such a society. In a diverse society, state also cannot support any single religion without causing conflict. Plurality of religions is also, in a way, functional to the society as well. It reminds individuals that religion is a matter of choice, and hence, a private matter. Bruce also views pluralism as a sign of growing secularisation in the society. But many of Bruce' hypothesis about the religious pluralism are also contestable. Recent conflicts in religious pluralistic places like Syria and even Europe are an example that pluralism may prove dysfunctional as well.

Peter Berger has linked the growth of the pluralistic beliefs to the growing trend of modernisation and secularisation as pluralistic beliefs undermine the one absolute truth. Similarly, Bryan Wilson also argues that with pluralisation of society, religious values become personal values and no longer remain community values.

Religious pluralism has existed in the Indian subcontinent since the rise of Buddhism around 500 BCE and has widened in the course of several Muslim settlements (Delhi Sultanate1276-1526 CE and the Mughal Empire 1526-1857 CE). In the 8th Century, Zoroastrianism was established in India as Zoroastrians fled from Persia to India in large numbers, where they were given refuge. Christianity was in India long before the colonial rulers arrived.

Types of Religious Practices: Sects and Cult

Sects and cults are two forms of religious organisation. They basically represent religious revivalism on one hand and search for alternative religious activities on the other. They often also represent ossification of the dominant religion and a search for alternatives. From an evolutionary perspective, cult, sect, denomination and institutional religion or Church are seen along a continuum. They differ from each

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other in the degree to which they are established and are conventional. Churches are well established and conventional, cult is neither. In contemporary Sociology, *New Religious Movements* is the term which is nowadays preferred over sects or cults.

In Sociology, Church-Sect typology is originally coined by Weber and Troeltsch. In fact, Troeltsch was among the first Sociologists who differentiated various forms of religious organisations. According to them, Church is a large, well established religious institution, bureaucratic in its working which is culmination of the evolution from sect. Sect, on the other hand, is smaller in size, closed and has a different agenda than the dominant religion. Howard Becker has further added *denomination* and *cult* to the church-sect typology of Weber and Troeltsch.

Various theoretical explanations have been put forward for the rise of sects and cults or the New Religious Movements –

NEW AGE MOVEMENTS OR NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

New Age Movements are a form of religious movements which started in 1960s and 70s. They took various forms. For example, some of them were world affirming and hence, they didn't reject the dominant religions and world completely, but focused on ways of self-realisation of individuals. Roy Wallis distinguished between three different types of such New Religious Movements world-rejecting, world-affirming and world-accommodating. He has classified Krishna Consciousness as *world rejecting*, Mahesh Yogis' Transcendental Meditation as *world affirming* and Neo-Pentecostalism as *world accommodating*. Generally, cults have the features of world affirming movements. Followers of new age movement seek out and develop alternative ways of life in order to cope with the challenges of modernity. For this reason, sometimes they call themselves as *spiritual* rather than religious movements alone. They encourage individuals to move beyond the traditional values and live their lives actively and reflexively. This was the time when The Beatles also came to India in 1960s, for spiritual solace in Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation. These New Age movements value personal experience over and above the *truths* offered by the traditional institutions and employed media like yoga, self-healing and clairvoyance.

I. One section of sociologists argues that they are a result of a wider process of secularisation and liberalisation of society.

II. Others argue that people who find traditional religion as ritualistic, rigid and orthodox look for spiritual solace in smaller, less impersonal religious movements.

III. According to Bryan Wilson, in his *Religion in Sociological Perspective, 1982*, they are a result of rapid social change. As traditional norms are disrupted, people search for explanations and reassurance.

IV. Some argue that such new religious movements appeal to those people who feel alienated and marginalised from the mainstream society.

V. Andrew Dawson, in his *Sociology of Religion, 2011*, argues that new religious movements like sects are a result of the tremendous changes caused by rapid and large scale urbanisation. This process challenged the long standing traditions and new institutions were sought.

Cult is a small group of religious activities whose beliefs are different from the dominant religion and are usually individualistic, focusing on individual experience. It never challenges the mainstream religion directly. They are often based upon charismatic leadership. It has no concept of membership and it is loosely organised with little rules and regulations and members may even retain affiliations

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to other religions as well. Some thinkers see their origin in terms of social evils, discontentment and change in society. They provide alternatives to the people and hence, are more readily accepted by the marginalised sections of the society. Cult is a voluntary organisation, open to all who wish to join or participate in it. But, where secretive, it tends to be highly exclusive. A cult emphasises one doctrine (above all others) or it focuses upon a God or goddess with certain definite characteristics. Cults seem to flourish in metropolitan centres where culturally heterogeneous populations are thrown together and they widely feel the impact of most rapid and impinging social change.

An established religion in one part of the world may have a status of cult in another part of the world when it is introduced in that part. For example, Krishna Consciousness better known as ISCKON, when adopted in the west, became a cult, but Hinduism, or *Vaishnavism* to be precise, is a well-established religion in India.

According to Olridge, cults are present in modern society because –

I. Religion guarantees salvation in afterlife, cults provides relief in this life itself.

II. While religion addresses spiritual needs, cults provide solution to mundane problems.

III. Religion usually points out the impossibility or extreme difficulty of direct communication with god, but in a cult, believers and devotees are face to face with each other.

Peter Berger classified cults into three types which are Revivalists, Adventists and Orientalists. Revivalist cults glorify the forgotten past. Adventists prescribe new means to joy and Orientalists follow the ideas of Oriental religions. According to Wallis in his *Elementary Forms of New Religious Life, 1984* – '*New religious movements like cults and sects can be classified into three broad categories which are world affirming, world accommodating and world rejecting*'

Sects are the more organised form of religion than cults and in this type of social organisation, institutionalisation of social roles starts. Urge for change and reinterpretation are at the heart of the sects and they are defined as those New Religious Movements which break away from the orthodoxy of the dominant religion. The sect is often intolerant towards other religious groups. It is marked by a desire to disassociate from the existing social order. Sects are seen as an attempt to rationalise the dominant religion. Sects also, generally, promote brotherhood, equality and common goals for its members. Sects tend to arise during a period of rapid social change. For example, Bryan Wilson sees rise of Methodism as a response of new working class to the ethos and uncertainty of life in newly settled industrial areas. In India also, many *Mutts, Sanghas, Panths,* etc. are examples of sects.

Some thinkers consider sects as an indicator of nature of society. More sects indicate a relatively open society. According to Peter Berger in his *Sociology of Religion and Sociology of Knowledge, 1969*– '*Sect is in tension with the larger society and is closed against it*'.

According to Weber – '*Sects are most likely to originate within those groups which are marginalised in society*' and he terms this phenomenon as *theodicy (religious justification) of disprivileged* as sects provide an alternative explanation or path of redemption. For example, Sects like Dera Sacha Sauda of north India promises a casteless society to its members who are generally from rural areas or from depressed castes. Similarly, Black Muslims sect in the USA in 1960s promised emancipation to Negros.

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Modern sects, however, have a varied membership and marginalised doesn't necessarily mean only in economic terms, but it can be in the form of relative deprivation as well. ISKCON is another sect which has a wide appeal and is not limited to economically weaker sections alone.

Sect	Cult
They are formed either when membership grows or the cult leader dies. It is formed in a bid to become a more organised religious unit.	It generally starts around a charismatic personality. For example, when Buddhism was started by Buddha, it was a cult at that time.
It is marked by a desire to disassociate from the existing social order. Sects are seen as an attempt to rationalise the dominant religion.	Its beliefs are different from the dominant religion, but never challenge it.
It is more formal and definite.	It is more volatile in nature.
Sects are largely closed to those who have not undergone a process of initiation. For example, drinking of holy water, wearing of amulets and so on as initiation rites are performed. So, they have a strong claim to the loyalty of its members.	They are relatively open and don't have preconditions for membership.
It is a relatively closed group and has membership criteria.	It doesn't have strict membership criteria as organisation is loose.
Calvinists or Methodists are examples of Christian sects.	Osho Cult, Transcendental Meditation, etc. are examples of a cult movement.

A *Denomination* grows out of the sect. Sects often lose their momentum as it is difficult to maintain high levels of commitments for long periods and sects either die out or transform themselves into denominations. According to Howard Becker – '*A denomination is a sect which has cooled down and become an institutionalised body rather than an active protest group*'. It is a religious sect which has lost its revivalist, reformist dynamism and has become an institutionalised body with a much larger following than a sect commands. The denomination is much closer to the Church, or the institutionalised religion for that matter, than the sect ever was. Church also has more acceptability of denomination than that of sect. Calvinism and Methodism started as sects, but are now in the form of denomination. Johnson observes – '*The line between ecclesia and denomination is not always clear-cut and nor is the line between sect and cult. Denomination is what usually results when a sect becomes respectable in the eyes of middle class society and relaxes its religious vigour*'. It has following distinguishing features –

I. Membership of denomination is drawn from all levels of society, unlike sect, which has membership predominantly from a particular stratum which is generally the lower strata.

II. The binding chord of *fellowship of love and religious service* which is a distinguishing trait of the cult becomes weak, almost non-existent, in the denomination.

III. Denominations generally accept the norms and values of larger society, though they may impose some minor restrictions upon their members. Sects, on the other hand, are closed against dominant religion and dominant values of society.

IV. It starts to develop a bureaucratic organisation with a hierarchy of paid officials much like the Church.

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Church or Ecclesia or institutional religion refers to the final stage in the evolution of cults, sects and denomination. It refers to a large formal organisation with a hierarchy of the officials. Individuals don't have to demonstrate their allegiance to a church to become its member, rather they are born into it. A church generally accepts the norms and values of society and frequently regards itself as the guardian of the established social order. It often jealously guards its monopoly on religious truth.

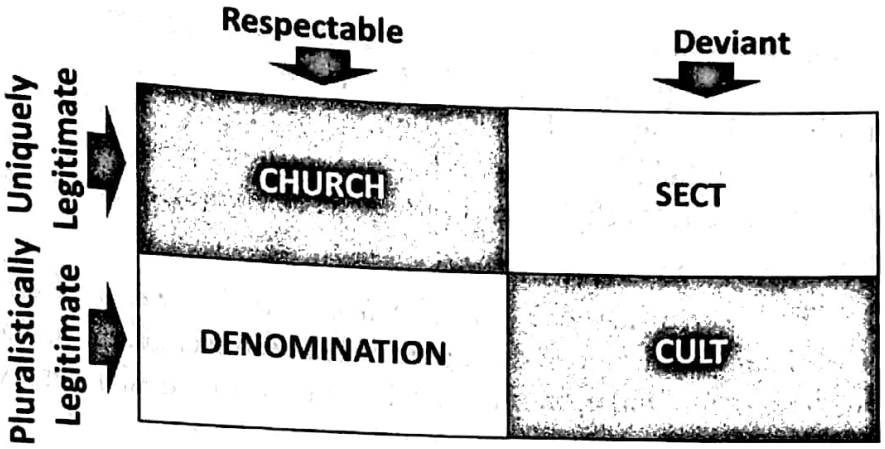

Fig. 8.1 Roy Wallis on Religious Institutions

To the above dimensions, Roy Wallis adds another perspective by offering certain unique characteristics to these institutions. He identified religious organisations in terms of their respectability or deviance, i.e., to the extent to which they supported the values and norms of the wider society. On the other hand, they were also distinguished whether they claimed a monopoly on the religious truth or they coexist with the other religious organisations. However, this framework of Wallis is also criticised for ignoring the current realities as Church no longer holds significant sway and religious pluralism is undermining its position in most of the modern societies.

In India, not much academic focus is there on the study of sects, cults and denominations. According to A M Shah, in his presidential address in the 20th All India Sociological Conference held in 1993, at Mangalore – '*Recent sociological research on religion in India has concentrated on ideas and symbols in religion rather than on the social organisation of religion*'. In India, often sects or *sampradayas* or *panths* are subsumed under the rubric of study of larger religions. Despite the increasing memberships of the sects in India, on account of drawing of members from non-sectarian religions into sectarian fold, very few studies have been commissioned. Sects in India are becoming more and more articulate and have diverse membership from all sections of society and this process is also wakening the rigid caste structures, if not completely diluting them. On one hand, Indian sects and cultic figures are involved in new programs of action – like building of schools and hospitals and on the other hand, some of them have recently embroiled themselves in controversies as well. Arrest of self-proclaimed cultic religious guru Asaram Bapu in 2013 for the rape of a minor girl, arrest of a Haryana-based cultic leader Rampal Maharaj in 2014 are some of the examples.

Religion in Modern Society: Religion and Science

Questions and confusions have always surrounded man and he sought answer to these in either religion or science. So, both acted as storehouse of complementary knowledge. It is generally agreed that religion predates science. With modernisation, some social thinkers started to believe that science and religion are incompatible.

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Classical evolutionary sociologists see evolution in a series of religion, magic and science. According to Comte – '*society moves from a theological stage to a Positivist stage*'. According to him, religion dominates traditional societies and science dominates modern societies. Tylor further glorified science and called science as infallible and embodies the spirit of modernity. Other evolutionary theorists like French Spencer also saw religion and science at two opposing ends. As societies evolve, science becomes the modern religion.

Malinowski, in his book *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays, 1954*, on his experience of Trobriand Islanders, also distinguishes between sacred and profane and according to him, science, apart from art, craft, and economic activities of Trobriand islanders, was cited as an example of profane.

Science	Religion
Science is considered as inquisitive and deliberative.	Religion is considered as imaginative and speculative.
Science drives man to shape his own destiny.	Religion pushes man towards fatalism.
Science believes in precision and measurement.	Religion has no such provisions.
Science brings the unknown to the level of observable reality.	Religion often depicts God as beyond the reach of normal human beings.
Science is liberating and enlightening and promotes questioning of everything.	Religion binds individuals and promotes status quo and tradition.
Science is based on rationality.	Religion is based on the belief in sacred.
Science promotes individual innovations, though team works are also there.	Religion is more collectively oriented.
Scientific knowledge and method are valid universally.	Religious principles are accepted within a particular community only which believes in those principles.

There are also many similarities between religion and science. Durkheim views both religion and science as providing society with its collective representations. So, he does not see any conflict in the two. Other similarities are –

I. Both aim to provide answers to certain questions.

II. Both have manifest, latent functions as well as dysfunctions.

III. Both are a result of intellectual as well as emotional needs of human beings.

Weber's comparative studies showed that how religions across the world advocate values that differ and are invariably in opposition to rationality. Science, on the other hand, is empirical. So, he sees an opposition between the two. According to Weber – '*As rationality and scientific thoughts increase, secularism increases and space of religion will decreases*'. Scientific ideas like *Darwin's Evolution Theory* came into conflict with the view that *God created man*. However, William Bainbridge, in his *Science and Religion, 2009*, takes a different view. According to him, both religion and science have become more fragmented. So, there is no single relationship between religion and science and there is a multiplicity of relations.

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According to Steve Bruce – *'Science and religion can go hand in hand and they are not anti to each other'.* In fact, it is the rationality and technology which are more important and are perhaps undermining the religion. Technological advancements have led to a greater control of people over natural world and people no longer turn to religious explanations in many instances. However, science, technology and rationality also have their limits. People do resort to prayers when the human ingenious fails. For example, in the field of medicine, after treatment fails to give results, prayers follow. Surge of New Age religious movements is also an indication that science and technology has not completely triumphed religion. In fact, some new religions like Scientology deem themselves as totally scientific and fully compatible with scientific principles.

Even the greatest scientists didn't stop believing in religion and to conclude in the words of such a great scientist, Einstein – *'Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind'.* So, even today, both are complementary as a lot still remains outside the realm of human knowledge. Due to influence of science, many religions have also rationalised themselves. Many religious institutions are making ample use of scientific discoveries to make the reach of religion wider. Television and internet are profusely used by religious leaders to reach the masses.

Religion in Modern Society: Secularisation and Secularism

Social thinkers like Comte, Durkheim, Marx, Weber and Spencer were of the view that traditional religion would become more and more marginal in the modern world. According to them, a process of secularisation is bound to occur as science becomes more important in the lives of people to control and explain the social world. Since the definition of religion is not universally accepted, definition of secularism or the process of secularisation is also not universal. Following are some of the major strands –

I. *Participation in institutional religion* – Extent of religion in our life is measured by the relative importance that we give to religious institutions, which is reflected in attendance in Churches, temples, mosques, etc. and the role of these institutions in performance of various events in our life like solemnisation of marriage and funeral rites etc. Some argue that fall in Church attendance is a symbol of secularisation of society. According to Bryan Wilson in his *Religion in a Secular Society, 1966* – *'The decline in organised religious participation indicates a way in which the churches are losing the direct influence over ideas and activities of man'.*

II. *Disengagement of institutional religion from everyday life* – Disengagement of religious institutions from important events of life is also seen as a proof of secularisation of society. Describing the process of secularisation, Bryan Wilson writes that – *'In secularisation process, various social institutions gradually become distinct from one another and increasingly free of the matrix of religious assumptions that had earlier informed, inspired and dominated their operation'* Today, education, politics and social welfare are no longer functions of religion. Parsons contradicts this point of view, and according to him – *'Structural differentiation of institutions is a natural evolutionary process and it doesn't make the role of religion less important'.* Due to the differentiation process, religious values become more generalised and they still guide the society and integrate it.

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III. *Societalisation* – According to Steve Bruce, in his *Secularisation*, with the arrival of large bureaucratic organisations, close knitted integrated societies lost their power as societalisation happens. In close knitted societies, same religious beliefs are shared by everyone and are never questioned.

IV. *Increasing religious pluralism as a symbol of secularisation* – Some argue that a truly religious society is monotheistic. Competition among various religious groups has reduced the power of religion. Religious loyalties become a matter of convenience for people. Existence of multiple faiths also runs against the belief that religion is the binding force of society as a single faith is a precondition for social integration. According to Bryan Wilson, in such a situation – '*Religious values are no longer the values of the whole community*'. Rising number of sects indicate that the dominant religious values have lost their pre-eminence.

V. *Secularisation of religious institutions themselves* – It is also argued that religious institutions are adapting themselves to changed conditions. They have recognised that the older values like belief in supernatural, other world and the saviour no longer sound plausible to believers. They would appear irrational and irrelevant in new societies. For example, Herberg in his *Protestant-Catholic-Jew, 1960* highlights that the major denominations in USA increasingly reflect the *American Way of Life* rather than the word of God.

VI. *Growing individualism* – This view argues that religion is no longer an act of collective worship and individuals today work out their own path of salvation. But Robert Bellah, in his *New Religious Consciousness and the Crisis in Modernity, 1976* argues that it doesn't show that importance of religion has declined, rather its form of expression has changed.

VII. *Desacrilisation* – It is argued that sacred has no place in modern society as supernatural forces are no longer deemed to control the world. Bryan Wilson states that – '*Men act less and less in response to religious motivation*'. They access the world in empirical and rational terms. A greater knowledge of physical and biological world, due to developments in science, has restricted the space of the sacred. Organisations are more and more guided by rational ideologies to solve the problems as is evident in the working of trade unions, judiciary, etc. Rational worldview is often the enemy of the sacred and hence, religion.

In general, secularisation is a process which has occurred throughout history. It can now be summed up as a process of lower involvement of men with religious institutions, decrease in influence of religious institutions on other material aspects of life and decline in the degree to which people hold religious beliefs. Some sociologists even see the seeds of secularisation in the very development of monotheistic religions as *rationalisation of belief in supernatural and random magico-religious beliefs*. The term in its modern connotations is also associated with the process of modernisation. The rational and systematic empirical knowledge questioned the supernatural conceptions of the world and gave an awareness to man's capacity to harness nature. There are other interpretations as well. Some also deem it equal to increasing tolerance and plurality in society. Marxists view it as a process of decline of religion itself.

The separation of religious and political authority marked a major turning point in the social history of the west. This separation was related to the process of *secularisation*, or the progressive retreat of religion from public life. However, the case in India was different because India never had a church or a powerful organised state and hence, there was no question of a need for the separation of the two.

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INVISIBLE RELIGION

Contrary to the popular belief that secularisation has led to the decline of significance of religion, Thomas Luckman, in his *The Invisible Religion, 1967*, argues that religion is still alive, though it has receded from the public sphere. Peter Berger, along with Lukman, made a critical observation about the conventional religious theories for being narrowly focused on Christian institutions and measuring religion in the form of Church attendance only. According to them, religion is practiced more in person as a mean to self-realisation, than in public. According to them, underlying the individualism of the modern society are ingredients of the belief in the sacred, which is fundamental to the individual's comprehension of the world. They called such a phenomenon as the *invisible religion* and it also emerged as a major bulwark against the mainstream secularisation thesis. According to them, human beings are essentially religious in nature and new religious belief is a result of rising individualism. Another corollary of this thesis is that strength of institutional attendance should not be confused with the strength of religious belief in society.

Secularisation in religion is usually accompanied by an increase in attention to public issues. Secular and profane activities have become as important as the sacred. Thus, we find religious institutions getting involved with running of modern hospitals and secular educational institutions or engaging in philanthropic activities. Religion in industrial societies often reflects the pragmatism of our age, and in doing so, is increasingly moving away from the supernatural.

The development of *secularism,* as an ideology, was partly an outcome of the process of secularisation in Europe. Secularism was also an ideological goal of the new political philosophy and movement after the French Revolution. Secularism as a progressive ideology was a necessary qualification for the end of a feudal and theological state and the arrival of a liberal, democratic state of the post French Revolution. Still, later in 1851, George Jacoab Holyoake coined the term secularism.

Secularisation thesis, glorified by classical sociologists, indicated the dichotomy between traditional and modernity. This thesis is rejected by contemporary sociologists. There are no means of ascertaining when this process of secularisation starts. There is no way of measuring the strength of either belief or secularisation. Revivalism, growth of new sects, theological states, civic religion and the growth of communalism and fundamentalism indicate that modernity and secularisation need not go hand in hand. A study by Kaufmann indicates that while church attendance has decreased, the number of believers has not. Davie, in his *Religion in Modern Europe, 2000*, calls this phenomenon as *belief without belonging*. Eric Kaufmann provides another interesting perspective in his Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth: Demography and Politics in the Twenty-First Century, 2011, where he linked trends in secularisation with demographic factors. For example, in countries like Israel, there is a growth of orthodox believers and such sections produce more children than the secular sections of population. Similarly, Thomas Luckmann, in his *The Invisible Religion, 1967*, also argued that religion is still alive, though receded from public sphere and he calls it the *invisible religion*. Religion is not declining, but is being channelled in other directions. Rise of New Religious Movements also pose a challenge to secularisation thesis. Rising tensions in the Middle East and west Asia also point out to the fact that religion is given no less importance. So, as long as religion is perceived as an answer to complex questions of life, total secularisation of society cannot happen.

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CIVIC RELIGION OR CIVIL RELIGION

According to Nisbet, civic religion is defined as *the religious or quasi-religious regard for certain civic values and traditions found recurrently in the history of the political states.* The term was first employed by JJ Rousseau in The Social Contract, 1762 and was later developed by Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 1912. According to Rousseau, it is different from the *religion of man*, which was a private matter between the individual and God. Civic religion, according to him, was the *religion of the citizen'*, which was a public matter of the individual's relationship with the society and state or government. According to him, a civic religion binds all the members with society, instructs them in their duties and, if necessary, mobilises them to war in support of the state. In contemporary sense, it refers to the beliefs, symbols, rituals and institutions which legitimise the social system, create social solidarity and mobilise a community to achieve common political objectives. The concept, in its modern avatar, was put forward by Robert Bellah in his *New Religious Consciousness and the Crisis in Modernity, 1976*. In civic religion, we find a fusion of the political and the religious elements.

This regard for the civic values and traditions of the political state is expressed through special festivals, rituals, creeds and dogmas, which honor great personages and events of the past. Eminent leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose and B R Ambedkar are some of those who have played a major role in the socio-political history of the society. The same is true about certain events, like French Revolution in France or the 1857 Revolt in India, which are of great significance to the state and society. We can take the example of the celebration of our Independence Day on 15 August, when our Prime Minister unfurls the National Flag every year on the historical Red Fort in Delhi. This celebration is marked by a semi-religious fervor. It serves to heighten the sense of national and political identify of the Indian citizens. Collective effervescence is high during such events and like religion, they also bind people together.

The concept of civil religion is not a new phenomenon. It has been present in many societies, from ancient Greece and Rome to the middle ages and during the Renaissance in western Europe. The ancient kingships also had the elements of civil religion, such as, the worship of the King or Emperor as God.

Religion in Modern Society: Fundamentalism and Religious Revivalism

Fundamentalism, in strict sense of meaning, describes an ideology of religious or other social groups which calls for an adherence to literal meanings of sermons or scriptures or doctrines and apply them to all aspects of life. Fundamentalists strongly believe in one and only one true explanation. Further, access to the exact correct meaning is limited to a privileged few which gives them enormous authority over others, as in case of priests, clergy, etc. Forces of drastic social change are important for the emergence of fundamentalism and fundamentalists erect fundamentalism as a defence against new forces of change. It is relatively a new phenomenon and emerged in the background of threat of modernity and globalisation to tradition.

Whenever there are drastic changes in society and change of pace which disturbs community life, very often, there is a loss of identity and rootlessness among people. In such a situation, people clutch any support for solace. Fundamentalism promises certitude and restitution of an earlier better age. For people, the psychological appeal of this is difficult to resist.

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Fundamentalism, as a concept, was first used in 1910-15, when anonymous authors published 12 volumes of literature called them *The Fundamentals*. In the early 1920s, the print media used this word with reference to conservative Christian groups in North America, who called for a return to *the fundamentals of the faith.*

In contemporary times, fundamentalism is an ideology with the following distinct features –

I. Fundamentalism stresses on infallibility of a scripture (e.g. the Bible, *Granths*, the *Gita* or the *Quran*) in all matters of faith, religion and doctrine. The believer accepts it as a literal historical record. Since the texts are seen as God's own actual words, their meaning is bound to be clear and unambiguous and also changeless.

II. Second, fundamentalists assert that all aspects and areas of life are to be governed by the true, revealed religion as embodied in the original texts. God's words and law are to be the basis of society, economy, polity, culture and law and the entire domestic and personal life of the believer. More specifically, the fundamentalists attack the separation of religion from politics and state, and therefore, the idea of the secular state. Similarly, the fundamentalists insist on religious control over education.

III. The fundamentalists don't believe in the equality of all religions or for how can false religions be treated as equal to the true religion or given the liberty to preach or practice falsehood?

IV. It is opposed to reason, rationalism, humanism and secularism.

V. The fundamentalists are also practical people and they try to purge the way of life of all impurities (religiously speaking). They reject all corrupt lifestyles. An example of this is Swami Dayanand's critique of the traditional, superstition filled way of life. Maududi characterised the present Muslim way of life as *ignorant* and Bhindranwale talked of the *fallen* Sikhs, who shave off their beards, cut their hair and do not observe the traditional Sikh way of life. Thus, fundamental movements are not only about religious beliefs and practices, but lifestyles generally.

VI. According to T N Madan – '*Fundamentalist movements are of a collective character*'. They are often led by charismatic leaders, who are usually men. Thus, the 1979 Iranian movement was led by Ayatollah Khomeini and the Sikh fundamentalist upsurge was led by Sant Bhindranwale.

In a major study titled *Strong Religion, 2003*, Gabriel Almond and others have noted that different religious groups in different countries are moving towards fundamentalist ideology for different reasons. It is also noted that the political leaders across the world have also grown less vocal in their criticism of fundamental groups in the recent times. Victory of Donald Trump in 2016 US presidential elections is one such instance. Similarly, victory of right wing parties in Europe in the recent elections also supports the pro-fundamentalist thesis. Growth of Islamic fundamentalism is another instance which is seen as a result of numerous factors, including the historical Christian and Muslim power struggle in Asia and Europe in the middle ages, colonialism which led to retreat of Islam from many European areas, American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and modernisation. These were seen as catastrophic for Islam and their inability to check the spread of western culture in the late 19th Century led to reform movements to restore Islam to its original purity and strength. Restoration of Islamic rule and implementation of *Sharia* rule in many countries like Iran is a reflection of this trend. Many a times, such groups obscure

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the revivalist agenda and indulge in violence as well. Rise of Islamic State in the recent years, as a global fundamentalist outfit, is an example.

Bruce has also enumerated various factors which led to the growth of fundamentalism –

I. Secularisation and modernisation have upset the traditional beliefs and as a result of this, fundamentalism emerges as a reaction for restoration.

II. Some religions have greater potential for fundamentalist offshoots. Religions which lack a single authoritative sacred text are less likely to result into fundamentalist tendencies and plurality of views diffuses the extreme views. Religions with a single text offer an opportunity for *ideological cohesion* and hence, mobilise the people along with common beliefs.

III. Threat perception or presence of common enemy turns the cohesive feeling into tangible action on the ground. For example, Jews in Israel grew insecure after the Holocaust Event and the fundamentalist tendencies developed.

IV. For growth, fundamentalism requires potential charismatic recruiters as well. For example, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in case of Islamic State, proved to be such a recruiter.

V. Wider political support is also conducive for a thriving fundamentalist ideology. Significant growth of fundamentalist Buddhist organisations in Myanmar with the backing of a totalitarian military regime is a case in point.

CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

The idea was given by Samuel Huntington and he believes that religion is playing an increasingly larger role in the relationship between the civilisations. As the world is shrinking, the civilisations are coming closer and hence, interactions are increasing. These interactions also lead to friction among the civilisations. Virtual decline of communism as a political ideology after the end of the Cold War has left a void which is filled by religion and increasingly growing *civilisation consciousness* and parallel growth of fundamentalism as well. This situation is leading to the growth of, what he terms as, *un-secularisation* instead and diverging civilisational values result into conflicts. He has a bleak view of future where religion and fundamentalism will only grow in the times to come.

Apart from these factors, Gabriel Almond highlights some other structural factors also like unemployment, presence of prosecuted ethnic groups, radical social change and specific historical chance. In many instances, the growth of fundamentalism in the past was linked to a reaction to colonialism and growth of nationalism as well. For example, Iranian Revolution of 1979 is an example, in which, fundamentalist tendencies grew as a reaction to US interferences.

Revivalism can be seen in broader sense than fundamentalism. It simply means revival of religion in any form, be it institutional attendance as in a church, growth of religious institutions and phenomenon like sects, cults and denominations, rise in individuals pursuing spiritual peace through personal motions of religion and finally, growth of fundamental ideas or fundamentalism. Further, sometimes, fundamentalism and religious revivalism are considered one and the same.

Classical evolutionary theorists like Comte, through evolutionary perspectives like theological stage, metaphysical stage, and scientific stage, predicted that science will replace religion. During renaissance period, religion saw a decline in its presence, both, in terms of attendance to institutions as well as a matter of belief as rationality and scientific temperament sought to side-line it. Emergence of liberal

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democracy first weakened the church influence and gradually confined it to a private space. However, in the recent years, there is a revival of religion and religion has not declined in a strict classical evolutionary sense.

Towards the end of the first half of the 20th Century, in 1940s, a tendency across the globe has been observed, where the role of religion has been re-emphasised. It is observed at the following levels –

I. Increased institutional acceptance of religion – This is observed in increasing attendance at religious places, construction of new religious places (number of Gurudwaras has gone up many folds in the past 50 years), increase in activities of sects and cults (like ISKCON).

II. Increasing use of religion as a medium – For example, political parties are using religious support to win elections. There is an increase in fundamentalism with Iranian revolution in the east. There is a rise of new right Protestant groups in the US and establishment of semi-theocratic governments and so on. Meanwhile, in some of the Latin American countries, Christianity has become the tool of resistance against exploitation.

III. Growth of invisible or private religion – Even where religion seems to lose its hold in the sense of decreasing attendance in church ceremonies, a *private religion* is seemingly emerging. In other words, a personal interpretation of religious doctrines is tolerated. Luckmann says that – '*Religion today is invisible as individuals carry it out in their private space and not in institutions*'.

IV. Growth of civil religion – Robert Bellah in his *New Religious Consciousness and the Crisis in Modernity, 1976* argued that *Civic Religion* is emerging as a new form of religion where, civic symbols and nationalism are accorded the same respect and faith as of religion.

Complexities of life, stress, anomie and alienation are leading people to explore peace in spirituality. Further, religion has also rationalised itself and many religions now don't prescribe strict scriptural messages, but moral guidance. Rising incidence of communal clashes in west Asia is also an indicator of rising religious fervour.

Religion has survived because of both, individual and social functions that it performs. And in words of Turner, the secret of the survival of religion is – '*Religion is not a cognitive system, a set of dogmas alone, it is a meaningful experience*'.

Fundamentalism and Communalism

Fundamentalism and communalism have certain ideological elements in common. Both attack the concept of separation of religion from politics and the state. Both oppose the concept of equal truth in all religions or the unity of different religions. Both advocate control over education by the followers of the dominant religion.

I. Communalism is often associated with eruption of violence and riots, these conflagrations may not have any particular aim or goal.

II. In a multi-religious society, a fundamentalist tends to be communal, while communalists are quite often, not fundamentalists. For example, in India, the Hindu Mahasabha, the RSS, the Muslim League, and the Akali Dal were communal parties but they are not necessarily fundamentalist.

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III. Communalist leaders need not be religious leaders. Thus, Maulana Maududi, founder of the Jamati Islami in India was a journalist. K B Hedgewar, founder of the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh, was a physician.

IV. Similarly, the fundamentalists want to Christianise or Islamise or Hinduise the whole world. But the communalists do not necessarily want to convert the whole world and instead they only want to communalise their own social community. This is because, communalism needs a binary (real or created one) opposition to mobilise its members.

Fundamentalism	Communalism
It stresses upon the infallibility of scriptures.	It is a strong allegiance to one's own ethnic group rather than to a society. The allegiance can be based out of religion, race, ethnicity, etc. In India, basis of allegiance had been religion.
Fundamentalists tend to separate certain communities from the mainstream.	Religion based opposition in Indian context. This is ideological and usually becomes active during the phases of social upheaval. For example, the 1947 communal flairs.
It aims to establish a normative order by various means, from wars to speeches to peaceful methods.	It aims to establish its supremacy through violence, which often involves hatred. This is a situation where religion and religious communities view each other with hostility and antagonism.
Fundamentalism is a movement and such movements are often led by charismatic leaders. For example Ayotollah Khomeni in Iran, Sant Bhindranwale in India.	Communalists have a mass psyche. Communalism becomes apparent only at certain occasions. It may not be sustained like fundamentalism as a movement.
They reject all corrupt lifestyles and aim to purge community of such evils. Bhindranwale talked of the *fallen* Sikhs, who shave off their beards and cut their hair.	Communalism doesn't have such a reformative agenda.
Fundamentalist movements are reactive and a response to what the persons involved like the leaders and participants consider a crisis. For example, Arya Samajis through Shuddhi Movement, showed such urgency.	It usually emerges when there are conflicts of interests and a sense of insecurity and suspicion exists in one or both the groups. Antagonism is central in communalism while promotion of the original is central in fundamentalism.
The pursuit of political power is very important to fundamentalists.	It is more protective of its own rights and beliefs and is exclusionary in nature.

Question Bank

1. Define religion? How is it different from other concepts like community and nationalism?
2. How is Sociology of religion different from Theological studies?
3. What are the probable explanations for the origin and growth of religious beliefs and practices in primitive societies?

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4. Classical intellectual theories of religion were neither *intellectual* nor *theories* but mere speculations. Assess this statement in the wake of modern theories of religion.
5. What are the core features of pluralistic religions?
6. Is Hinduism a monistic or pluralistic religion? What about Christianity?
7. According to you, which theoretical model suits the best to describe the primitive religions of the tribal societies?
8. Is man a product of religion or religion a product of man?
9. There has been a recent growth in cults and sects, despite the growth of education and rationality. What explains this phenomenon? Is religion and rationality mutually exclusive?
10. Explain the Weberian idea of Church-Sect typology? How is it different from Durkheim's idea of religion?
11. Religion is the opium of masses. Why did Marx say so?
12. How is Indian secularisation different from western model of secularisation? What are the limitations of both the models?
13. Recent times have seen building of magnificent religious institutes like Akshardhaam Temple in Delhi and at the same time, tremendous growth in the field of science as well. How are science and religion related to each other?
14. What are the factors which have contributed towards the growth of fundamentalism across the world in recent times?
15. Is religious revivalism same as fundamentalism? How are religions across the world coping with the forces of modernisation?
16. What are the latent functions of religion? Can religion be dysfunctional as well?
17. Is globalisation helping or retarding the religious revivalism? Give some illustrations to substantiate your answer.
18. How is religion related to communalism and fundamentalism? Is the religion a promoter of the two?
19. Fundamentalism is more about power and politics and less about religion and communities. Explain the statement with the help of examples from history and present.
20. In the wake of recent surge in inter-religious conflicts in the Middle East, evaluate whether religious plurality is a bane or boon for a society?

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Systems of Kinship

9



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about the system of kinship and role
2. Explain the role and functions of family and kins in society
3. Know about the concepts of marriage, lineage and descent
4. Understand working of patriarchy in society

We are born into a family and most of us chose to stay in a family as well. It makes the family a universal social institution. Despite the changing forms and structures, family has stood the test of time. It is a cradle of socialisation and social learning where formative human personalities are shaped into social members. Similarly, existence of kin and extended family members also play many functional roles in society. Kinship holds a central place in sociological analysis because humans as sentient beings require emotional, physical and psychological support also, which only other human beings like kin can provide. Despite being of such an indispensable nature, some thinkers have also suggested that family as an institution also creates barriers for individual liberty and promotes many undesirable values such as patriarchy.

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The kinship system refers to a set of person recognised as relatives, either, by virtue of a blood relationship technically called consanguinity, or by virtue of a marriage relationship, that is through what is called affinal or conjugal relationship. Nowadays, relationships based on adoption and places are also included in this category. There are also 'fictive kins' especially in societies where mechanical solidarity is higher – for example, in rural societies. Such kinship bonds are non-marriage and non-blood based and are due results of individual preferences as a result of friendships, religious obligations, etc. We find the evidence of such a practice in many tribal and village studies. In his study of Shamirpet, S C Dube found that unrelated individuals behave like brothers. Raymond Firth in his '*Two Studies of Kinship in London, 1956*' makes a further distinction in terms of *effective kin* and *non-effective kin* based upon extent of regular contact between kinship members.

According to Harry Johnson, kinship has five important elements –

I. *Sex* – It indicates sex of blood and conjugal relations in nomenclature like brother and sister, husband and wife.

II. *Generation* – For example the nomenclature – father and son.

III. *Closeness and intimacy* – As in the case of husband and wife.

IV. *Blood relations* – As in case of mother and child.

V. *Lineage* – It traces the kinship along generations.

Kinship ties are deeper and more extensive in traditional societies as community puts high premium on such ties. Further, kinship groups also perform various functions in traditional societies which make them even more significant. Various institutions which come under the ambit of kinship are – family, marriage, lineage, descent, *gotra, kula,* etc.

Kinship relations are important because they perform several functions as well for individuals and society. Rights and obligations are decided on the basis of these relations. System of production, consumption and authority is also governed through kinship, especially among tribes. These also lay down marriage taboos. Kinship relations are also important in terms of performance of various rites also. Many of these functions, and importance of kinship, have been diluted with economic and social changes in society. Factors like – nuclear family, individualisation, migration, urbanisation, woman empowerment, etc. have changed qualitative nature of kinship relations.

Family, Household and Marriage

In simplest terms, family is a social unit, household is a dwelling unit and marriage is a union of two (or more in case of polygamy) adults. They together form the primary social units in the society. Family, household and marriage are the basic units of society and some sociologists have defined them in the form of basic building blocks of the architecture of social organisation. Humans are differentiated from other animals because of their ability to marry and form a family in a household.

Family

Earliest views on family viewed it as a result of an evolutionary process. Family was not a social unit when man was not a social animal in true sense. During that time, according to some early sociologists like Morgan and Frazer, man lived in wild like other animals and exhibited promiscuous behaviour.

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As social relations stabilised, family started to take a concrete shape. This theory was based upon observation of some communities which exist even today and exhibit such promiscuous behaviour. However, such an evolutionary view of family now stands largely rejected.

Classical definitions defined family as a group based on marriage, emotional bonds, common residence, and stipulation of domestic services. It has also been defined as a group based on marital relations, rights and duties of parenthood, common habitation and reciprocal relations between parents and children. It is regarded by most of the sociologists as the cornerstone of the society.

According to the functionalists like George Peter Murdock, who studied more than 250 societies – both traditional and industrial – in his '*Social structure, 1949*', family is viewed as a universal social institution as it existed in all kinds of societies from hunting gathering to industrial societies. He defines family as '*The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co-habiting adults*'. This definition may be contested today on various grounds, but it gives a basic idea about family.

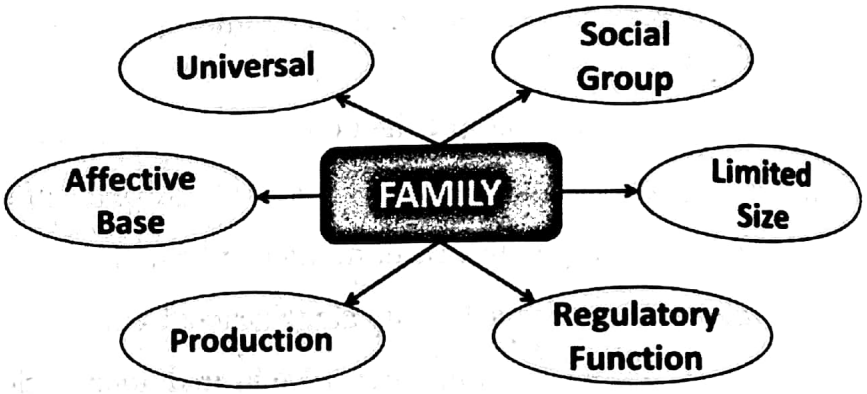

Fig. 9.1 McIver and Page Defined Family in Terms of Various Features

Different definitions add different dimensions to family and in a nutshell, a family is a primary social institution, consisting of some adults, reproductive relationship, children, emotional bond, relations – consangual and affinal, household, economic cooperation and so on. Due to various changes in structure and functions of family, it is argued that classical definitions are no longer valid as family today is not limited by adults of opposite sexes – as in case of gay or lesbian marriages – and may not perform the function of reproduction. Its other functions are also overtaken by bureaucratic organisations.

The family, unlike other institutions, enjoys a unique position in society and its distinctive features, according to McIver and Page are –

I. *Universality* – It is found in all hitherto existing societies.

II. *Affective affinity* – Family provides emotional basis for existence of members.

III. *Limited size* – Family is the smallest social unit or kin group.

IV. *Nuclear position* – In the social structure, family occupies a key position as a cornerstone of socialisation.

V. *Responsibilities of the members* – Members perform certain roles and are assigned many responsibilities.

VI. *Social regulation* – Family lays down the early values that the members are supposed to follow.

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Family is seen as a universal social institution and an inevitable part of society. Despite profound changes in society, it continues to remain part of all known societies. Attempts to develop alternative institutions have not been so successful. It performs various essential **functions** in society, like –

I. George Murdock enlists four universal functions served by the family in his '*Social Structure, 1949*', these functions serve to resolve four major problems of society – regulates sexual relations, controls reproduction, accounts for economic survival and socialises children.

II. Parsons also observes that family performs certain 'basic and irreducible' functions. Primary socialisation of children and stabilisation of adult personalities are these functions. Primary socialisation is the process in which children learn the norms of the society in which they are born and it happens in early years. Marriage is the mode of stabilisation of adult personalities. He saw families as factories producing human personalities. Once produced, they must be kept stable through marriage, relationships and emotional security. According to Parsons, modern families are *'isolated nuclear families'* and they evolve as a requirement of industrialisation in society as there is a functional relationship between the family and economic system of the society. Isolated nuclear family provides for better geographical mobility in an industrialised society as it is structurally isolated and it does not form an integral part of a wider system of kinship relations. However, Parsons is criticised for taking an over-harmonious view of family and is accused of suffering from patriarchal bias. His conception of *'isolated nuclear family'* as the sole type of family in modern society is also not true.

III. Ogburn and Nimkoff state that the basic functions of a family are – affectional, economic, recreation, protective and educational.

IV. Ronald Fletcher, in his '*Family and Marriage in Britain, 1966*', argues that functions of family have not decreased significantly as a result of industrialisation. Parents' responsibility towards their children ha now increased. They have to play a decisive role in guiding, encouraging and supporting their children. With increasing scope of social life – health, physical education, media etc. – role of parents has in fact increased.

Apart from these views, the functions of a family can be seen in terms of – 'individual or manifest functions' and 'societal or latent functions'. Some of its manifest functions are –

I. Family provides emotional support in modern society where other kinship bonds are not so strong. Parsons refers to it as personality stabilisation.

II. Physical security of the young ones and the older ones is also provided by the family.

III. Family also provides financial security and placement. For example – individuals take family business as a means to economic security.

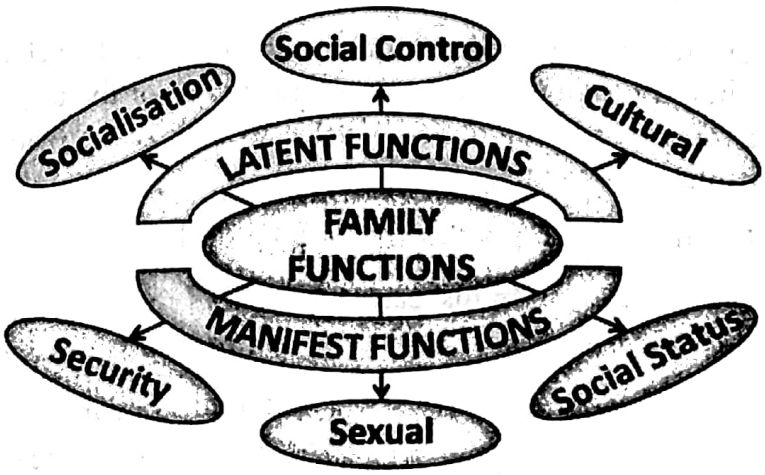

Fig. 9.2 Functions of Family

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IV. It provides for sexual gratification and regulation of sexual behavior.

V. Family also provides early learning to individuals and imparts life skills in individuals.

VI. Entertainment function is also provided by family at various stages.

VII. Family also provides for social status and identity to individual.

Societal or latent functions of family are those which are viewed at societal level. Such macro functions have been emphasised by Parsons, Durkheim etc. –

I. The foremost function of a family for the society is that of reproduction as it keeps the society alive. It performs the function of member replacement in society and of its physical maintenance.

II. Family also performs function of cultural transmission. Values of society are transmitted during the process of upbringing.

III. Family also carries out primary socialisation of children. According to Parsons it is one of the basic and irreducible functions of the family.

IV. Family is also a mechanism of social control. Various sanctions, rules and punishment given to family members ensure that they adhere to the accepted social norms.

V. Family also provides for the physical and emotional care of the geriatrics and the disabled.

VI. Family has also functioned as a unit of economic production. Until recent times, the family was an important unit of both production and consumption.

There are many other alternative views to family as well. Today, family as a functional unit is replaced by many bureaucratic institutions like schools, old age homes, hospitals, play-schools, etc. at least for secondary functions. Friedrich Engels also offers one of the earliest Marxist perspectives on family in his '*The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State, 1884*'. He took a materialistic evolutionary view of family. According to him, in communal mode of production, family did not exist and humans exhibited promiscuous behaviour. As mode of production matured, limitations were put on sexual relations and modern family emerged gradually. Monogamous nuclear family arrived with the arrival of private property as it emerged as an effective solution for the protection of private property via inheritance.

The feminists provide another perspective and they view family in terms of unequal power relationships. They try to highlight the economic worth of the unpaid labour tendered by the women in household chores. According to Fran Ansley, women also provide emotional support to the frustrated males in a capitalist system.

Family is also viewed as not so functional by many social thinkers. Some of its dysfunctions are –

I. Morgan, in his '*Social Theory and the Family, 1975*', states that '*Family is depicted as remarkably harmonious social institution*'. In reality it may not be so.

II. Marxists say that it breeds notions of conformity. According to David Cooper, in his '*Death of Family, 1972*', '*It is an ideological conditioning device in an exploitative society*'. He also contends that it denies individual freedom and is a hindrance in development of individual's self.

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III. Edmund Leach in his '*A Runaway World? 1967* says, modern family is isolated from larger society and kin and is a storehouse of stress and tension. '*Parents and children huddled together in their loneliness take too much out of each other. Parents fight, children rebel*'.

IV. Feminists like Margaret Benston are of the view that family perpetuates unpaid labour.

V. It also legitimises violence. According to Murray Strauss – '*Marriage license is a hitting license*'. Family also legitimises sexual abuse and violence.

VI. Norman Bell in his article titled, '*The Emotionally Disturbed Child as the Family Scapegoat, 1968*', conclude that family is dysfunctional for children as parents use them as scapegoat to vent out their tensions.

Functions of family change with changing times due to various factors like nuclearisation, industrialisation, rise of bureaucratic institutions and so on. Some of such changes are –

I. With rise of modern welfare state, social control is now lying in hands of law and order maintaining institutions. Family is no longer the primary institution to enforce social control.

II. Ronald Fletcher calls family as multifunctional social institution, but today its secondary functions are performed by bureaucratic organisations.

III. Family, today, no longer performs the production function and it no longer plays the role of economic placement of an individual in society. Modern division of labour has facilitated numerous avenues of employment.

IV. Concept of old age homes is also leading to the transfer of old age care function to formal institutions.

Almost all sociologists would agree that functions of family have changed, but all may not agree that they have decreased. Ronald Fletcher argues that many functions of family have expanded despite the growth of bureaucratic institutions. For example, with the growth of schools, parents have to put in even more efforts to keep up with the modern education.

Apart from its functions, family is also understood in terms of its 'structure'. It means composition and relationships in kinship terms i.e. persisting patterns of relations which form the basis of kinship organisation. Structural studies are concerned with the size of family and its organisation in terms of roles and authority.

The structure of family can be studied both as a social institution in itself and also in its relationship to other social institutions of society. In itself, a family can be defined as nuclear or extended. It can be male-headed or female-headed. The line of descent can be matrilineal or patrilineal. This internal structure of the family is usually related to other structures of society, namely political, economic, cultural, etc. For example – the migration of men in search of better economic opportunities from the villages of the Bihar to Northern states of India or from Kerala to Gulf countries can lead to an unusual proportion of women-headed families in these states. Work schedules of young parents in the software industry in India may lead to increasing number of grandparents moving in as care-givers to young grandchildren. The composition of the family and its structure thereby changes. And these changes can be understood in relation to other changes in society.

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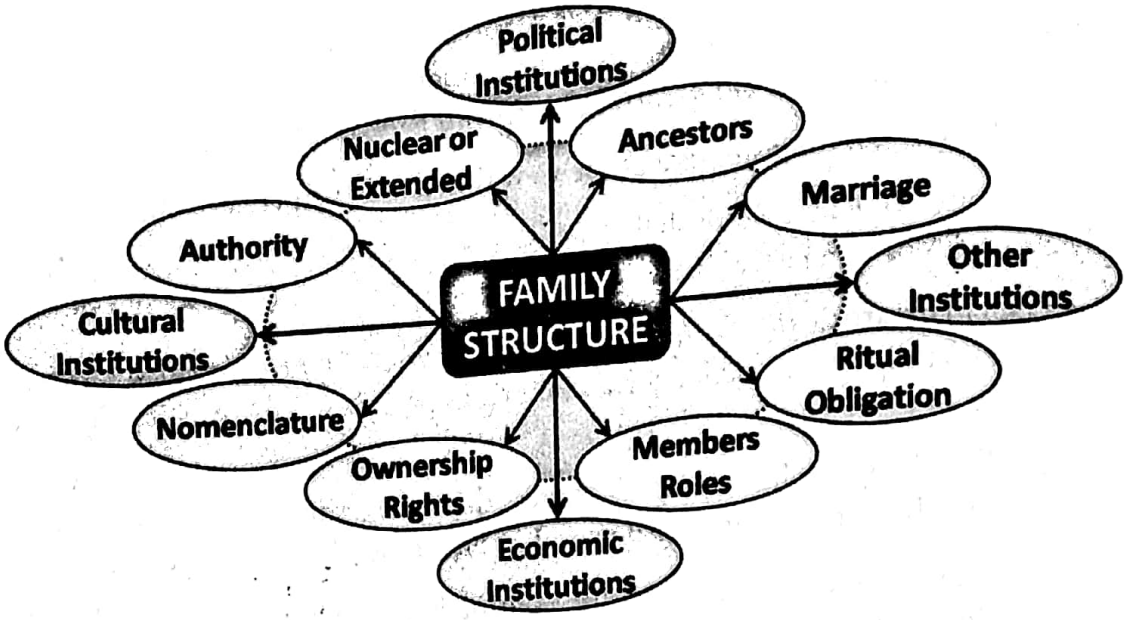

Fig. 9.3 Structure of Family

Traditional family structure has the following features –

I. *Size* – Nuclear family, joint family and extended family are the three commonly understood structural features in terms of size. Extended family is a sort of group of several nuclear families and it may be vertically or horizontally expanded. Joint family may be considered a particular type of extended family. It is now well-acknowledged that extended family was never a universal feature of traditional society and the argument that industrialisation led to the formation of nuclear family is not true. William Goode, however, in his '*World Revolution in Family Patterns, 1963*' argues that extended family was the type of family of pre-modern society and today, worldwide nuclear family is emerging as a universal type. However, this has little empirical support as families today are seen to be more notable for their diverse range of forms.

II. *Authority relationships* – Dominant form is 'patriarchal' form. The eldest male exercises authority in family and is known as *Karta* in a traditionally Hindu family. The eldest female exercises authority over all females. Male, according to Parsons, have 'instrumental authority', while mothers enjoy 'emotional authority'.

III. *Kinship bonds within family* – In traditional families, conjugal bonds are strong, but subordinate to consanguine bonds. Filial bonds are stronger, but built on respect with limited interaction in case of father and child. Mother-child bond is, however, stronger. As the basis of formation of family changes, the qualitative nature of the kinship bonds also changes. For example – with advent of love marriages, conjugal bonds are gaining primacy and display of affection between the spouses is not a taboo in even traditional societies.

IV. *Descent* – On the basis of descent, we can have matrilineal and patrilineal family structures. In India and even globally, patrilineal descent is the most common form of the descent-based structures. However, in some parts of south India and in Northeast India there are examples of matrilineal structures as well.

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V. *Seniority* – It is a source of authority as well as respect. Societies which are divided on the basis of age-sets, age factor is a primary factor in deciding the division of power within the family structure. Some of the African tribes follow this type of familial organisation. Even in India, the older members command more respect and authority as compared to the younger members.

VI. *Division of labour* – It is generally sex-based and patriarchal in nature. Empirical evidences show that sexual division remains the primary mode of division of labour. Household works are branded as 'feminine' and 'masculine'. Washing utensils is not so masculine a job in most of the traditional parts of Indian society.

VII. *Rules of relations* – Various rules like incest taboo, women rearing children, etc. guide the kinship relations. These rules vary from society to society. For example, while cousin marriage is a taboo in most of the Northern India, it is not among various tribes, some parts of South and Northeast India.

VIII. *Ownership patterns* – Ownership of property in traditional joint family is with adult males and succession line is patrilineal.

Increased female labour force participation, legislation impacts on gender, personal law reforms, international migration, advances in science and technology including new reproductive technologies among others, have impacted family and have led to following structural changes –

I. *Conjugal relations and authority structure* – Relationship between husband and wife today is based more on cooperation rather than domination and women are also playing an increasing role in decision-making. According to Parsons, nuclearisation has strengthened conjugal bonds between husband and wife. Young and Willmott, in their '*The Symmetrical Family, 1975*', saw family in terms of its evolution in four stages from pre-industrialisation to the current form. Today, 'symmetrical relations' is a hallmark of husband and wife relations in modern family and husband-wife relations are based on 'companionship'. Similarly, in a more recent study by Goran Therborn by the title '*Between Sex and Power, 2004*', it is argued that patriarchal power within family has generally declined over the 20th Century. According to him events like – World War I which led to women joining the work force, Russian Revolution which promoted the principle of egalitarianism, feminist movements of 1970s, etc. – have altered the gender profiles and hence family structures.

THE SYMMETRICAL FAMILY

Michael Young and Peer Willmott in their two decade-long study of London families concluded that family has undergone evolution in three stages – the pre-industrial family, the early industrial family and the symmetrical family. Pre-industrial family also had an equitable division of labour and every member participated in almost all the chores. So, pre-industrial family was also a symmetrical family. Early-industrial family was different as men started to engage in industrial work and women took to the house chores. Symmetrical family is the third stage and is largely a self-reliant and self-contained unit. Marital bonds are stronger and based on compassion. In this type of family too, the husband-wife roles are not totally symmetrical and sexual division of work still remains, but husband and wife significantly share each other's burden. Increase in male income, mobility, lower male mortality, lesser children, etc. led to the evolution of this form.

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II. *Parent-child relationships* – Mowrer says that children's role in decision-making is increasing and families are now rather becoming filliocentric.

III. *Parental roles* – Both parents now play instrumental and emotional roles. Parsonsian hypothesis seems to be not so valid today as gender stereotypes are taking a hit with social and legal reforms. It is no longer an oddity for a father to display affection for kids. The Victorian values seems to be a thing of past now.

IV. *Brother-sister relationship* – They are now based on fellowship, based on equality. Cultural notions attached with the roles of brother and sisters are weakening under the modernising influence.

V. *Greater incidences of divorce* – According to Duncan Fletcher, people today expect more out of marital relations and hence more likely to end a relation which would have survived in past. Edmund Leach says that emotional stress and tensions are so great that family often fails to bear it and conjugal bonds become fragile. In industrial society, due to rise of functional alternatives, families perform fewer functions and hence there are fewer bonds to unite. Nicky Hart says that there are more opportunities to escape today. According to her, this is best exemplified by the enactment of new Divorce Law in USA in 1971 which led to a spurt in divorce cases.

VI. *Authority structure changes* – Authority of the aged members in family is decreasing. Individualism and achievement orientation has altered the authority structures within family.

VII. *Rise of traditionally non-institutionalised features* – Live-ins, single parent family, etc. have altered our understanding of family as an institution. Family is no longer the classically understood institution comprising individuals of both the sexes.

Factors that have been responsible for changes in structure and functions of family and marriage are –

I. *Industrialisation* – According to Parsons, it has led to smaller family sizes which are geographically more mobile. Industrialisation also promotes achievement based status and strengthens conjugal bonds.

II. *Advent of love marriage* – Today, families are also formed as a result of love marriages. Free selection of spouse has introduced romantic element in family.

III. *Legal factors* – New legislations have improved the status of women and children. Women now have more rights. Individuals are now also freer to move separately. Polygamy is now practiced lesser due to legal restrain on it in most of the countries. In India, Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 banned polygamy among the Hindus and it also gives right ofdivorce to women as well.

IV. *Household shifts in family* – 'Neolocal' trend is replacing patrilocal patterns. Working couples have to move to new places where their jobs are located. It has also altered their relations with the traditional joint family.

V. *Emergence of alternatives to family and marriages* – Cohabitations or live-ins, gay and lesbian partnerships and single parent families are the newly emerging trends. Acceptance of same sex relationship has also upset the traditional definitions of family. Denmark was the first country to legalise gay marriages. In India too, the Supreme Court has taken steps to decriminalise homosexuality.

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VI. *Growing individualisation* – Individualisation and fluidity in relations has led to less durable bondings. Zygmunt Bauman in his '*Liquid Love, 2003*' argues that modern life is characterised by constant change and lack of lasting bonds.

VII. *Educational achievements of women* – Women are now more educated and well informed than ever before. They are now actively resisting the compulsions and atrocities of a joint patriarchal family and are demanding equality of status in the household.

VIII. *Over population and migration* – Migration due to various factors like – occupational compulsions, urbanisation, etc. has altered the structure of a joint family.

IX. *Problems of accommodation* – A single house becomes insufficient to accommodate all members of family and beyond some time, members move to new households as the original household cannot cater to demands of multiple married couples. This phenomenon has also been explained in the form of a cycle of 'jointness' and 'nuclearisation'.

X. *Secularisation of society* – Decline of religious control alters functions of family. As members start to question the prescribed roles, the functional character of the family changes.

XI. *Role of media* – Social networking, cinema and traditional media has affected family in a profound manner. Concept of romantic marriages has gained much traction in recent times with the growth of liberal and individual centric ideas.

XII. *State policy* – Family planning drives and rhetoric like '*Hum Do Humare Do*' has influenced the idea of family in the past and present as well. As a measure of population control, governments actively discourage larger families. In many government schemes, the financial and other benefits are not extended to the third child. For example – maternity leave is not provided for the third child in India.

XIII. *Land reforms* – According to Lakshminarayana, land reforms in India imposed ceiling restriction on the landholdings and in many cases, the heads of the family resorted to theoretical partition to save their lands from land ceiling legislations. But it sowed the seeds for separate living.

XIV. *Economic difficulties in rural areas* – Imbalanced urban rural growth has led to higher migration of young members to cities.

According to Bolsche, money economy has also contributed in reduction of size of family as there is constant negotiation between limited resources and unlimited desires of members. In many Western countries industrialisation, migration and modernisation dictated size and form of family, but in India cultural institutions like religion, caste, etc. still play an important role.

Some sociologists also argue that family is no longer a cornerstone of society. Some countries like Netherland have as high as 80 per cent of single individuals in the 18-45 age-group. Examples of alternatives like Kibbutz in Israel also raise questions over the universal existence of family. Some other sociologists argue that family should be replaced by household as a unit of analysis as household remains a unit of cohabitation despite changing forms of family.

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Types and Forms of Family

Many sociologists have regarded family as the bedrock of society, but its composition varies from society to society based upon various socio-cultural factors. Various commonly classified forms of family are –

I. *On the basis of residence* – Matrilocal, patrilocal, duolocal and neolocal are four broadly classified forms on the basis of residence of the married couple. In matrilocal, the newly-wed couple lives at the bride's place. This kind of practice is prevalent among some matriarchal families of Northeastern India.

II. *On the basis of authority* – Matriarchal and patriarchal are the two forms based on authority. But true matriarchal forms are rare. Even in the purportedly matriarchal societies, males often have considerable authority.

III. *On the basis of descent or rule of inheritance* – Matrilineal, patrilineal, ambilineal, etc. are some forms of the descent-based forms of family. The most common of them is patrilineal followed by matrilineal. Other forms are rare.

IV. *On the basis of marriage* – Monogamy, polyandry and polygyny are the three forms. However, polygamous marriages are declining over the years for various reasons.

V. *On the basis of household size* – Joint household, nuclear household, single person household, institutional household and so on are some of the commonly observed classifications based on the household.

VI. *On the basis of size* – Nuclear (sometimes the term 'conjugal family' is also used for nuclear family) and extended are two broadest classification. Nuclear family includes husband, wife and their offspring. When other members also become part of this family, it becomes an extended family. A joint family is a particular type of extended family.

VII. *On the basis of membership type* – Yet another distinction is made between the 'conjugal family' or family by marriage on the one hand and 'consanguine family' or family by blood on the other, based on the membership type of the family.

VIII. The family in which one is born as a child is the 'family of orientation' and the family in which one is a parent is the 'family of procreation'.

Various other classifications have also been suggested. For example, on the basis of volatility in the form of family, Anthony Giddens talks about '*serial monogamy*' in modern societies in which a person goes through multiple divorces followed by multiple marriages and nuclear household are formed in succession. In wake of recognition of alternative sex-orientations, 'family of choice' has also emerged in the context of the members of LGBT community. Similarly, cohabitation without marriage is also now recognised as a form of family and some countries also provide legal recognition to these new forms of families. For example, in 2010, Ireland enacted the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act to provide legal recognition as well as to provide some safeguards to cohabiting couples.

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Isolated Nuclear Family of Parsons

Talcott Parsons, in his '*The Social Structure of Family, 1959*' – a study of American families, concluded that isolated nuclear family is family of modern industrial societies. It is structurally isolated as it doesn't form a part of the wider system of kinship relations. Though there are relations with the kin groups, but they are more of a matter of choice than binding obligations. He sees his theory of isolated nuclear family as an extension of his wider evolutionary theory of societies. As society undergoes a process of structural differentiation, new specialised institutions come up to perform many of the erstwhile functions of family.

Parsons further argues that there is a functional relationship between the isolated nuclear family and the economic system in the industrial societies. Isolated nuclear family evolves to meet the needs of new economic system as it requires a geographically mobile family. It ceases to be an economic unit of production as production shifts to industries. In modern industrialised societies, status is achieved and not ascribed. Isolated nuclear family is the best form of family structure for a society based on achieved status as individuals are now judged on 'universalistic values'.

Parsons also goes on to define the roles of members in this isolated nuclear family. According to him, husbands or fathers play instrumental roles of bread earning and wives or mothers play affectional role and rear children. Thus, according to him, though status outside the family is achieved one, it is ascribed one within family.

Due to structural isolation, conjugal bond between husband and wife is strengthened. Although many functions are now performed by specialised institutions, 'stabilisation of personalities' and some other 'basic irreducible functions' are still performed by the family.

There are many who contend that the conclusions of Parsons are simplistic and far from reality. Feminists argue that his branding of roles for male and female is prejudiced. Others like William Goode argue that growth of nuclear family is not due to industrialisation, but is a result of the ideology of nuclear family itself. The degree of independence it affords and the premium that we put on it in modern Western societies has led to growth of nuclear families. There are many areas in the world where industrial penetration is poor, but high degree of nuclearisation is happening. It explains the ideological impact of the very notion of nuclear family.

Eugene Litwak argues that 'isolated nuclear family' is not a proper term to define the industrial family and instead, 'modified extended family' should be used which is a coalition of nuclear families in a state of partial dependency i.e. nuclear families still exchanging significant services with each other and not structurally isolated.

Household

Family is a social unit based on kinship, household is a brick and mortar dwelling unit. The household or '*ghar*' is a residential and domestic unit composed of one or more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in the same kitchen or hearth/*chulah*. Thus, emotional attachment is the core feature of a family, while commensality is the core feature of a household. Household and family may or may not be the same for a given set of people. There can be different households for the same

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members of a family as in case of husband and wife having occupations in different places and hence living in different households. There may be different families in same households, as in case of different families living in a single house as tenants and landlords. There can also be institutional households as in case of hostels, dormitories, and hotels and so on. There may also be houseless households as in case of pavement dwellers. The household is a commensal and co-resident group/unit which may even take form of a single person household. Thus, kin and residence rules distinguish between family and household.

Classical scholars like Morgan, Maine and Kroeber have looked at a family as a mean to explain the evolution of human civilisation and hence largely ignored its household dimension. Later, the idea of nuclear family by Parsons, William Goode, etc. also emphasised that nuclear family and household are inseparable from each other. However, Anthony Giddens argues that phenomenon like '*serial monogamy*' have led to the breakdown of the concept of family and household being one and the same as different marriages bring different relations under a single roof. Further, stay of members is more transitory than permanent. Occupational compulsions in a cosmopolitan culture has separated husband and wife who often live at different places in different households and meet only at weekends giving rise to new concepts like 'weekend families/marriages'.

Household as a concept of social analysis is becoming more important because it also provides for internal division of labour among the members of the household and hence acts as a micro-economic unit as well. Feminists argue that household is a den of unequal sexual division of labour.

A household may also go several changes with time from nuclear to joint, etc. In India, such transformation has been studied by A M Shah in Gujarat villages in his '*The Household Dimension of the Family in India, 1973*'. A household may experience progression and/or regression on the basis of birth, adoption, in and out-marriage, death, divorce and separation of members over a period of time. A household in itself is neither joint nor nuclear, but becomes either of these by virtue of its being under progression and regression in the process of its developmental phases. For example, a married son when moves out of his father's house in a patrilineal society makes the son's house a nuclear one, or rather a separate one. This act may or may not simultaneously make his father's household a nuclear or simple one.

Thus, the term household is used for the residential grouping and family for the group, related through kinship, emotional, ritual and legal dimensions. Some scholars like A M Shah have tried to make a conceptual difference between the household and family. According to him, it is the family that is nuclear or joint, a household can be more aptly called as 'simple' or 'complex'.

Marriage and Its Types

Marriage can be defined as a socially acknowledged and approved sexual union between two adult individuals. Classically thinkers like Malinowski have defined it as '*Marriage is a contract for the production and maintenance of children*'. There are other dimensions and definitions suggested by other thinkers which include a 'socially-accepted cohabitation', 'a legal and social contract', 'commitment' and so on. According to the *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, '*Marriage is a socially acknowledged and sometimes legally ratified union between an adult male and an adult female*'. This definition presupposes a heterosexual

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orientation of the two consenting adults in a marriage union. Many modern sociological thinkers may no longer deem this definition as a valid one. This type of union is based on two objectives – sexual gratification and procreation with socially sanctioned sex-relationships and economic co-operation. It is a legitimate and most accepted way of establishing the most fundamental social unit called 'family'. It is also seen in functional terms as performing various societal functions. It gives social recognition to sexual relationship between a male and female and paves way for legitimate reproduction. It provides members to society for its survival.

INCEST TABOO

It is a principle which disallows establishment of sexual relationship with close primary kin like – father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter, etc. In a more nuanced sense it is an exogamous principle which is almost universally followed. Degree of prohibition varies. In some groups, parallel cousin marriages are allowed, but in some they are not and are a taboo.

Levi Strauss explains incest taboo as a way of creating wider social networks and relations. Others argued that it is biologically ingrained in humans and even in many animals also.

Edmund Leach has tried to offer an attributional perspective and has considered marriage as a 'bundles of rights' and he enumerated ten such rights which includes both kinship rights and domestic rights. Some of these rights are –

I. Marriage provides an opportunity to legitimise the offspring. Procreation without marriage is still considered a taboo in most of the societies till date.

II. Marriage provides for socially approved access to the spouse's sexuality, labour and property.

III. Marriage also provides for the establishment of affinal relationships between persons and between groups.

IV. Marriage also confers various domestic rights and it serves as the basis of formation of household, division of labour, etc in the family.

However, contemporary trends in marriage have rendered many of the above definitional aspects as incomplete. For example – marriage is no longer an affair concerned with adults of opposite sexes only. It is also no longer a mechanism for procreation only. Recognising such limitations, Edmund Leach has commented that '*all universal definitions of marriage are vain*'. Despite such limitations, the above definitions still holds good for most of the sections of the society and provide at least a basic framework for understanding this evolving social institution.

There are various types of marriages, primarily based on the rules which govern marriage and a number of partners, like –

I. *Civil marriage and ritualistic marriage* – Often religious practices also influence family and marriage. In most of the societies, there are some rituals based on secular or religious ideas which govern the process of marriage. At the same time, most of the governments across the globe have also come up with specific legislations to permit and/or promote marriages beyond such ritualistic frameworks. For example – The Special Marriage Act, 1954 in India has provided for greater freedom to adults and they can marry with their mutual consensus if they have crossed minimum age for marriage. Such legislations have also acted as tools of social reformation

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and have facilitated inter-caste and inter-religion marriage in India. They have also helped in breaking the orthodox traditions and values regarding rules of marriage.

II. *Monogamy and polygamy* – Today, monogamy is the most predominant form of marriage across societies. For example, though Muslim personal laws in most of the countries allow up to four wives for a man, but the instances of polygamous behaviour are coming down. Polyandry is prevalent among some Himalayan tribes like Kinni of Himachal Pradesh, Sherpa of Nepal, Bhutiya of Bhutan, but such instances of polyandry are also coming down. Many countries like USA have banned polygamy as a matter of state policy.

III. *Endogamy and exogamy* – These are two major principles that also govern marriage. In different societies different rules of endogamy and exogamy are followed to various degrees. For example – in general, caste endogamy is practiced all over India. In many parts of North India, a girl born within a village is considered the daughter of the village and hence cannot marry a boy from her own village. Apart from village exogamy, clan or *gotra (Gotra literally means 'cow pen', a place where the cattle of the whole clan are kept)* exogamy is also practiced. Two other kinds of exogamy, which have been prevalent among several Hindu communities in North and South India, are *Sagotra* and *Sapinda* exogamy. *Sapinda* exogamy indicates the prohibition placed on the intermarriage between certain sets of relatives. *Sapinda* represents the relationship between the living member and their dead ancestors and it is generally limited to a few generations. The term *Sapinda* literally means those who share the particles of the same body or the people who are united by offering '*pinda*' or balls of cooked rice to the same dead ancestor. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 precludes marriage within five generations on the father's side and three on the mother's side.

IV. *Arranged marriage and love marriages* – With modernisation and individualisation, romantic love is gaining more traction and instances of love marriages are increasing. It is not so that love marriages are a byproduct of modernity, they existed earlier too. For example, '*Gandharav Vivah*' was a common form of love-marriage during ancient India.

V. Anuloma *or hypergamy and* pratiloma *or hypogamy* – Marriage is also classified on the basis of status differential. Hypergamy is a form of marriage in which the status of the groom is higher and it is practiced in almost whole of India as a groom with higher status than that of girl is desirable. This practice is also accused of promoting dowry as parents of boy put a price on their 'high status' boy. *Pratiloma* or hypogamous marriages have been less common form of marriage throughout the history.

VI. *Preferential marriage* – Apart from the above mentioned universal forms, certain specific preference based marriages also take place. For example – cousin marriage, levirate and sororate marriage. A levirate marriage is the one in which a woman marries one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death, if there were no children, in order to continue his line. Similarly, in sororate, the husband marries the sister of his wife after the death, infertility, etc. of his wife. Gazetteer of India, 1965 has mentioned the prevalence of levirate alliances among the Ahir of Haryana, some Jat communities and Girijan and several castes in Uttar Pradesh, etc. Similarly, cousin marriage is common among Indian Muslims and even Hindus of south India.

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VII. *Re-marriage* – Remarriage is also taken as a separate classification as in case of widowhood and divorce or desertion. In modern societies like USA where divorce rates are as high as 35 per cent, remarriages are a common phenomenon. Anthony Giddens calls such marriages as '*serial monogamy*'. In some traditional conservative societies, female widows are not allowed to re-marry. It was quite prevalent in caste Hindus till some time back, but this practice is slowly breaking down.

VIII. *Community specific rules based marriages* – Among the tribals, there are various forms of marriages like – marriage by kidnapping, elopement, forced marriage and so on. In UK, most of the marriages are neo-local, but in India they are patrilocal. Further, every community may have different rules governing the marriages. For example – the Hindus traditionally have eight forms of marriages like *Gandharav* marriage, *Pisach* marriage, etc. Similarly, Muslims and Christians also follow different forms of marriage.

IX. *Marriage taboos* – Different 'marriage taboos' also govern marriage. Marriage with closed blood relations is prohibited in North India, but such preferential marriages are allowed in some southern areas and among Muslims. Age difference is another taboo. Generally females are lower in age and age gap between the two is not very high.

Apart from these types of marriages, several less common forms of marriages include – walking marriages, temporary marriages, forced marriages and so on. An interesting form of marriage is 'convenience marriage or sham marriage' which takes place to derive some benefits. For example, in USA, to get the citizenship status, many people marry in records to get citizenship benefit as the spouse of a permanent US citizen. Change in forms of marriage is also occurring with changing times. Societies with traditions of plural marriages are turning towards monogamy. Even in a Muslim country like Pakistan, legislations were introduced making it necessary for the '*kazi*' to solemnise plural marriages only if the first wife gave her written consent. The trend towards monogamy has also been encouraged by the new idea of romantic love as the basis for marriage. Legislation has also played its role. Special Marriage Act, 1954 of India provides for secular marriages, inter religion marriages etc. Similarly, Hindu marriage Act prohibits polygamy. Desire for symmetrical relations in marriage – as highlighted by Young and Willmott, need for dual employment of husband and wife, desire of women to participate in workforce etc. are factors that are now affecting marital relations. Another change observed by sociologists of urban areas is that age at marriage is increasing and instances of child marriage are coming down. Instances of same sex marriages have also gone up as many countries have provided legal recognition to such marriages and the taboo associated with such marriages is diluting. According to James Neill, in his '*The Origins and Role of Same-sex Relations in Human Societies, 2009*', such marriage have existed historically also, but in more subtle forms, their legal recognition is something which is a recent phenomenon. As of 2016, more than eighteen countries allow same sex marriage.

Some negative trends and problems with marriage have also been noticed. Karve in her study found that dowry is becoming more entrenched and prices of groom are increasing with education. Child marriage is still practiced in some parts of India, especially among the Rajputs of Rajasthan and in states like Bihar. Polygamy is also prevalent among Muslims and many tribes of India despite it being outlawed for all other communities. Hypergamy has also helped in perpetuating the notion of inferiority of woman. With the breakdown of traditional values, individualisation and legal reforms, instances of divorce and marital breakdowns are also increasing.

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Marriage as an institution also has its critics as well. Feminists view marriage as an institution promoting patriarchy. According to Tanya Evans, in her '*Women, Marriage and the Family, 2005*' women are considered as a property of the husband. Jean Hardisty, in his '*Marriage as a cure for poverty?, 2008*', argues that marriage is a propaganda spread by the state and other social institutions as a cure of all maladies. But this is not found true by the author. Some sociologists also cite dysfunctional aspects like – marital rapes, violence, dowry and so on also as counter-arguments against the institution of marriage.

Lineage and Descent

Apart from family, an individual is also a member of a number of other kin-groups based upon a system of ritual or other obligations. Kinship groups are formed on the basis of certain principles; 'lineage' and 'descent' are two concepts on which such principles are based.

Lineage

Lineage is understood in two terms –

I. As a 'principle' on the basis of which alignment or inheritance is chosen in a linear fashion. Such an arrangement is called a 'line' or 'lineage' (called *Vanshavali* in traditional Indian system). Most common forms of which are – patrilineage and matrilineage. It gives rise to descent groups which are linear in character.

II. It also refers to a particular type of 'kingroup' (called *Kula* in traditional Indian system) in which members have a common ancestor whose 'identity is known' and who is generally considered as the founder of the group. In lineage, the common ancestor of lineage members is usually an actual remembered person (unlike in case of clan where it is more likely to be a mythological figure). Among North Indian Hindus, there is a unique system of maintaining such genealogical record, dating back to as far as 12th Century, by the Brahmin Pandits – knowns locally as *Pandas* – at various places like Haridwar, Garh Ganga, etc.

In case of lineage, one can trace one's ancestors whereas in case of descent one often fails to trace one's ancestors and the ancestor could be substituted by a mythical one symbolising the origin of one's descent.

Descent

Descent and lineage are often used, interchangeably as well, in conjunction to mean similar things for discussing kinship. Descent (called *Vansha* in traditional Indian system) is the principle whereby a person is socially affiliated with the group of his or her parents, grandparents and so on. The individual belongs simultaneously to several descent groups – those of the two parents, the four grandparents, the eight great-grandparents, and so on. If this chain is not limited, decent principle will virtually connect everyone in this world into a single descent group. However, in reality some restrictions are placed to limit the size of the descent groups. Sometimes, a common known ancestor can be the cutoff (as in case of lineage) and sometimes it can be in form of some other symbol as well. Descent can also be traced to some mythological figure as well. For example, many Brahmins in India trace their descent to the

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mythological sages like *Vashishtha*. Hence, descent is a method of limiting the recognition of kin group on the basis of some common identity and in different societies, different principles might be used.

There are many possible avenues for the transmission of descent group membership, from parents to children. These are –

I. *Unilineal* – Descent is reckoned through a single line and it is pre-defined for an individual to which descent group will one belong. This system is followed in most parts of India. It may have further two classifications – viz. Patrilineal – where descent is traced in the male line from father to son, and Matrilineal – where descent is traced in the female line from mother to daughter.

II. *Double (duolineal or bilineal)* – Where descent is traced in both the father's line as well as mother's line for different attributes such as movable property in one line and immovable in another.

III. *Ambilineal (cognatic)* – Ambilineal rule affiliates an individual with kinsmen through the father's or mother's line. Some people in societies that practice this system affiliate with a group of relatives through their fathers and others through their mothers. The individual can choose which side he or she wants to affiliate to. The Samoans of the South Pacific are an excellent example of an ambilineal society.

IV. *Parallel descent* – It is a very rare form of descent where descent lines are sex specific. Men transmit to their sons while women to their daughters.

V. *Cross or alternative type descent* – It is also very rare form of descent where men transmit to their daughters and women to their sons.

Descent groups can be of various types. Most common is 'family' which is also the smallest descent group. A number of families which are linked by a common ancestor, whose identity is known, form a group called 'lineage'. A number of lineages linked together with a common ancestor whose identity is not known is called 'clan' or roughly translated as 'gotra' in case of India and it is exogamous. A number of clans having a common mythical ancestor form a 'phratory' and it is an endogamous group. Phratory is sometimes equated with caste in India.

Descent groups are also linked with various functions like –

I. They perform certain rituals on the occasions like birth, marriage etc.

II. Lineage and kinship are instrumental in defining the identity of a person and distinguish between insiders and outsiders.

III. In earlier times, according to Evans Pritchard, kinship groups could convert into war groups.

IV. The descent group will have a built-in authority structure, with power normally exercised by senior males.

V. Rules of inheritance tend to be in line with the reckoning of descent in most societies.

VI. An individual's economic rights and responsibilities will be defined by his or her position in the descent group. Property rights are often well defined among the kingroups.

VII. In many societies, unilineal descent groups are also jural units, internally deciding their own disputes, and externally acting as a unified group in the conduct of feuds, fights etc.

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Patriarchy and Sexual Division of Labour

Gender and sex are two similar sounding words, but have different meanings. While sex is a biological phenomenon, gender is a social phenomenon and it refers to the identification of humans – physiologically and socially – as women, men and other third genders. Because gender is a socially constructed category, we are 'behaving as' men or women rather than 'being' men or women.

Patriarchy is defined by Sylvia Walby, in her '*Theorizing Patriarchy, 1990*', as '*A system of social structures and practices in which men dominate and oppress women*'. According to her, patriarchy operates through multiple structures like – production relations in the household where women is subjected to unpaid labour, discriminatory allocation of occupations in the labour market, capture of political power by patriarchs, male violence which is often patterned and systematic, patriarchal relations in sexuality which are manifested in sexual double standards for males and females, patriarchal cultural institutions like education, media and so on. Walby distinguishes patriarchy as private patriarchy which is practiced in household and public patriarchy which is collective response of a patriarchal society to women.

SYLVIA WALBY ON PATRIARCHY

According to her, the concept of patriarchy remains central to feminist understanding of society and there are six patriarchal structures that undermine her position in society –

I. Paid Work – Women have been historically discriminated in paid jobs.

II. Patriarchy within Household – Her labour at home is unpaid and unrewarding.

III. Culture – Culture promotes sex specific roles.

IV. Sexuality – There are more limitations on women when it comes to sexual freedom.

V. Violence – Violence is a form of overpowering of women by men.

VI. The State Institutions – Though not as strong as in past, but state has historically taken a patriarchal view.

Patriarchy is reflected within family as well in wider society and is reflected at manifest as well as latent level. Within family, authority structure, inheritance rights and other entitlements, rituals, division of labour reflect it. In society, gender discrimination, division of labour – some jobs are now stereotyped as women's job and others as men's jobs, physical and sexual violence against woman, etc. reflect it. For example, in India, girls after school are more likely to be sent for medical education than for engineering streams like mechanical engineering as mechanical is considered as a boys' thing. According to the '*Annual Status of Higher Education in States and UTs in India Report, 2015*', there is a distinctive gender pattern among various courses across the states. In the Indian society, patriarchy as a social institution gives rise to other social values such as male child preference, sexual purity, monogamy, fasting by women, abstinence of women from public discourse and so on.

Many sociologists are of view that in a primitive society where man lived in state of nature, there existed a primitive matriarchal system. As mankind evolved, changed mode of production demanded specialisation of labour in which men donned the roles of bread earners. Thus, economic system shaped patriarchy. Ann Oakley too blames industrialisation as the real beginning of modern patriarchal system in which women were branded as 'housewives'.

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Sexual Division of Labour refers to the process of dividing work between different people on the basis of their sex and gender. It is the most basic form of division of labour which has been in existence since time immemorial. Basically, there are two broad approaches which deal with the question of sexual division of labour – biological approach and socio-cultural approach.

I. *Biological approach* – Various theoretical perspectives have been offered on the origin of patriarchy as well as sexual division of labour. Biological theories by Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, Murdock and Parsons have attributed – for various reasons – sexual division of labour on biological factors. Tiger and Fox in their '*The Imperial Animal, 1972*' gave concept of 'Human Biogrammar' to explain biological basis of sexual division of labour. According to them, biogrammar is like a genetic program which has been developed due to the fact that man has spent 99.9 per cent of his time as hunter gatherer and as a result, man is more aggressive and dominant. Women are programmed by their biogrammar to reproduce and take care for the children. Reproduction is considered as role of women and production as role of men and implication of patriarchy on various forms of entitlements is now a part of social life. Parsons called such different roles as '*Instrumental*' and '*Expressive*' roles of a husband and wife. George Peter Murdock in his book '*Social Structure, 1949*' argues that biological differences like the greater physical strength of men and the fact that women bear children, led to gender roles sheer out of practicality. Given the biological differences between men and women, sexual division is the most effective way of division of labour in society.

II. *Socio-cultural approach* – Feminist sociologist Ann Oakley in her '*Housewife, 1974*' has vociferously rejected biological theories and has argued through empirical evidences that it has a strong cultural basis. According to her 'sex' is natural or biological, but gender is cultural construct and it assigns different social roles for both genders. Differential rewards are attached to these roles which create gender inequalities and gender stratification. She cites numerous examples in which women take stereotypical and so called 'masculine' roles. According to her, pre-industrial society had equal space for both men and women in all kinds of works. It was only during industrialisation that such changes were brought that woman was branded as 'housewife'. Housewife role, according to Oakley, has following characteristics – it is exclusively for women and dependent on men, it has the status of 'non-work', compared to real economic productive work of men, housework is unpaid, privatised and isolated. She sites examples in which women are also performing tasks which are labeled as tasks of men. Women in many Latin American countries work in mines. She also sites how Kibbutz play role of mothers as alternatives. Similarly, Bruno Bettelheim in his study of Kibbutz highlights that close continuous mother-child relation is not essential for effective socialisation. Role of women in marriage and family also follows broader division of labour. According to Jessie Bernard in her '*The Future of Marriage, 1976*', benefits that husband and wife draw from the marriage are radically different or unequal. Compared to single men, married men are likely to have more successful careers, but compared to single women, wives are more likely to suffer depression. In marriages, it is the wife which makes adjustments, conforms to his wishes and resembles him. Hoschild in his '*The Second Shift, 1989*' has argued that employed women are doubly harassed by men – one during their 'first shift' at their workplace and secondly in their 'second shift' in form of housework. According to W Yeung, as women move into paid employment in increasingly larger numbers,

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men's contribution to domestic tasks and child care does not seem to be increasing at the same pace.

Today, it is broadly acknowledged that sexual division of labour is socio-cultural in nature and not biological. Historically, men have been considered as bread winners and women as housekeeper and raise children. This arrangement used to be considered as 'natural'. The ideology of 'naturalness' of division of labour has been challenged as women started entering the labour force in large numbers. The rise of feminist movement in the West, especially since the 1970s' Women Liberation Movement, raised questions about sexual division of labour and almost universal subordination of women across societies and cultures. Many empirical researches in the nature and causes of sexual division of labour have proved that women and men are equally capable of doing almost all types of works. Cordelia Fine, in her '*Delusions of Gender, 2010*', argues that men and women are not hardwired naturally with different interests and capabilities and instead cultural and societal beliefs contribute to sex differences. According to her, gender is recycled in a highly gendered society in which children develop.

Further, in Indian context, caste is also viewed by feminists as a patriarchal institution as across the castes, role of women is of a domestic worker. Together with religion, it defines role of women in Indian society. According to Uma Chakravorty, Brahminical traditions glorify obedient women as '*Pativrata*' or loyal to husband and hence put a veil on gender discrimination. Patriarchy legitimises motherhood as the primary role of women. In the Indian society, patriarchy as a social institution gives rise to other social values such as male child preference, sexual purity, monogamy, fasting by women and abstinence of women from public discourse. While her status on one hand is of *Devi* or goddess in scriptures, she is given treatment of *Dasi* or slave. Veena Das calls it as '*Devi dichotomy*'.

However, patriarchal system with its unlimited restrictions on women and its comparative freedom for men is gradually breaking down under the impact of a new civilisation and culture. Earning of husband is gradually proving to be insufficient for the upbringing of the whole family especially in the case of middle class. Traditional masculine jobs are now also taken by women. As hold of religion weakens, accompanying notions like – '*streedharma*', '*pativrata*' and so on are also weakening. Romantic love is the new basis for marriage. Further, as functional roles of family change, relations of members are also affected. Occupations which were once branded 'males only' are now lapped up by women as well. For example, a combat role in armed forces as one of the toughest occupations is now opened for women as well. In 2016, the President of India also announced that women will be recruited in combat roles in all the three armed forces. The Constitution of India also prohibits sexual division of labour on discriminatory terms and other laws like Factories Act provide for equal treatment of men and women at workplace. Skeptics on the other hand argue that such laws have brought theoretical 'liberation', but not 'emancipation' of women.

Contemporary Trends in Kinship Patterns, Family and Marriage

Contemporary trends in kinship patterns can be viewed in terms of changing structure and functions of kinship groups and patterns of relationships between them. Many of the changes are brought about by the newly emerging bureaucratic organisations, individualisation, migration, education, nuclearisation

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and so on. Another factor that has contributed immensely towards change in the function and structure of the family is the arrival of modern contraceptive methods. It has helped in limiting the size of the family on the one hand and improving the choice of woman on the other hand. Birth control gave more freedom to woman, limited the size of family and in many cases also led to many psychological and behavioural issues among the family members as individualism grew with small family size.

In structural terms, nuclear family, decline of patriarchal relations, weaning authority of parents over children, rise of alternative kinship institutions like live-ins are contemporary trends. Functional aspects of kinship relations are also changing. Various function of family and other descent groups are taken over by alternative institutions. Placement function is no longer performed by family and it is done by other economic organisations. Similarly, jural rights of kin groups are taken away by formal judicial institutions. Education function is also performed by schools now.

Cases of marital breakdown, divorce and separation are increasing in family. Incidences of domestic violence are also increasing. Community bonds and kinship bonds are weakening and there are lesser avenues to vent out pent up frustrations leading to distress in marital life leading to marital breakdowns as well. Marital breakdown can be divided into three categories – divorce, separation and empty shell marriage. Divorce is legal termination of marriage while separation is physical separation without legal recognition. Empty shell marriages are those in which the spouses live together, but only for sake of living together and marriage remains in name only. Marital breakdowns in post industrialised society are on a rise and the various contributing factors are –

I. Today, it is easy to get divorced due to legislative reforms and enforcement of a uniform civil code in most of developed countries. For example, after the enactment of new divorce law in US in 1971, divorce cases suddenly saw a major spurt.

II. According to Nicky Hart in her '*When Marriage Ends, 1976*', opportunities to escape marriage are more today. Divorce is no longer a social stigma.

III. According to Fletcher, over expectations in marital relations are leading to breakdowns. People expect and demand more from marriage and consequently are more likely to end a relationship which may have been acceptable in past.

IV. According to William Goode in his '*A Sociological Perspective on Marital Breakdown, 1971*' nuclear families today carry heavier emotional burden and such social units become relatively fragile.

V. William Goode argues that as a result of relative isolation of the nuclear family from the wider kinship network family carries a heavier emotional burden and as a consequence, this unit is relatively fragile. In an industrial society, family performs fewer functions and as a result, there are fewer bonds to unite.

VI. Life is becoming more and more secular, marriage is no longer sacrament. Marriage is more personal thing now.

Studies also indicate that divorce rates are high if both spouses are from different backgrounds as reinforcing mechanisms are weak. Though wives are encouraged to work, they are also expected to perform their traditional roles as well and it often leads to conflicts.

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Instances of marital breakdown are culture and context specific as well. In USA, as per a 2014 data by Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 40 per cent marriages end up in divorce. Instances of breakdown also vary across the strata of class. In her study of American society, Nicky Hart observed that there is an inverse relation between income and breakdowns as low income places a heavier strain on relationships. An inverse relation is also found in the age at marriage and divorce. Lower the age at marriage, higher the chances of breakups as wages may be low at young ages and financial strains may lead to breakup of marriages. Status of parents also affects married life of children. If any of the spouses had parents which are divorced, it increases the chances of split of married children as well. Nicky Hart argues that experience of having divorced parents reduces the aversion to divorce. Studies by T Noble have shown that rate is more in certain occupations like – actors, lorry drivers, authors etc. According to William Goode, if the spouses are from different ethnic and social backgrounds, chances of divorce are increased.

Implications of marital breakdown are manifested in terms of impact on family, kin and society. In his book '*Social Origins of Depression, 1978*', George Brown found that it is one of the most stressful moments in an individual's life. Single parenthood is on the rise and family as a social institution is threatened. In Britain, there were seven per cent children who had single parents in 1972 and this figure rose to 23.6 per cent in 2010. It also means that social functions of family are threatened. Divorce is also leading to separate homes and doubling of resource requirement. Marital breakdowns create a general feeling that the integration of society as a whole is affected. But a spate of welfare measures like – family allowances, old-age pensions, health security and so on by states across the world has also greatly helped the family in tiding over the challenges posed by the forces of change.

Question Bank

1. Family is the most fundamental building block of society. Comment.
2. Some statistics highlight that as much as 60 per cent of marriages end in divorces in some of Western countries and the trend is on upward side in Indi .oo. Does it imply that marriage has outlived its utility?
3. How is a household different from a family? Why is there an increasing shift in focus towards household?
4. Family has both functions and dysfunctions. What factors have determined its long existence? What are the various alternatives to family?
5. What are the factors that have affected the form, functions and structure of family? How has globalisation and industrialisation affected the structure of family?
6. Do you agree with the statement that Indian society is patriarchal in nature? What are the factors which have contributed towards such behaviour?
7. Explain the term 'Sexual Division of Labour'? What are various other bases of division of labour in society?

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8. Is nuclear family a historical fact or recent phenomenon? What factors have contributed towards its growth or decline?
9. What advantages does a joint family offer over a nuclear family? Despite these advantages, why is this form of family apparently declining?
10. Compare and contrast the structure of a typical Indian and European family?
11. What are the various functions that descent groups perform? How have modern bureaucratic institutions replaced some of these functions?
12. Family and marriage are often linked. Are they complementary? Can there be a family without marriage?
13. Family performs certain basic and irreducible functions. Discuss the validity of this statement in light of the functional approach of Parsons?
14. Family not only acts as an institute of socialisation, but also as an institute of social control. Explain with special reference to the Parsonsian idea of the Social System.
15. What changes have the currents of social changes brought to the status of women in a family system? Give some examples from both urban and rural areas.
16. Differentiate between the terms – matriarchal and matrilineal. Do such societies exist in India? Is male authority absent in matriarchal society?
17. Kinship and alliance are two primary means of formation of kinship. How do they work in Northern India? Is there any other basis of kinship formation apart from these two?
18. Are the new forms of family like live-in, a sign of decline of the traditional forms of family?
19. How is sex different from gender? Elucidate the difference in light of the transgenders and homosexuals and the related legitimacy issues in India.

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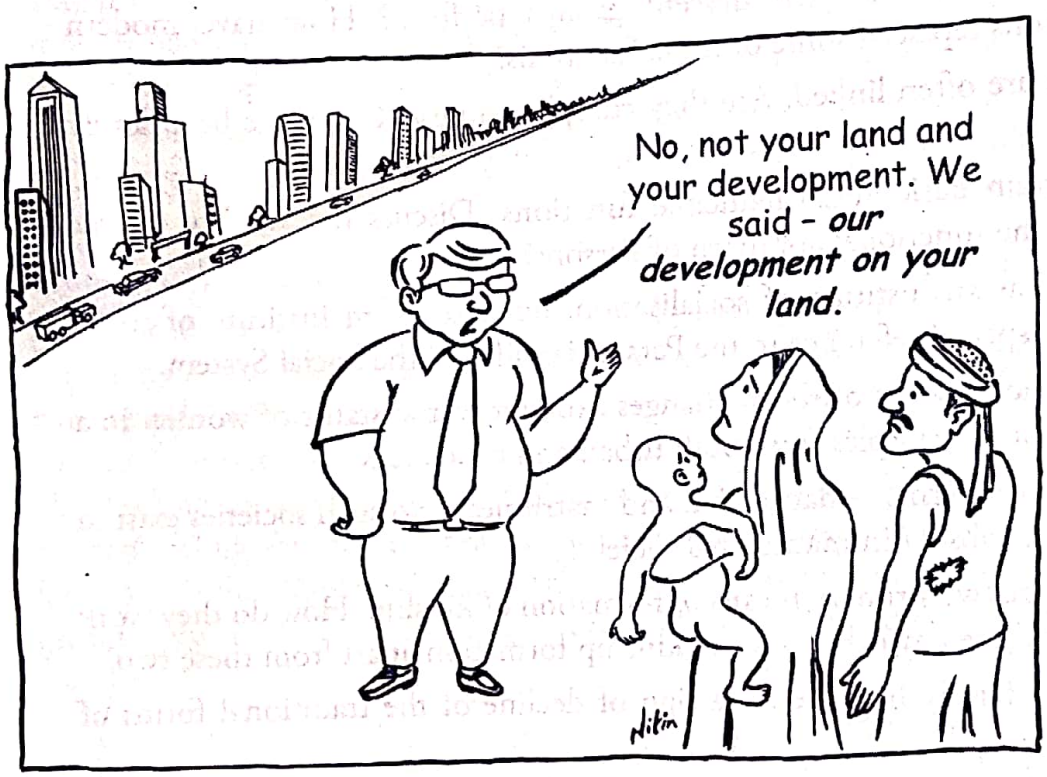
Social Change in Modern Society

10



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about the concepts related to social change
2. Understand the sociological theory of social change
3. Explain the agents of social change

The cartoon reflects the ubiquitous development and social change debate. Various sections of society may ask whose development and what type of development? Earlier sociologists were influenced by natural sciences and they limited the idea of social change and development into linear models, one size fits all, which was later debunked. Functionalist tried to put a harmonious label on developmental process which was later shattered by critical school. Despite all the explanations of causes and effects of social changes, one thing remains clear that development has affected different strata of society unequally. Many a times, the development agenda is hijacked by those in the driving seat. At other times, we have also witnessed that social change is real. Many of the evils of the last Century have been banished today and society is much more egalitarian and open.

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Social change has been defined by sociologist Wilbert Moore as *a significant alteration in structure over time in behaviour patterns and culture, including norms and values*. At the broadest macro level, social change has two aspects which are structural and cultural. Structural changes include changes which affect the whole society fundamentally, like urbanisation and industrialisation. Cultural changes include changes which are rooted in the values and belief system, like emancipation of women, dilution of caste and change in family forms and social values.

As per a popular classification, there are five major types of sources or causes of social change, which are environmental, technological, economic, political and cultural. Further, source can also be classified on the basis of their origin, such as *endogenetic*, *exogenetic* or *equigenetic*.

Social change in the Indian context is also studied specifically by different scholars and is given names like Modernisation, Sanskritisation, Westernisation and Secularisation. While the theories of Sanskritisation, Westernisation and Great Tradition and Little Tradition show only cultural change, phenomenon of democratisation, Green Revolution, legal rights, occupational mobility and education highlight structural aspects also.

Sociological Theories of Social Change

Theories of social change can be classified in terms of nature of change that is viewed by the sociologists. Change is viewed by some as linear, some view it in cyclical manner, some view it in form of waves; growth and decay and some view it in form of spiral; ever expanding. Postmodernists on the other hand don't attribute a fixed pattern to change.

Linear Theories of Social Change

The notion of social evolution, which is used in linear theories, was taken from the theories of biological evolution. Some theorists who have employed a Linear Model or Evolutionary Model include Comte, Tylor, Spencer, Morgan, Hobhouse, Marx, Durkheim, Tonnies, etc.

I. Comte used a progressive evolutionary model for the new forms of society in his *Law of the Three Stages*. These stages of history were designated as Theological, Metaphysical, and Positivistic. In theological stage, thinking was guided by religious ideas and beliefs that society was an expression of God's will. Metaphysical stage started with Renaissance, in which, society was seen in natural terms. Positivistic stage started with new scientific discoveries. Comte believed that eventually man would be able to measure empirically and explain conclusively, all forms of social behaviour, in the latter stage. It is also the stage in which a science of society, Sociology, will be fully developed. While describing these three stages of evolution, Comte took *intellectual development* as the basis of all evolution. In theological stage, religion dominated the collective civilisations and social activities. In metaphysical stage, imaginative thoughts questioned theological dogmas. During these phases, there are periods of stability and upheaval as well which Comte termed as *organic* and *critical* periods. Critical periods inaugurate new phases. Another aspect of his idea of social change is that some aspects remain constant, which he termed as *social statics* and some change, which he described through *social dynamics*'.

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Comte's Progressive Evolutionary Model

Stage	Time period	Ruling class	Predominant social unit	Type of order	Prevailing sentiment
Theological	Since beginning of mankind	Priest and military	Family	Domestic	Attachment and affection
Metaphysical	Middle Ages	Churchmen and lawyers	State	Collective	Veneration, respect
Positivistic	Industrialisation	Industrial administrators	Humanity	Universal	Benevolence

II. Spencer took a classical evolutionary view and he is often termed it as a *Social Darwinist* as his ideas were influenced by biological theory of evolution offered by Darwin. According to him, evolution involves differentiation of simple things into complex or differentiated things. He also believed in the idea of *survival of the fittest*. According to him, like organisms, societies are also made up of large number of interconnected parts and these parts evolve into more complex ones as needs of the society grow. However, unlike many other sociologists like Comte, he focused on individual while Comte focused on larger units like family. He also rejected Comte's *Law of the Three Stages*. He argued that Comte was content to deal with evolution in the realm of ideas, i.e., in terms of intellectual development. Spencer, however, sought to develop an evolutionary theory in the real, material world. Process of differentiation is also accompanied by a process of integration. He also identified certain stages of evolution of societies as simple, compound, doubly compound and trebly compound. Spencer also offers a theory of evolution from *militant* societies, which were involved in warfare, to *industrial* societies, which are based on friendship, altruism, elaborate specialisation, recognition for achievements, etc.

III. Tylor also used an evolutionary perspective and according to him, principle criteria for cultural development were growth of industrial arts, scientific knowledge, nature of social and political organisation, etc. According to him, evolutionary sequence is followed by three phases which are animism, polytheism and monotheism.

IV. Morgan thought of change in terms of various moral stages of society which were primitive, barbaric and civilised stages of development.

V. Ferdinand Tonnies, a German sociologist, used the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* to account for the same phenomena. These two social groups exist due to existence of two types of will viz, *Essential Will* and *Arbitrary Will*. Essential will is associated with peasants and artisans, while arbitrary will is associated with businessmen, scientists, political class, etc. People of groups belonging to the first type of will are called Gemeinschaft or roughly translated as *community* and those associated with the latter are called Gesellschaft or *society*. Societies also evolve linearly from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft. He found that in small homogeneous societies, represented by Gemeinschaft, members interacted with one another on face to face and informal basis. Gemeinschaft is small both in size and its population. It is isolated from other groups and hence, there is little chance of change happening in it and hence, is marked by great homogeneity. There is little disorganisation, conflict and friction. Family occupies a central role in the social structure of such a folk society. Religion in such

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societies pervades all other aspects of the life. In comparison, Gesellschaft or societies that are large and heterogeneous, such as the modern industrial societies, relationships among members are impersonal, formal, functional and specialised. According to Tonnies, these societies have often contractual relationships which are on the basis of clear cut, legal contracts rather than being governed by traditions. These, unlike Gemeinschaft, are marked by high degree of stratification and conflict as well. This mass society is marked by the limited role of religion and social activities are largely secular in nature. This binary, and in a sense evolutionary as well, even today is used as a kind of Ideal Type model for a comparative analysis of societies at different levels of progress and was later used by various other scholars also, in their own conceptions of societies. For example, Robert Redfield used the concepts in his formulation of *folk society* as a concept to designate one pole of a continuum between folk and *secular or urban societies*. It was also applied by McKim Marriott, in his idea of change from traditional to modern.

A sub-category for grouping classical views of evolutionary social change is the *dialectic theories*. Hegel is one of the foremost thinkers to put such a perspective. He, like the Greeks, sought for reality in the form of ideas only. According to him, all of history is formed through dialectic process, whereby, an idea (thesis) develops, is challenged by an opposite idea (antithesis), and merges into a new form (synthesis). The synthesis then becomes the thesis and the process begins over again. Marx (Conflict Theory) too, viewed history as moving in a dialectic pattern. However, for him, the prime mover was materialism and not idealism. He represented his evolutionary model into a form of six modes of production. According to Marx, Class Struggle is the driving force behind social change. Real social change occurs only when there is a revolution leading to establishment of socialism and finally of communism. In socialism, for the first time, real change occurs in society and the historical processes of exploitation and inequality in society comes to an end.

Linear theories are criticised for their value bias and hence, lacked objectivity, a precondition for scientific study. Their nomenclature (*savage, primitive,* etc. referring to older societies) reflected their bias as well. Further, the various theorists also didn't agree upon the various stages. Most of the evolutionary theories were arm chair theories which were accused of speculation and relying on questionable secondary data.

CULTURAL LAG

This idea was developed by W F Ogburn, in response of economic determinism in which social, cultural and political phenomena change in direct and immediate response to changes in economic base of the society. He noted that changes in culture were not congruent with economic or material change. For example, economic changes influencing division of labour in a family had not affected the patriarchal ideology in a similar way. Thus, cultural lag refers to the phenomenon of cultural changes being slower than material changes. Traditional organisations and values take time in adjusting to the new material conditions.

In a more general sense, cultural lag exists when two or more social variables, which were in some form of agreement or mutual adjustment, become dissociated and maladjusted by their differential rates of change. MclVer and Page has, however, criticised the notion of cultural lag as it is vague and fails to explain which aspects of culture lag behind. It is also argued that with communication becoming increasingly fast, the process has been actually reversed and material changes are now slower than non-material changes.

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Cyclical Theories of Social Change

Second strand of theories belong to *Cyclical Theories* and major proponents were Spengler, Pareto, Toynbee and Sorokin.

I. Oswald Spengler believed that every society is born, matures, decays and eventually dies. The Roman Empire rose to power and then gradually collapsed. The British Empire grew strong and then deteriorated. Spengler believed that social change may take the form of progress or of decay, but no society lives forever.

II. Pareto, in his *A Treatise on General Sociology, 1963* presented his theory of the circulation of elites. His theory was inadequate as it was based on a limited instance of the circulation of elites in ancient Rome. Pareto also conceived of society as a system in equilibrium, a whole, consisting of interdependent parts. A change in one part was seen as leading to changes in other parts of the system. His idea of equilibrium also greatly influenced Parsons, who later developed his own theory of social change. His conception of political change ignored the growth of democratic government in modern times.

III. The British philosopher Arnold J Toynbee also saw change in cyclical terms and saw it in a cycle of *growth*, *arrest* and *decline* of civilisations.

IV. The Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin in his book *Social and Cultural Dynamics, 1938*, has offered another explanation. He classified societies according to their *Cultural Mentality*, which can be ideational (reality is spiritual), sensate (reality is material), or idealistic (a synthesis of the two). Sorokin considered that social change follows a trendless cyclic pattern, i.e., like a swinging pendulum, culture moves in one direction and then back in another. Ideational culture emphasises those things which can be perceived only by the mind. It is abstract, religious, concerned with faith and ultimate truth. It is the opposite of the sensate culture. Both represent *pure* types of culture. Hence, no society ever fully conforms to either type. In sensate phase, people seek knowledge through science and materialism. The sensate culture stresses those things which can be perceived directly by the senses. It is practical, hedonistic, sensual, and materialistic. Like Spengler, Sorokin regarded the Western culture of his time as sensate and declining, overripe and ready to swing to the other extreme which is ideational culture which emphasises religion. Without mentioning the causes, he said that as the culture of a society develops towards one pure type, it is countered by the opposing cultural force in the form of development of new institutions and normative patterns. Cultural development is then reversed moving towards the opposite type of culture. In brief, too much emphasis on one type of culture leads to a reaction towards the other. *Societies contain both these impulses in varying degrees and the tension between them creates long-term instability.*

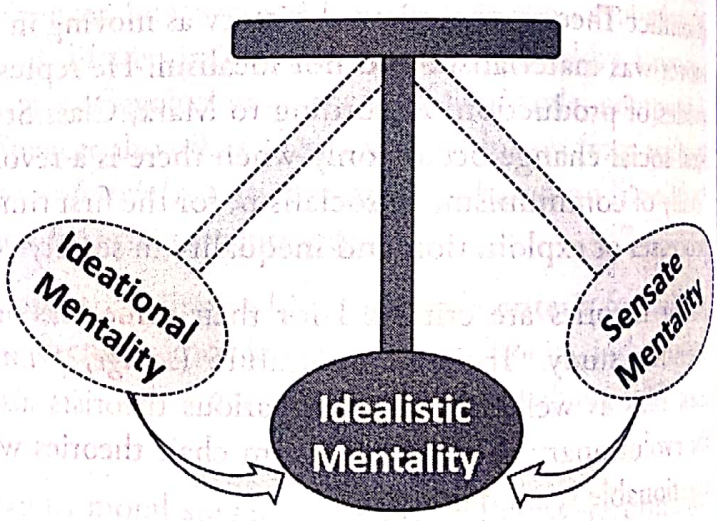

Fig. 10.1 Sorokin's Classification of Society

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Cyclical theories are criticised for various reasons like being too abstract and speculative. Sorokin's theory is considered to be too speculative and impossible to test scientifically. Sorokin's theory has not been accepted by the sociologists for it portrays his prejudices and probably his disgust with the modern society. His concepts of *sensate* and *ideational* are purely subjective. It does not provide an explanation as to why social change should take this form.

Structure Functionalist Theory of Social Change of Parsons

Functionalists are often accused of being status-quoist and ignoring change. According to the critics, if a system is stable, how a change is possible? Parsons addressed this issue by giving the concept of *dynamic equilibrium* or *moving equilibrium*. Change is seen as a progress from one stage of moving equilibrium to another.

Parsons takes a systems view of society and Parsonsian system is not in static equilibrium, but in a dynamic one. First, there is a certain amount of flux in the external situation which tends to throw the system off balance. Secondly, inside the system also, there are processes in form of actions going on, which provide an impulse for change. Thus, equilibrium is disturbed and system again restores it making it a dynamic equilibrium. So, Parsons' idea of change is linked with dynamic equilibrium. Parsons sees change as a temporary state which is overcome by the systemic forces. Change occurs when structural strain of a system exceeds equilibrium forces. He didn't see change in absolute terms, but in terms of a moving equilibrium, in which, a system moves from one state of equilibrium to another. According to him, when *shared values* are institutionalised in a system, it results into an equilibrium state. This equilibrium is dynamic equilibrium. Following are the two integral aspects of his idea of change –

I. *Systems view of change* – For Parsons, change is restorative, one that brings system back to its equilibrium. All the structures are closely related to each other and all the functions are interrelated and interdependent. It is related to Parson's AGIL framework and any disturbance in energy flow or information flow leads to a social change. Since system is an integrated one, change in any of the functional pre-requisite produces change in others also.

II. *Evolutionary view of social change* – Like evolutionary theorists, he believes that societies evolve from simple to compound societies and head from one *Evolutionary Universal* to another in five stages. The history of human society from the simple hunting gathering to complex is seen in terms of *increasing adaptive capacity of society*. As societies evolve from simple to complex, control over the environment increases. This in turn, poses a problem of integration. This problem is solved by generalisation of values. Thus, social integration and social order are maintained by generalisation. Social change, thus, involves process of increasing differentiation, specialisation and adaptation.

Post Modernist Perspective on Social Change

Post modernists see social change beyond integration-conflict debate. They reject grand theories of social change as proposed by Marx, Durkheim and Parsons. Feminist Sociology is one of the strands of post-modernist Sociology. It emphasises centrality of gender in social change. According to the feminist sociologists, social reality is viewed differently by the two sexes. Rising awareness of rights, feminisation of workforce and women's movements are seen as new dimensions of social change.

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Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault laid foundation of *post structuralism*. Foucault analysed the emergence of modern institutions like prisons, hospitals and schools as a sign of increasing surveillance and discipline in society. Postmodern society is not destined to socialism as Marx had predicted, but is likely to be more multi-cultural and diverse so that traditional branches of Sociology will prove insufficient to account for social change. According to French author Jean Baudrillard, mass media has reversed the Marxist idea that society is dominated by economic structure, rather it will now be increasingly controlled by the signs and images which are a creation of mass media.

Development and Dependency

Development as a social concept involves progressive change from one lower state to a higher state of well- being or simply change in the desired direction. It is also defined *as development is about removing the obstacles to the things that a person can do in life, such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, or lack of civil and political freedoms.* It can have many dimensions like cultural, economic and political. True development is the one which not only means growth, but also self- realisation and independence of thoughts and actions leading to full realisation of every individual's potential in society. Classical sociologists took an evolutionary view of development, which is often simplified as a shift from a traditional or simple society to modern or industrialised society. Thus, according to this view, development means high industrialisation, high production, urbanisation, secularisation, democracy, individual liberty etc. which are characteristics of modern industrial societies. This model was later accused of suffering from Western bias, ignoring ingenious approaches. Contemporary notions of development stress on justice, rights, equality, equity, human development, sustainability, individual liberty and realisation of individual's potential.

DEPENDENCY CULTURE

It was a term popularised by Charles Murray to describe individuals who rely on state doles rather than entering the labour market. It is argued that an aggressive welfare state makes people indolent and their self- reliance capability is eroded. Today, rights based, self-help and self-respect based approaches of development are more popular as an anti-dote to dependency culture argument.

Over the years, the developed countries evolved their own model of development which was primarily focused on material well- being. The western notion of development was imposed on newly liberated nations after the Second World War, when numerous of them became independent. However, soon it was realised that their conditions were not improving and instead, they were facing a net outflow of resources, stagnant levels of poverty and worse of all a dependency on the western countries.

This led to rise of *dependency theories* in 1950s in Latin American countries which were under communist influence and which saw development process as essentially the one creating dependency of the developing countries on the developed countries. They rejected the arguments of modernisation theorists that modernity and development reach to the bottom most in its own due course. They rejected the notion that underdevelopment of countries is due to their own cultural and institutional faults. They are an offshoot of Marxist thinking which sees a creation of global haves and the have nots in the form of a highly unequal global north and global south. According to it, though colonialism has officially ended, it continues to be practiced in a disguised manner and developed countries prevent development of underdeveloped countries for their own vested interests. These theories regard power, economic, military and soft power as central to enforcing unequal economic relations.

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Dependency theory is also a reaction to conventional wisdom of development which supports a western model of development. Andre Gunder Frank in his book – *Development of Underdevelopment, 1966* argues that in fact, the contemporary underdevelopment of Latin American countries and Afro-Asian countries is a result of artificial dependency that the West has historically created and this underdevelopment is fundamentally different from undevelopment. Colonialism and capitalism led to a complex integration of colonies into world economy in a subservient manner. According to him, though Adam Smith perceived global trade to be based on principles of equality, powerful rich countries impose unequal terms in the name of free trade and developmental help. Surplus by trade and industrialisation is taken away by the developed countries and multinationals. French economist Arghiri Emmanuel, in his *Unequal Exchange, 1972*, refers to low income countries as not under-developed, but as *mis-developed*. Similarly, scholars like Wallerstein blame developed countries of perpetuating a culture of dependency and forwarding hollow slogans of development and in turn, sucking out the resources of lesser developed countries. According to him, self-sufficient units of pre-capitalist society are now a victim of global capitalism and market forces. Neo-dependency theorists also highlight the stalling of Doha WTO round as a symbol of western vested interests in promoting an unequal global trade framework. Instead of developing institutes of excellence, globalisation of trade has given birth to sweatshops in developing countries.

Development can be truly meaningful if it can bring happiness to all the participants and lead to their collective rise. Development, which is unequal, will always lead to dependency. True development creates synergy and not dependence. In India too, this dependency is created by unequal development and unequal distribution of benefits. Visionaries like Mahatma Gandhi visualised this situation and therefore, stressed upon grass-root level empowerment in villages. Dependency can be curtailed only through empowerment of those who are at the receiving end of the development process. New approaches like sustainable development, rights based approach and bottoms up development are emerging as viable alternatives to the traditional approaches of development which created dependency.

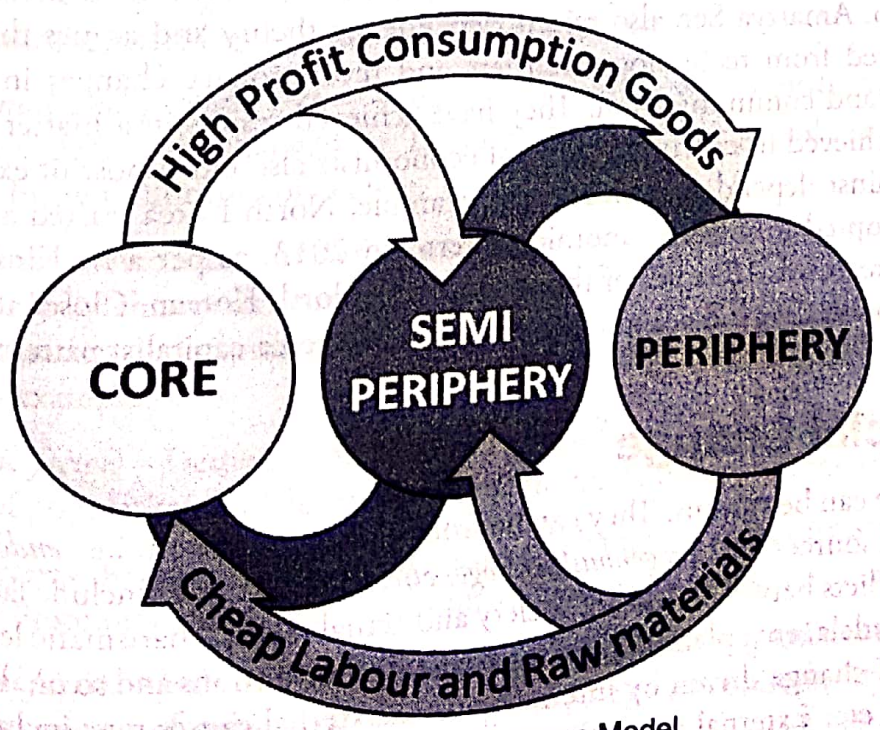

Fig. 10.2 World Systems Model

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WORLD SYSTEMS THEORY

World-systems theory stresses that the world-system (and not individual/collective nation states or the distinct First World, Second and Third World countries, etc.) should be the basic unit of social analysis. This theory is an extension of Marxian concepts of Dialectical Materialism and Class Struggle on a global scale.

The most well-known version of the world-system approach has been developed by Immanuel Wallerstein in 1970s in his book The Modern World System, 1974. The modern world system, essentially capitalist in nature, followed the crisis of the feudal system. Wallerstein locates the origin of the modern world-system in the 16th Century Western Europe and the Americas when Feudalism was replaced by Capitalism. According to him, process of exploitation during colonial period produced a world system madeup of core, semi-periphery and periphery. World System refers to the international division of labour in unequal terms. He develops the concepts of core and periphery from the wider Dependency Theory. Core forms the exploitative capitalist class on a global level. While countries may transit from core to semi-periphery and vice versa, structure of world system remains the same.

Core countries focus on higher skill, capital-intensive production, and the rest of the world focuses on low-skill, labour-intensive production and extraction of raw materials. This constantly reinforces the dominance of the core countries. Economic exchange between core and periphery takes place on unequal terms – the periphery is forced to sell its products at low prices but has to buy the core's products at comparatively high prices.

However, Wallerstein didn't foresee a radical change in the world system, as Marx visualised in the form of communism as inequalities are likely to be there and some countries will be replaced by others.

Dependency theory is criticised by liberals who term this theory as simplistic and suffering from ideological biases. Gunnar Myrdal contends that developmental deficit cannot be completely attributed to dependency, but its major causes are value deficit and institutional inadequacies in the third world countries. Another principal criticism of dependency theories has been that the school does not provide any substantive empirical evidences to support its arguments. Dependency theorists also fail to account for the rapid economic development of many East Asian economies and even Latin American countries like Brazil and Mexico. Amartya Sen also rejects dependency theory and argues that the third world countries have benefited from technology transfers and revolutionary changes in the social sectors like health, education and communication. They have achieved results in a matter of a decade, what developed countries achieved in centuries. Liberal economists also cite a host of examples in support of their arguments against dependency theory. For example, North Korea started as a close economy, while South Korea adopted a liberal economic pattern. In 2013, as per a McKinsey report, average income of a South Korean was 18 times of the income of a North Korean. Closer at home also, critics cite example of the growth that India witnessed after it embraced a capitalist pattern in 1991.

Agents of Social Change

Agents of social change can be various. They can be from within the society, i.e., *endogenous/orthogenetic* or can be from external sources, i.e., *exogenous/heterogenetic*. Internal causes include factors like stress and conflict in society, conflicts between ideals of society and actual reality, charismatic leadership, as in case of Gandhi, Lenin, Mandela, etc., planning, political rule, and inventions and so on. Russian Revolution is an example of social change driven by internal causes. External causes may include cultural causes, environmental causes, etc. External aggression, war, urbanisation, industrialisation, trade, migration,

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westernisation, etc. are some of the social causes and earthquakes, pollution, deforestation and ecological changes are some of exogenous physical factors. Global warming has emerged as a big challenge which poses imminent threat of adverse social changes for low lying countries. Christianity and Islam also brought considerable cultural changes in India when they arrived in India. Sorokin proposed a theory of *inner causes* which said that inner linkages and conflicts cause change in a particular society. The list can go on and on, but broadly various factors of social change can be classified as –

I. *Cultural factors* – A large part of change in society is caused by change in culture. Culture is a system that constantly loses and gains components. Invention, discovery and diffusion are considered to be the main sources of cultural change. Invention here refers to the discovery of new cultural ideas, discovery refers to meeting ideas which are new to oneself and diffusion is a process of the spreading of ideas, culture and objects to other societies. Recent change in the position of women in many societies is an example of cultural change.

II. *Ideas and values* – New ideas and modification of old ideas in a new context bring wide-scale changes in society. For example, Max Weber established that rationalisation of religious ideas brought about phenomenal change in the Protestant world.

III. *Social structure* – The seeds of change sometimes lie within the very social structure, the changes arising out of tensions and conflicts. The most influential theory linking change to social structure was by Karl Marx, who claimed that social class was the basis of conflict between unequally positioned sections of the population which are the rich and the poor. The rising tension between the haves and the have nots, he held, would lead to class struggle, in which the capitalist system, which is advantageous to the haves, would be replaced by a socialist system.

IV. *Political factors* – Ruling class defines the political atmosphere of a society. For example, in a military dictatorship, resources are channelised in a different manner as compared to a democracy. Often a redistribution of power happens due to some big political events like revolutions and coups as in the case of French Revolution. Gradual changes also take place as a result of far reaching political initiatives like universal adult franchise.

V. *Environmental and physical factors* – Early civilisations were mostly situated in flood plains. Village life is drastically changed by Tsunami. Now a days, global warming also looms large which may bring multitudes of change.

VI. *Economic factors* – According to Karl Marx, true social change, in form of communist revolution, can come only by change in economic infrastructure. Discovery of oil in the Middle East, rise of industrialisation and capitalism are some of the examples. Globalisation of economies is the most recent example.

VII. *Demographic factors* – Demographic change is caused by a change in birth rates, death rates and migration of population. Change emanates from the demographic transition in society.

VIII. *Religious factors* – Religion can act as an agent of change as well as resist the change. Weber has shown how Protestant Ethics brought industrialisation to Europe.

IX. *Technological factors* – Industrial Revolution is an example which led to massive social upheavals. In Ogburn's concept of *cultural lag and* also, technology has been an important factor in social change.

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X. *Conflict and change* – Social change is also caused by tension and conflict. Structural strain, deprivation, cultural revitalisation, etc. have been the major causes of conflict. Social division based on class, caste, gender, ethnicity, estate, etc. have also been important sources of conflict and change in society.

XI. *Social movements and change* – Social movements are organised efforts of groups of people to bring about deliberate change in the values, norms, institutions, culture relationships and traditions of the society. They also generate new identities and a new perspective.

Education and Social Change

In 1960s, US President Lyndon Johnson said that *the answer to all our national problems comes down to a single word; Education*. Education is more than schooling or being literate. While school is a formal institutional mechanism for imparting formal education, education as an informal process can be ever continuing. It is a social process which enables and promotes acquisition of skills and knowledge and the broadening of personal horizons. It can be defined as '*The process of cultivation of distinct qualities and traits through explicit instructions or through implicit inhibition as part of growing up amidst family members, kin and peer groups.*

Francis J Brown remarks that *Education is a process which brings about changes in the behaviour of society. It is a process which enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of society and to make positive contribution to the progress of society.*

In traditional societies, educational function was performed by family, but in modern societies functional alternatives in form of schools, colleges and other institutions have come up. Further, earlier it was mostly linked to religion, but today, it is secular in its character and is more inclusive in its approach. The invention of the printing press in the year 1423 was a milestone in the history of education. Books and print material now became readily available and education itself became more broad based and open to all. It also promoted vernaculars. One consequence of this was the spread of literacy.

Education brings social change by way of affecting existing value systems and beliefs, creating capacity among the individuals to absorb new ideas and opening up of avenues for social mobility. Education fosters personal development and self-fulfilment. It encourages the individual to develop his or her mental, physical, emotional and spiritual talents to the fullest. Hence, education and social change are linked in following way –

I. *Initiate social change* – Education is the most powerful instrument of social change because education fulfils the needs of society and propagates such ideas which promote social change in all fields of life. Education prepares the ground for the advent of social change. Many great evils like Sati and child marriage were largely banished from the Indian society due to education.

II. *Capacity to welcome change* – Education promotes capacity to welcome and accept social change easily and gladly. Education creates a wholesome and conducive environment for the social changes to become acceptable to all.

III. *Equality of opportunity* – Modern education system and schools provide equality of opportunity to the members of society to a great extent, regardless of their position in the system of stratification. It helps in creating a more open society and provides greater opportunities of

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social mobility. As educational capabilities of members increase, their bargaining powers in the market also increase.

IV. *Moral agent* – Education also plays a role in imbibing social values like empathy and rational investigation. It upgrades personal skills and make members more valuable in the society. It broadens personal horizons as well. Children become in their lives what they practice at schools and educational institutions. In Aristotle's words, *we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones.* Schools perform the function of laying the moral foundation in society.

V. *Economic role* – Education also has a close linkage with economic system. Mass education began only with industrial revolution. It began as the need of economic system. Technical education helped in scaling up the industries which heralded industrial revolution.

VI. *Fights orthodoxy, promotes liberal ideas* – Education strives to banish social evils, blind customs and traditions through various social reform projects. It helps in minimising discrimination. Schools in modern societies are designed to promote uniformity, standardised aspirations and universalistic values. This is done through uniform textbooks, uniform dress code and a common pedagogy.

VII. *Social mobility* – It provides avenues for structural mobility. Mass education brings fundamental changes in the social structure. Examples of Jyotiba Phule, Brahma Samaj, etc. show how education heralded social change for some sections of society. It is a force that is even breaking the mold of rigid stratification like caste and providing opportunities in closed societies also. It facilitates both inter-generational and intra-generational mobility. In modern society, it offers multiple avenues of livelihood and hence, offers occupational mobility. Modern societies are individual achievement oriented. Education facilitates equality of opportunity in future life.

VIII. *Evaluate change* – Apart from these, education also accelerates and stimulates change and later helps us in evaluating the social change.

Education and its relationship with other social institutions has been examined from various perspectives. Functionalists are concerned with two fundamental questions, What functions does education perform? And how is it related to other social institutions? Durkheim says it is an agent of transmission of social norms. By respecting rules in schools, children learn to respect norms of the society and they learn to be part of a larger group. Education provides such functions which family and peers cannot provide in a modern society. Education also helps in impartation of skills which sustain division of labour in society. Thus, education helps in transmission of both the *general* and *specific* values. Parsons says schools are *society in miniature* and education plays a key role in role allocation in an increasingly specialised industrial economy. In a family, a child is judged on *particularistic standards* and in schools child learns *universalistic values* which are necessary for social integration. To build consensus in society, schools instil two important values in children; the value of achievement and the value of equal opportunity. Differential educational achievements lead to differential rewards as well. Other functions that are performed by education are social control, communication of knowledge, character building, development of human resources and contributing to human and economic development.

Feminist perspective also emerged on education in 1970s. According to feminists like McRobbie and Sue Lee, schooling reproduces appropriate feminine roles in girls. Schools saw their task as preparing

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girls for family life and responsibilities and boys for future employment, thus reproducing the gender stereotypes prevailing in society. Paul Willis also highlights that boys use derogatory language which is not checked effectively in schools and it promotes aggressive masculinity.

There is also an alternate Marxist view by likes of Althusser. Althusser, in his *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus, 1972*, treats education as the most important *ideological state apparatus* appropriated by the ruling classes to pursue their own ideas and interests, and it reinforces dominant ideology and thus, hinders real social change in society. It merely leads to reproduction of labour force. Similarly, Bowles and Gintis, in their *Schooling in Capitalist America, 1976*, say it is a *giant myth making machine* with a *hidden curriculum*, which serves the interests of the dominant groups. Ivan Illich, in *Deschooling Society, 1971*, says that education promotes existing social relations and according to him, *The pupil confuses teaching with learning, grades advancement with education and a diploma with competence*. According to him, schools suffocate creativity and deskill the individuals as they become more dependent on capitalist system. Schools promote *passive consumption*, i.e., an uncritical acceptance of the existing social order. To overcome these problems, he suggested deschooling of society.

Mark Twain famously said *I never let my schooling get in the way of my education*. Modern education has become synonymous with schooling and it removes focus from wider learning opportunities. Raymond Boudon, in his *Education, Opportunity and Social Inequality, 1974*, shows that the role of education in providing avenues for social mobility is not very significant. In fact, education based on equality only perpetuates inequality. Power, wealth and other material resources play a greater role in such societies. Commercialisation of education has further diluted the role of education in social change as there is now unequal access to quality education based on one's class. Children of working class only have *working class suited* education which offers only limited avenues. According to Paul Willis, working class kids get only working class jobs as differential education leads to differential reproduction of cultural values. According to Pierre Bourdieu, education also helps in reproducing *cultural capital* which is as necessary as social capital and economic capital. Cultural capital influences acquisition of other capitals as well. Thus, cultural reproduction in schools in unequal societies also leads to unequal educational attainments. Sally Tomlinson, in her *Education in Post-Welfare Society, 2005*, also makes a similar point and laments it being reduced as a means of economic development. According to her, education should be *liberalising, humanising and democratising force.*

Science, Technology and Social Change

Science and technology are essential ingredients of modern life. Science and technology accompany us from cradle to grave. Science and technology is an important secular medium which transcends local boundaries and touches lives of everyone.

Evolution of mankind can be seen in terms of technological evolution as well. Invention of fire and wheel changed the face of mankind. Various historical epochs viz. hunter-gatherers, agrarian society, industrialist society are distinguished from each other in term of technological advancement. Invention of steam engine heralded industrial revolution and also led to increased international trade as shipping became faster. Aided by technology, Green Revolution in India led to self- sufficiency in food grains and no major famine has hit India since then. Japan is a classic example of a nation which has scarce natural resources, but is among the most developed countries due to development in science and technology.

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Science and technology can help lift millions above poverty by helping in improving food security and making basic amenities more affordable. Science and technology have greatly improved connectivity and communication. People can remain in touch with each other in a never before manner.

Similar technologies also have different impacts in different societies. Printing in China led to standardisation of manuscripts, but in Europe, it led to diversity in literary works. During the Second World War, nuclear power was used to annihilate two cities, but was later used for peaceful purposes also. Similarly, information technology can also be used for centralisation and espionage, but can also be used for empowerment and social change as well.

Today, the change brought about by science and technology is at breakneck speed. Facebook became one of the most valued firms in less than seven years, riding on the one single idea of social connectivity. Tesla Motors is already set to change the face of automobile industry across the globe and Elon Musk has vowed to make petrol driven cars a part of history soon. This will have tremendous ecological and social implications. In 2016, the Indian Government too, visualised replacing the conventional cars by vehicles driven by alternative fuel by 2030.

Science and technology also have a homogenising tendency. Work is now increasingly done in similar fashion. Industries are now global in scale, leading to similar products, similar cloths, similar tastes and similar consumption. It is bringing the world together, but, at a cost of their diversity and the assimilative effect is creating yet another evolutionary universal in Parsonsian sense, which will be all encompassing.

Over-reliance on science and technology is also leading to a shift from *being adapted to* environment to a *tendency to change* the environment. This is having serious consequences in terms of climate change and increasing frequency of disasters. One major difficulty in technology, as source of change, is that its impact on society is not visible in the short run. Technological changes don't lead to social change so easily and often, there is backlash as well. Early use of anaesthesia, stem cell research, cloning, etc. were opposed as an attempt of man playing as god. Luddites vandalised industrial machinery as a reaction to newly introduced machines at workplace. Robert Blauner, in his study *Alienation and Freedom 1964*, has also highlighted the alienating aspects of technology at work place. Some technologies like automation lead to monotony at workplace. Marxists also argue that technology alienates man from its labour and fruit of labour.

Question Bank

1. What is social change? What are the various forms that it can take? Is it always desirable?
2. What are the major limitations of cyclical theories of social change?
3. Define development? Why has it become a debated term in the recent times? Is development a zero sum game?
4. Why has India failed to become a developed nation even after more than seven decades of independence?

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5. How is the concept of *capacity building* different from *development*? Which suits the Indian conditions better?
6. What explanations do dependency theorists offer for the backwardness of African and Asian countries? Do you support their view? What is the major flaw in their arguments?
7. What is the meaning of *inclusive development*? How is it different from 'holistic development'? Can both of these go together?
8. How is Marxian view of social change different from Parsonsian idea of social change?
9. What are the predominant factors of social change in contemporary Indian society? How have these affected the interests of women and weaker sections?
10. Why is education considered the most potent tool of social change in developing countries like India? Has our society succeeded in utilising its potency?
11. How can RTE in India lead to social change at grass-root levels? What are the challenges that lie ahead in effective implementation of RTE?
12. Innovation is the buzz word around the globe. How does innovation help in bringing social change? What social innovations do we require to make India a socio-economic superpower?
13. World Systems Theory has exaggerated the relationship among the countries from a Marxian lens. Do you agree? What else explains the condition of third world countries?
14. Displacement has emerged as a fallout of development, but it has affected different sections differently. Analyse.
15. What are the social indicators of economic development? How do they mutually reinforce each other?
16. What is the relationship between development and social change?
17. Education can be liberating, but it also has great potential of perpetuating conformity, submission and oppression as well. Critically evaluate this statement with particular reference to neo-Marxist arguments.
18. 1970s was an eventful decade for the emergence of various social movements. Discuss the developments, especially with reference to the issues related to gender, environment and development.
19. What are New Social Movements? How are they different from Old Social Movements?

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Part – II

Section A – Introducing Indian Society

- Chapter 11
  Perspectives on Study of Indian Society
- Chapter 12
  Impact of Colonial Rule on Indian Society

Section B – Social Structure

- Chapter 13
  Rural and Agrarian Social Structure
- Chapter 14
  Caste System
- Chapter 15
  Tribal Communities in India
- Chapter 16
  Social Classes in India
- Chapter 17
  System of Kinship in India
- Chapter 18
  Religion and Society

Section C – Social Change in India

- Chapter 19
  Vision of Social Change in India
- Chapter 20
  Rural and Agrarian Transformation in India
- Chapter 21
  Industrialisation and Urbanisation in India
- Chapter 22
  Politics and Society
- Chapter 23
  Social Movements in Modern India
- Chapter 24
  Population Dynamics
- Chapter 25
  Challenges of Social Transformation

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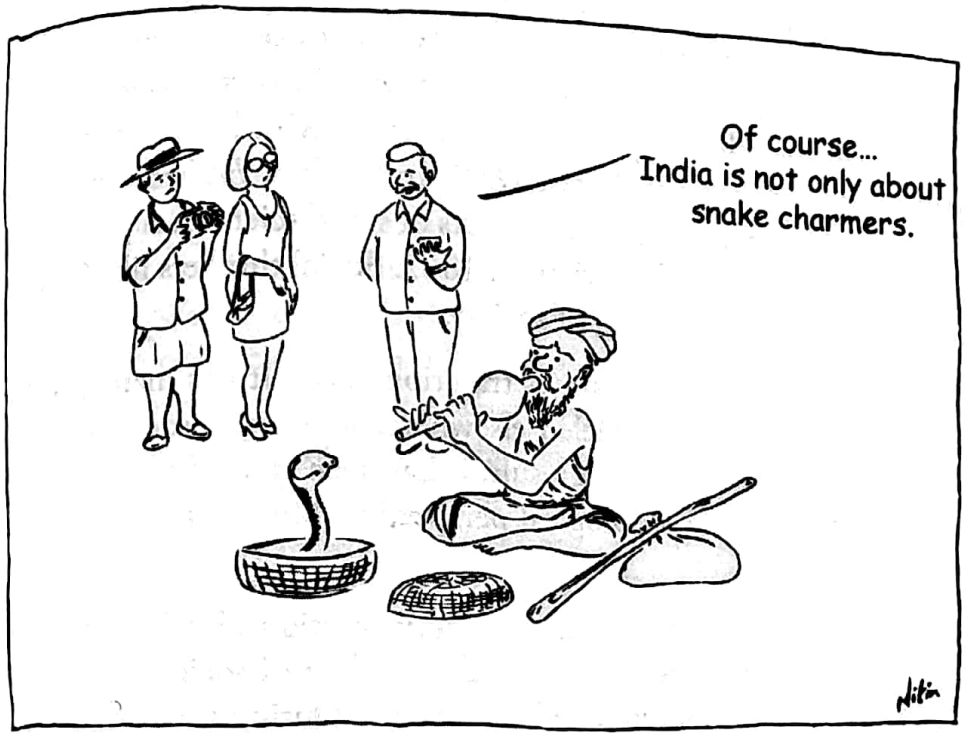
Perspectives on Study of Indian Society

11



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the real picture of Indian society
2. Explain various perspectives related to Indian society
3. Know about *Indologist, Marxist and Structuralist-Functionalist* traditions of India
4. Explain other key sociological concepts like Sankritisation

Countries and societies around the world are often stereotyped in certain images due to their particular history, culture, location and so on. Even today, India is considered as a land of snake charmers by some outsiders. Similarly, the early British Indologists stereotyped Indian society as a Hindu society based upon their textual understanding. They used the knowledge contained in the ancient scriptures and took that on face value. This classical understanding differed from the empirical reality and was later challenged not only by various sociologists and anthropologists, but also by nationalists. While the British suffered from colonial bias, some Indian thinkers suffered from nationalistic bias as well. When sociology was established as a formal discipline in early 20th Century, some more insights were offered into study of the Indian society and more objectivity was infused in the discipline.

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Indian society is a multicultural society and is marked by multiple complexities. Even before the rise of sociology as a formal discipline in 1920s, scholars tried to understand Indian society. It was, however, only after the establishment of British political and administrative rule that study of society became systematic. Earlier, the understanding of society was contained in religious scriptures, travelogues and political works. There is a *marked discontinuity* in such writings thus, creating a challenge in understanding of society. Texts like *Arthshastra* gave an elaborate account of ancient Indian society, but from the perspective of statecraft. Elaborate accounts by travellers like Megasthenes, Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo also gave vivid details of the then social systems. In the 18th and 19th Century, seeds of sociological thought were sown by voluntary organisations like Asiatic Society of Bengal led by William Jones, who translated *Manusmriti* into English. *Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge* was formed in 1838. Herbert Risley pioneered the ethnographic studies in India with his works as a civil servant in Bengal and with his book *Caste and Tribes of Bengal, 1891*. In Madras, *Bethune Society* was formed in 1859, which organised regular discussions on various aspects of social sciences. A paper titled *Sociology for India* was presented in The Oudh Scientific Society in 1867. Social thinkers like Gandhi, Vivekananda, and Tagore also had their own understanding of society.

Indian society is generally viewed as a society that still holds its traditions dear. It has many peculiar features like caste, kinship and villages which are unparalleled elsewhere. Its unique social structure has attracted many interests from India and outside and as a result, it has been studied from different perspectives. Some of the major perspectives include Indological perspective, Marxist perspective and Structural Functionalist perspective.

Apart from voluntary organisations and government machinery, administration also laid stress on study of Indian life. Colonial rulers started to work to gain an understanding of society in order to rule the country better, in areas of law and order, revenue collection, etc. During the early period, till around 1850s, understanding of Indian society was generated primarily by British administrators and not by scholars. During the 1820-50, many books were written and many works were produced. However, they developed an orthodox view of India society, and characterised it as a self-sufficient and closed village economy, as having a caste based social structure, and primitive tribal communities. Also, universities were established in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857. Department of Census was established in 1871 and Ethnic Survey was made in 1901. These helped in a scientific study of social sciences and of Indian society.

After 1850s, India came under the direct administration of the British crown and by that time, British rule was extended to the whole territory. Now, the understanding of Indian society was extended by writings of Christian missionaries, academic theologists, ethnographers and industry experts. The process was supplemented by establishment of western education and by tremendous expansion of administrative framework in India. During this period, a few educated Indians also helped in enriching understanding of the Indian society. Many other elements like joint family, *Jajmani* system, customary laws and Panchayati Raj were studied along with previous elements. At the macro level also, historical works were used to generate a theoretical understanding of the society without supplementing it with field studies. Early pioneers of the discipline were Patrick Geddes and Ghurye in Bombay, Radhakamal Mukherjee and D P Mukherji in Lucknow, and A R Wadia in Mysore, among the others.

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Major areas of focus of the discipline in India were –

I. Indian Philosophy

II. Orientology and Indology

III. Ethnic and social survey

IV. History

Ghurye was influenced by all the four currents and he made a study of Indian caste system, tribes, cultures, cities, religions and trade. Radhakamal Mukherjee represented the spirit of the synthesis of Indian intellectual life and Western analysis.

Sociology was established as an academic discipline by Sir Patrick Geddes in 1919 in Bombay University (in the same year when Weber established the first department of Sociology in Germany). Later, a separate department was also established in Lucknow University and Mysore University. It was at this time, that understanding of Indian society came in the domain of *sociologists*. Many perspectives slowly emerged. Before independence, primarily a book-view was taken by the scholars. This approach of studying of Indian society using historical texts came to be known as *Indology*, literally meaning the study of Indian history, literature, philosophy, and culture. G S Ghurye was the father of Indian Sociology and Indology. In 1940s, the discipline got recognition in other universities as well.

YOGENDRA SINGH: PERSPECTIVES OF STUDYING INDIAN SOCIETY

Yogendra Singh classified the theoretical and systematic perspectives in Indian sociology in following aspects –

I. Philosophical perspective – Sociologists of Lucknow school were particularly influenced by it.

II. Cultural perspective – It included the works of Srinivas, Milton Singer, Redfield, McKim Marriott, etc.

III. Structural perspective – F G Bailey made important contribution towards explaining the structural perspective in the Indian context. M N Srinivas had also used this perspective.

IV. Dialectical historical perspective – Ramakrishna Mukherjee used this perspective in the study of Bengal and development of colonialism. D P Mukherji also used this perspective. A R Desai used it to study nationalism, social change and Modernisation.

Early sociological thought in India was also influenced by the ideology of Indian freedom struggle and by the uniqueness of Indian culture and thought. It is also reflected in the choice of subjects of study by Ghurye, D P Mukherji, etc.

Inter-disciplinary and culturist approach was taken by the Lucknow School. At an institutional level, Indian Sociological Society was formed in 1951 as a platform for exchange of thoughts and to promote the cause of the discipline in India. The society was founded by none other than G S Ghurye. Ghurye also started a journal *Sociological Bulletin* in 1952.

After India's Independence, sociology developed more scientifically and it was also influenced by structural functionalism in 1950s. M N Srinivas introduced this perspective in his famous study of Coorgs of Mysore and emphasised on field view. Emphasis was laid on factual, empirical surveying and

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field studies in place of theological and traditional issues. Thus, a series of rural and urban studies came to light. However, they lacked serious theoretical basis and were narrow in focus and had short term objectives. Survey method was also introduced by the Ford Foundation in 1950s. During 1970s, A R Desai re-popularised Marxist perspective in the study of Indian society.

Indian sociologists also explored the question of objectivity and value neutrality. Early sociologists viewed value-neutrality as a barrier to study into the pressing issues faced by the Indian society. Srinivas criticised the disenchanted view taken by the Western sociologists, just to maintain dry professional commitment. Similarly, Ramkrishna Mukherjee advocated a *value accommodating* approach which calls for adoption of method depending upon the contextual relevance. I P Desai also asserted the inseparability of knowledge from practice.

Indian Sociological scene also witnessed major changes in line with global developments. After the disintegration of the USSR, Marxological influence declined in India also, but the interest remained alive due to persistence of Left Wing extremism. There is also an ongoing and persistent attempt to establish authentic identity of the discipline. Professor P N Mukherji, in his article *The State of Sociology, 2005*, called for the need to decolonise Indian sociology by moving away from the influence of British anthropological tradition, American interventions and the Marxist hangover. Indian Sociology, in the 21st Century needs to look forward to developing indigenous perspectives which understand the Indian society in their very own terms.

Indology

Indology literally means *systematic study of Indian society and culture*. Task of Indological perspective is to interpret and understand Indian society on the basis of traditional religious texts, ancient legal and historical documents, literary works, and even archeological evidences. In this way, this approach is different from the Western approaches, which are deemed unsuitable in Indian context. Religious texts like Mahabharata, Ramayana, Vedas, Upanishads and Smritis and historical texts like Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, travelogues like those of Magesthenes, Fa-Xian, writings and inscription by kings, and other archeological evidences were all used for the study of Indian society. Indology emphasises upon study of Indian languages, ideas, beliefs, customs, etc. within the broad purview of Indian society.

Culture is the central premise on which the understanding of Indian society is built. Salient features of Indological approach are –

I. Indian society is unique and it can be understood by theories and concepts unique to Indian society and not by prevailing Western theories and concepts.

II. Indologists emphasise more on understanding rather than suggesting solutions to the problems.

III. Understanding of the society is developed in terms of continuity from the past and through identification of historical moorings.

IV. This perspective seldom uses field view for taking into account the existence of heterogeneity and variations present in the Indian society. The resulting view has been very broad, ideal and typical in nature.

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Indological perspective changed with time as the nature of study changed. It is broadly categorised in two streams –

I. *Classical Indology* – It was prevalent before the 1920s in the writings of British intellectuals. It refers to a *pure-book view* perspective as inferences from the ancient texts were taken on their face value. Initial emphasis of this perspective was on translations of Sanskrit texts and on developing an understanding on that basis. William Jones established Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1787, which later emerged as a major study of Indology. Max Muller's *Sacred Books of the East*, a fifty volume work published from 1879 onwards, translated Vedas and other sacred texts. Henry Maine's *Ancient Law, 1861* and *Village Communities in East and West, 1871* were classical Indological texts. Initial Indologists were either Western scholars or colonial British officials. Later, many Indian Indological schools were also established including the Theosophical Society in 1886, Oriental Research Institute in Mysore in 1891, Bhandarkar Institute in Pune in 1917, etc. Western scholars, in general, had a critical view of Indian society. Indian scholars, however, highlighted greatness and uniqueness of Indian society. Western view considered India as a land of villages, which were further considered as self-sufficient, isolated, static and orthodox. Religion was considered central to the understanding of other social institutions. Social relationships were guided by traditionalism and caste system. Caste system was considered as closed and a symbol of feudal and backward character of Indian society. Gradually, joint families, panchayats and *Jajmani* system, etc. were considered other elements of Indian social life and some research was done on these elements as well.

II. *Modern Indology* – With the establishment of sociology as a discipline, the task of understanding society came within its purview. Classical Indology was modified by combining it with various sociological perspectives leading to development of Modern Indology. It is sometimes also referred to as *Social Indology*. Modern Indology was used by academicians, in contrast to scholars and officials as is in the case of Classical Indology. G S Ghurye is considered father of Modern Indology as he was instrumental in the establishment of first department of Sociology in India. He synthesised classical Indological approach with anthropological diffusionist approach. Similarly, Radha Kamal Mukherjee combined the classical approach with empirical Sociology. D P Mukherji developed Marxological approach by combining Classical Indology with Marxian analytical framework. After independence, the use of Indology continued, but other perspectives remained predominant. Modern Indological perspective criticised the orthodox picture of Indian society. Villages were not seen as isolated or static or self-sufficient. Religion was considered as the central institution, but nowhere as a hindrance to dynamism of Indian society. The present changes on account of colonial rule were also studied. The relevance of joint family, panchayats, etc. was emphasised with an Indological view.

In spite of being the earliest perspective, Indology started to lose its sheen post-independence on account of various reasons –

I. Subsequent field studies revealed that normative order followed by people in practice is highly different from the ideal typical view of Indologists. For example, M N Srinivas' concepts of *dominant caste*, *Sanskritisation* changed the traditional notions of caste generated by Indological views.

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II. Contradictory information in Indological sources introduced subjectivity in the analysis. Understanding differed on the basis of references to different texts. This reduced the reliability of the analysis.

III. Indologists relied on the *book view*, authenticity of which was questionable. These texts generally depicted an idealised version of Indian society and were often biased by various factors. For example, texts like *Prithviraj Raso* and other contemporary *rasos* were eulogies of the kings by the royal bards. Sometimes, they lacked veracity and truth was coloured by imperial preferences.

IV. Finally, Indologists have always been accused of compromising with objectivity in sociological research, i.e., Indological explanations had been coloured with vested interests. Western scholars were biased for their colonial interests and Indian scholars were biased with nationalist interests. Thus, no objective view could be generated.

Though Indology may be losing its perspective, *Indological studies* continue to be relevant till date. Recently, there has been an effort to revisit the traditional texts for seeking re-interpretations. Some form of *post-modern Indology* seems to be emerging with the revival of interest among scholars about the culture of ancient India. Some interesting perspectives have been offered recently by likes of Devdutt Pattanaik, who have shed an altogether different light on Indian mythology. Romila Thapar has combined Indology with History. Wendy Doniger has used this perspective to explore alternative views on traditional Hindu social organisation.

Indology of G S Ghurye



Fig. 11.1 G S Ghurye

Govind Sadashiv Ghurye was born in a Brahmin family and was a trained Sanskrit scholar. To develop his Indological perspective, he profoundly studied Vedas, Shaastras and poetry of Kalidas, among other traditional texts. He was also greatly influenced by Western scholars like W H R Rivers. He pioneered the modern Indology which improved upon the narrow view of Indian society taken by Classical Indology. Ghurye played a key role in the professionalisation of Sociology by founding the Indian Sociological Society and its journal Sociological Bulletin, thus, getting rid of some of the infirmities of classical Indology. He wrote more than 30 pioneering books which enriched the nascent discipline to a great extent. He also encouraged and mentored a large number of noted students like M N Srinivas, A R Desai, M S A Rao, Irawati Karve and I P Desai, who enriched the sociological and anthropological tradition in India in various perspectives.

In Ghurye's Indology, culture is the central element throughout his works. He understands society in terms of Sanskritic texts, historical documents and other archeological material, and also supplements it with theoretical perspectives.

Ghurye developed his methodology after studying a large number of classical texts. His ideological view is also influenced by Bhandarkar Institute of Pune. His approach was a combination of historical, diffusionist and descriptive ethnography. He attempted to study Indian society in a specific historical

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context. Indian traditions were seen as diffusion from one place to another, resulting in unity of society. His descriptive ethnography was very much rooted in empirical reality.

His view on Indian society can be seen in terms of his overall view of society as well as in terms of his specific views on various elements of society. His general view of society was that Indian society is unique and it should be understood in terms of concept and theories particular to Indian society. According to him, Indian society is a *Hindu Society* and it cannot be understood without understanding Hindu tradition. He emphasised upon first understanding the Hindu tradition rather than suggesting solutions to the problems faced by the Hindu society. Indian society is viewed as a continuity from the past in form of its historical moorings. He also emphasised on understanding of order and change in society. Order is understood in terms of specific aspects of society like caste, religion, village, tribe and urbanisation. He took a dynamic view of Indian society, not only in terms of continuities from the past, but also in terms of understanding the process of change in terms of British influence. The process of change is understood in terms of changing Hindu traditions, and he refrained from mentioning any great modernising influence of the British rule.

His specific views about caste are mentioned in his various works. His first book *Caste and Race in India, 1932* is regarded as a classic in this field. He gave a theory of origin of caste as well and said that caste originated from Gangetic plains and spread to other areas. It highlighted his diffusionist approach, which was in turn, influenced by the British diffusionist tradition. He took an attributional approach of the caste and he understood caste in terms of its various features. He mentioned six features of caste as division of labour, principle of purity and pollution, hierarchy, civil and religious disabilities, hereditary nature and endogamy. He also stressed on adopting a comparative perspective rather than treating caste as a completely unique institution. Endogamy is regarded by Ghurye as the key principle which maintains boundaries in caste. He also draws a parallel between caste and tribe and calls tribals as *backward Hindus*. He also talked about the status of caste in modern times. He saw formation of caste associations as spreading of caste consciousness and he referred to it as *caste patriotism*. He was firmly opposed to caste system, but he believed its disappearance will be gradual and will be brought about by the influence of urbanisation, education, etc. While his maiden work was confined to caste and race alone, later, he diversified his works to include social dimensions like occupation and class, to bring some dynamism into the concept of caste.

He also wrote extensively on religion and wrote many books on it including *Indian Sadhu, 1952*, *God and Men, 1962*, etc. He saw religion as dynamic as Indian society. He didn't see it from an orthodox point of view and he even offered rational explanations. He also didn't see religious diversity as contradictory. For example, in his book *Indian Sadhu, 1952*, he saw Sadhus as a social link between the spiritual people and common people. In this book, Ghurye also explored the genesis, development and organisation of asceticism in Hindu religion and the role Sadhus or ascetics have played in the maintenance of Hindu society. According to Ghurye, religion is at the centre of the total cultural heritage of man. In another book of his – *Religious Consciousness, 1965*, Ghurye analysed the three of the oldest human civilisations, namely, the Mesopotamian, the Egyptian and the Hindu, along with their connections to the religious practices like worshipping, afterlife, and mythology.

His views on tribes are also influenced by his Hindu traditional views of life. He rejected the British policy of isolation. For him, tribes had always been in contact with Hindus and they have assimilated

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themselves into mainstream in various degrees. He called tribes as *Backward Hindus* and differentiated them as *Hinduised tribes*, *Partially Hinduised* tribes and *Hill Section*. According to him, their backwardness was due to their imperfect integration into Hindu society. He cited examples of the Santhals, Bhils, Gonds, etc., who live in South-Central India and had integrated into Indian society to different degrees. He also studied the impact of outsiders on tribal culture and considered it as a result of British policy. According to him, British never followed an appropriate policy for the development of tribes. Instead, forest policy of the British brought huge hardship to tribes. Apart from providing a general overview of tribal societies, he also wrote on specific tribes such as the Kolis in Maharashtra. Ghurye's work on the tribal society came at a time when a majority of the established colonial anthropologists and administrators were of the opinion that the separate identity of the tribes has to be maintained at any cost. Ghurye debunked this idea of isolation and he even ideologically debated with Elwin over the issue. Contrary to the then prevailing notion of isolation, he argued that the incorporation of Hindu values and norms into tribal life was a positive step in the process of tribal development.

He also expressed his views on village life in India. According to him, villages are the centre of Indian social life, but he rejected the self-sufficiency view of western scholars. His understanding of village was drawn mainly from the caste system. He had totally ignored the actual structures operating within the villages which are highlighted by various other scholars in terms of dominant castes, caste class nexus, etc.

He had an optimistic view of urbanisation and he rejected Louis Wirth's pessimistic view of urban growth in the form of excessive individualism. He considered urban areas as cradle of innovation. According to him, urban and rural areas are organically linked and their growth is also connected.

In all his works, he provided detailed historical descriptions of the phenomenon that he studied. He didn't aim at providing grand theoretical frameworks, but preferred to stick to detailed description of social phenomena. He also took pride in nationalistic tradition and was reluctant to accept frameworks which were not developed in India. In fact, all his works were almost atheoritical, though he was well acquainted with the existing theories and he even tried to enter into a dialogue with Toynbee, Spengler and Bertrand Russel. Due to his ideological orientations, he also entered into a debate with Verrier Elwin regarding the Hindu origin of the tribals. His works were a reflection of the struggle of the new discipline in the Indian context.

Ghurye is criticised for his over Hinduised view of Indian society. He also took a favourable view of caste and failed to see its dehumanising aspect. He failed to recognise qualitative changes that have occurred during the colonial rule. He also failed to explore the structural implications of various social institutions like caste and he only focused on cultural aspects thereof.

Structural Functionalist Tradition in India

Use of structural functional perspective in 1940s is considered an important development in understanding of Indian society. After independence, with establishment of welfare state, sociologists were oriented towards developing systemic view that could provide critical input for planning. Emergence of this perspective in India can be traced back to initial sociologists who got their training under Western, primarily American, anthropologist and sociologists. During this period, this perspective was

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quite popular in America in the writings of Parsons, Merton, Davis and Moore and in Europe, in the writings of Radcliffe Brown, Malinowski, etc.

M N Srinivas is considered to be the first sociologist who systematically used this perspective for the understanding of Coorgs of Mysore. Srinivas was not much impressed by the American functionalism and rather followed the British tradition of field study based approach. Although, W H Wiser had used this perspective for highlighting the functional importance of *Jajmani* system, Srinivas applied this perspective for the understanding of the whole society. This perspective became more important as it used the field view to provide an actual view of reality. For example, Srinivas made intensive field study of the Coorgs to generate a functional empirical understanding of their society. Apart from Srinivas, S C Dube also used field studies to complement this perspective during his numerous village studies. The prevailing perspectives like Indological, anthropological, economic and philosophical suffered from one deficiency or another.

The major premises of this perspective include –

I. It aimed at studying the pattern of relationship, social institutions and their working in the society in a holistic manner. For example, M N Srinivas, in his study of Coorgs of Mysore, not only gave an ethnographical account of Coorg society, but also developed a holistic picture of solidarity among Coorgs in terms of their customs, beliefs, religion, family, etc. More importantly, existing socio-political framework was taken into account through a field view.

II. This perspective attempted to develop an interpretation of a particular social phenomenon in functional terms within a larger social context. For example, studies on family in India emphasised upon understanding its significance in the context of Indian society rather than simply studying it as a type of family. In this context, studies conducted by K M Kapadia, Karve, etc. are quite significant.

III. Structural functional perspective in India also took into account actual structural cleavages and social differentiation in society. It tried to break the mould of a *timeless and unchanging Indian society* and brought the much needed dynamism in the sociological studies. This made sociological understanding more empirical and contextual. In this, functions were seen not only from a cultural angle, but also from the view of changing structural context.

IV. This perspective also emphasised upon comparative understanding of various social institutions, while taking into consideration various variations and their implications on wider society.

V. Initially, structural functional perspective was confined to an anthropological view, but during 1960s and 1970s studies focused on a particular phenomenon or institutions from purely structural functional perspective.

Like its original framework in the West, structural functionalism in India also suffered from several limitations and was criticised for the following reasons –

I. This perspective ignored conflict in Indian society. Social institutions may be dysfunctional and causing conflict in society. For example, caste is more dysfunctional than functional. Srinivas is often criticised for upholding upper caste values through his concepts of Dominant Caste and Sanskritisation.

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II. This perspective is considered status-quoist. Generally, social patterns were considered desirable and functional in a broader context.

III. It lacked purity in its application owing to influence of other perspectives. Cultural influence was quite marked in the study of structures. Structural functionalism in India was never used in the similar manner as it was used in Western, American to be precise, Sociology.

Structure Functionalism of M N Srinivas



Fig. 11.2 M N Srinivas

Mysore Narsimhacharya Srinivas pioneered structural functionalism in India through his path breaking work on Coorgs of Mysore in 1940s. It was a holistic study of Coorg society, and he analysed how different cultural elements contribute to solidarity of Coorg society. However, unlike his western counterparts, like Parsons, he didn't take fancy flights of formulating grand theories. He was also perhaps the first sociologist who developed his perspective by deviating from a purely Indological view. His major contribution was to challenge the then prevailing dominant paradigm that focused on understanding Indian society from a purely textual point of view, and in the process, he ushered in newer frameworks for understanding Hindu society, in particular and Indian society, in general.

His structural functionalism was a blend of approaches used by Radcliffe Brown and Evans Pritchard under whom, he had received his Sociological training in Britain. He used structural functionalism of Brown and anthropological field view of Pritchard. At the same time, he was also critical of the American influence on Indian Sociology, through the institutions like Ford Foundation, as the American social scientists were viewed as promoting American values in the garb of making Sociology a scientific discipline. He blended theoretical structural functionalism with empirical work and as a result, he studied the smaller constituents of society like villages, as functional wholes. He used the method of direct observation to study Coorg society and introduced elements of ethnography. His approach also took into account Indological views, influence of which cannot be ignored in his works.

M N SRINIVAS ON VILLAGE

Work of Srinivas was pioneering in the field of village studies. According to him, villages were the focal points of understanding Indian society. He refuted the logic of cultural theorists like Dumont that only caste should be focused upon to understand Indian society. He took a two prong approach in studying the villages through *field studies* and *historical analyses*. According to him, ethnographic account of villages was necessary to study the village dynamics and the process of change. At the same time, he found the use of historical analysis to counter the argument of British administrators that village was an unchanging unit of self sufficiency. According to him, villages had served as a unifying identity and that village unity was quite significant in rural social life. Village studies, according to him, provided an opportunity to illustrate the importance of ethnographic research methods. They also offered eye-witness accounts of the rapid social change that was taking place in the Indian countryside which helped policy makers a great deal in designing the developmental agenda for the villages. Village studies, thus, provided a new role for a discipline like Sociology in the context of a newly independent nation.

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Srinivas had a systems view of Indian society which was derived from his own micro studies of small community based organisations. He studied Indian society in terms of patterns of relations, social institutions and their working in society in a holistic manner. Srinivas interpreted particular social phenomenon like caste, family and religion in functional terms, within a larger context of Indian society. In his study of Coorgs, he described the concept of functional unity and established interpretations in the context of various rituals followed by Coorgs.

He also took a comparative view of Indian society by studying the same phenomenon within specific regional context. He understood order and change as well. Order is understood in terms of caste, village, religion, etc. He is also known for understanding the dynamics of Indian society. He emphasised upon understanding cultural changes, leading to a change in Indian society.

Study of Indian society through institution of caste, dominated his writings. His concept of *Dominant Caste* in his study of village Rampura, and his concept of *Sanskritisation* in his study of Coorgs of Mysore highlight it.

He also studied the process of change in detail in his book *Social Change in Modern India, 1962* through his twin concepts of Westernisation and Sanskritisation. His monumental work *The Remembered Village, 1976* is still considered a classic in the field of sociological field studies. It was an outcome of the eleven months he spent in a Karnataka village, which he names as Rampura in 1948 and which he visited subsequently as well, till 1964.

Apart from the above general view of Indian society, he also had specific views on various other social institutions. His understanding of caste is primarily driven from his numerous field studies. He combines theory with practice. His understanding of caste has some Indological elements also, but it is more oriented towards its operational aspects. His concepts of *Sanskritisation, Dominant Caste, Vote bank,* etc. give a practical view of Indian society, a radical shift from the earlier pure Indological view.

He viewed Indian village as a prototype of Indian society or a microcosm of Indian society, and like Ghurye, he also rejected the colonial notions of self-sufficiency of Indian village. Village exogamy is one of the prime examples that underscore that villages were interdependent. He considered village to be integrated with the wider society. He saw marriage, family and *Jajmani* system also as central to the understanding of village and caste.

One of the major criticisms of his writings and approach is that his focus remained on community and caste. Some social thinkers say that his concept of village is overburdened with the caste. He didn't develop a macro understanding of Indian society similar to the one developed by the other functionalists. Further, his methodology of focusing on a single village also left little scope of generalisation despite being rich in depth.

Sanskritisation

The term Sanskritisation was coined by M N Srinivas and he defined it as '*The process by which a 'low' caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, ritual, beliefs, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a twice-born (dwija) caste.*' It is an endogenous source of social change.

The term Sanskritisation was coined and used by M N Srinivas to describe the process of cultural and social mobility in the traditional social structure of Indian society. He first propounded this concept

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formally in his book, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India, 1952*. Sanskritisation refers to a process that pertains to *cultural social mobility* and it existed even before the onset of colonialism. However, Secularisation, Westernisation and Modernisation started in India only after the arrival of the British. The idea is path-breaking also because it introduced and validated field work as an essential component in developing an understanding of the Indian society.

The impact of Sanskritisation is manifold. Its influence can be seen in language, literature, ideology, music, dance, drama, style of life and ritual. The process gained momentum after the arrival of the British, as means of communication hastened the process and its impact was felt in even the remotest corners of villages.

In his study among the Coorgs of erstwhile State of Mysore, he found that lower castes, in order to raise their position in the caste hierarchy, adopted some Brahminical customs and gave up some of their own, which were considered to be impure by the higher castes. For instance, they gave up meat-eating, consumption of liquor and offering of animal sacrifice to their deities They imitated the *Brahmins* in matters of dress, food and rituals. By doing so, within a generation or so they could claim higher positions in the local social order. In other words, they thought that the higher castes should accept them as their equals and would treat them with honour and dignity. To denote this process of social mobility Srinivas had first used the term *Brahminisation*.

Sanskritisation is a much broader concept than Brahminisation. In many cases, these higher castes were not *Brahmins*. They were *Kshatriyas, Vaishyas* and higher *Shudras* in various regions of the country. Thus, de-Sanskritisation and even Tribalisation occurs when the non-*Brahmins* and Tribes respectively are the dominant groups.

Major features associated with the concept of Sanskritisation are –

I. Sanskritisation of a group has usually the effect of improving its position in the local caste hierarchy, i.e., it doesn't lead to a change in the macro *Varna* framework. It normally presupposes either an improvement in the position of the group concerned or a higher group self-consciousness resulting from its contact with a source of the *Great Tradition* of Hinduism such as a pilgrim centre or a monastery or a proselytising sect. Sanskritisation is, thus, an endogenous and localised version of social change.

II. Sanskritisation suggests a process whereby people want to improve their status through adoption of names and customs of culturally high-placed groups. The *reference model* is usually financially better off as well.

III. It is primarily a process that takes place mainly within the Hindu space, though Srinivas argued that it was visible even in sects and religious groups outside Hinduism. Studies of different areas, however, show that it operated differently in different parts of the country.

IV. In those areas where a highly Sanskritised caste was dominant, the culture of the entire region underwent a certain degree of Sanskritisation. In regions where the non-Sanskritic castes were dominant, it was their influence that was stronger. This can be termed the process of *de-Sanskritiation*. There were other regional variations too. In Punjab, culturally Sanskritic influence was never very strong.

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V. Srinivas argued that, since Sanskritisation improves the position of a group only in the local caste hierarchy, it doesn't necessarily lead to any structural change.

VI. The impact and significance of Sanskritisation is manifold. It is viewed as a process that facilitated socio-cultural mobility in Indian society which was generally viewed as closed and monolithic. It can also be viewed as a mental construct to understand social change in India, and as a tool with the sociologists and anthropologists. Its influence can be seen in language, literature, ideology, music, dance, drama, style of life and ritual also.

YOGENDRA SINGH ON SANSKRITISATION

Yogendra Singh says that Sanskritisation is a culturally specific case of the universal motivation toward *anticipatory socialisation* of the culture of the higher group, in the hope of gaining its status in future. Yogendra Singh writes that there are two levels of meaning which are implicit in Sanskritisation –

I. Historical specific – In historical specific sense, Sanskritisation refers to those processes in Indian history which led to changes in various castes. It is indicative of an indigenous source of social change in the broad historical spectrum of India.

II. Contextual specific – In contextual specific sense, Sanskritisation denotes contemporary processes of cultural imitation of upper castes by lower castes or sub-castes in different parts of India. It also implies that Sanskritisation is not a uniform phenomenon.

Criticism of Sanskritisation –

I. D N Majumdar says that there are many signs of reverse process, i.e., de-Sanskritisation. Many upper castes are forsaking their lifestyle as well. Kashmiri Pundits and *Brahmins* in Haryana and Punjab are such examples.

II. It has been criticised for exaggerating social mobility or the scope for *lower castes* to move up the social ladder. For it leads to no structural change, but only positional change of some individuals. In other words, inequality continues to persist, though, some individuals may be able to improve their positions within the unequal structure.

III. It has been pointed out that the ideology of Sanskritisation accepts the ways of the *upper caste* as superior and those of the l*ower caste* as inferior. Therefore, the desire to imitate the *upper caste* is seen as natural and desirable. Srinivas himself is accused of succumbing to the values of the other castes.

IV. Sanskritisation seems to justify a model that rests on inequality and exclusion. It appears to suggest that to believe in pollution and purity of groups of people is justifiable. Therefore, to be able to look down on some groups just as the *upper castes* looked down on the *lower castes*, is deemed as a mark of privilege. The effect of such a trend is that the key characteristics of Dalit culture and society are eroded. For example, the very worth of labour which *lower castes* do is degraded and the activity is rendered *shameful.*

V. Sanskritisation led to seepage of evils of dominant castes into the lower castes. Dowry is an example.

VI. Srinivas is also accused of ignoring the *non-Sanskritic traditions*. As some elements of non-Sanskritic tradition might also become part of Sanskritic tradition in a locality.

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VII. Further, Sanskritisation was not a uniform phenomenon and didn't explain all the cultural changes. In North India, especially Punjab, it was Islamic tradition that provided basis for cultural imitation.

VIII. According to Harold Gould, Sanskritisation is a camouflage for latent inter-caste and inter-class competition for economic and social power, and it is not the culture, but the socio-economic deprivations that drive such imitations.

IX. Further, Srinivas took Sanskritisation to mean some kind of Brahminisation, while the other investigators have shown that Sanskritisation could be based upon *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* or even a *Shudra* model. Sanskritisation is thus, only an illustration of universal *reference group* process.

Sanskritisation as a process of social change in contemporary Indian society has lost much of its relevance due to reservation policy, rise of Dalit consciousness, Westernisation replacing Sanskritisation, democratic polity among other factors. Erstwhile depressed classes are now recognising their numerical strength and are using politics and socio-economic process to assert their own identity rather than imitating *Dwijas*. Despite such changes and much criticism, the concept is still known for providing an unconventional perspective of Indian society in general and caste system in particular. It was born out of detailed field works which changed the very face of the approaches to study the Indian society.

Westernisation

M N Srinivas defines Westernisation as *the changes brought about in Indian society and culture, as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels, technology, institutions, ideology and values*. Like Sanskritisation, Westernisation also depicts a cultural change in India and not a structural change. However, Yogendra Singh contends that it also led to structural changes as many new phenomena/institutions like middle class and bureaucracy emerged during this process.

There were different kinds of Westernisation, according to Srinivas –

I. Primary Westernisation refers to the emergence of a westernised sub-cultural pattern through a minority section of Indians, who first came in contact with the Western culture. This included the sub-culture of Indian intellectuals who not only adopted many cognitive patterns, or ways of thinking, and styles of life, but also supported their expansion. Many of the early 19th Century reformers were a product of this kind of primary Westernisation. There were, therefore, small sections of people who adopted western life-styles or were affected by western ways of thinking. In the initial stages, it remained limited to a small section of elites and was limited to a few cities like the then Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

II. Secondary Westernisation refers to the process, in which, a section of population came in direct contact with the primary beneficiaries of Westernisation.

III. Tertiary Westernisation refers to the general spread of Western cultural traits, such as the use of new technology, dress, food, and changes in the habits and styles of people in general.

Westernisation does involve the imitation of external forms of culture. It should be noted that it does not necessarily mean that people adopt modern values of democracy and equality. People can be

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western in their clothes and appearances, but may not have democratic and egalitarian values that are a part of *modern attitudes*. So, Srinivas prefers the term Westernisation to Modernisation. He contends that *Modernisation presupposes rationality of goals which in the ultimate analysis could not be taken for granted since human ends are based on value preferences and rationality could only be predicated of the means of not the ends of social action*. By Westernisation, he meant primarily the British impact. Hence, Westernisation is more value-loaded than the term Modernisation. It is positive as well as negative.

According to Yogendra Singh, it started a process of cultural Modernisation as Western impact brought a new great tradition of Modernisation. It led to the growth of a universalistic legal superstructure, expansion of education, industrialisation and urbanisation, increased communication, growth of nationalism and politicisation of society.

Impact of Westernisation can be seen in multiple spheres. Emphasis on humanitarianism and rationalism is a part of Westernisation that led to a series of institutional and social reforms in India. Establishment of scientific, technological and educational institutions, and rise of nationalism, new political culture and leadership in the country are all by-products of Westernisation. Other effects were –

I. *Rationalisation of ritual sphere* – Impact of rationalisation was profound on Hindu society and many elaborate rituals were given up in favour of more rational ideas.

II. *Change in belief system* – One finds that a Brahmin was supposed to get his/her girl child married before puberty and if he failed to find a boy before that age, it was believed that he had committed a sin. But today, under the influence of Westernisation, one will not get his or her girl child married before the age of 18.

III. *Social reforms* – Widow marriage, which was not even thought of earlier, is now becoming common, and today, even a Brahmin considers it absurd to shave the head of a widow.

IV. *Art and architecture* – Apart from affecting ways of life and thinking, the West influenced Indian art, architecture and literature as well. Artists like Ravi Varma, Rabindranath Tagore, Chandu Menon and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay were all grappling with the colonial encounter.

V. *Education* – Erstwhile, *Gurukul* System and *guru-shishya* tradition paled in front of the Western education. In fact, *Brahmins* and other higher castes were first to take advantage of this. ICS officers in Madras province were predominantly *Brahmins*.

VI. *Economic system* – Traditional economic institutions like *Jajmani* and Guild system weakened as market based system arrived. Domestic enterprise and cottage industry also took a beating.

VII. *Communication system* – According to Srinivas, the development of communication media carried Sanskritisation to areas previously inaccessible, and spread of literacy carried it to groups which were very low in the caste hierarchy. Thus, Westernisation considerably helped in the spread of Sanskritisation as well provisioning faster communication channels.

VIII. *Rise of nationalism* – Some social thinkers are also of the view that Westernisation was responsible for the rise of nationalism and launching of freedom movement as modern ideas of democracy, self-determination, rule of law, etc. gained ground among the Indian freedom fighters.

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IX. *Social mobility* – Westernisation created scope for greater spatial mobility and societal contact as it helped in breaking many cultural notions which inhibited modern thoughts among various sections of Indian society.

In course of time, Westernisation helped Indians to launch resistance and freedom movements against the British. The very values that the British used to exploit Indians were used to turn the tide of time against them. But, critics argue that Westernisation had many negative effects also as compared to a few positive effects. It led to a process of cultural and cognitive colonialism. Unlike Modernisation, it was value loaded and local cultural values were branded inferior at times.

In contemporary times, the term has gained a new meaning. It has largely delinked itself with the colonial legacy and is used in a broader sense to denote the overall impact of Western ideology and culture.

Westernisation and Sanskritisation, as twin concepts, have also been subjected to comparison and contrasts. Following are the major relations between the two –

I. *As a prelude to Sanskritisation* – Srinivas considers Westernisation as a prelude also to Sanskritisation. He is of the view that the *Brahmins* and people of other higher castes got into white collar jobs because of their Sanskritic tradition. Srinivas thinks that in Indian situation, a section of people attempt to be Westernised so as to Sanskritise their culture and lifestyle.

II. *As a promoter of Sanskritisation* – According to Srinivas, the increase in Westernisation does not retard the process of Sanskritisation; both go on simultaneously and to some extent, an increase in Westernisation accelerates the process of Sanskritisation. For instance, postal facilities, railways, buses and newspaper media, which are tools of western impact on India, have helped in rendering more organised religious pilgrimages, meetings, caste solidarities, etc. in a way that was never possible in the past.

III. *Opposing Sanskritisation* – In some cases, Westernisation helped in the spread of Sanskritisation, while in others, it contradicted. For example, eating habits of Westerners were against the Sanskritic ideals.

Srinivas suggested that while *lower castes* sought to be Sanskritised, *upper castes* sought to be Westernised. However, this was not generalised. Srinivas concedes that the way to describe the social changes occurring in modern India in terms of Sanskritisation and Westernisation is to describe it primarily in cultural and not in structural terms.

Marxist Sociology in India

Indian Marxist scholars use basic assumptions of Marxian analysis of understanding of society. In India, this view also found favour among nationalist leadership after the Russian Revolution. This new leadership favoured this approach within the context of freedom struggle. Before independence, this perspective was used by D P Mukherji, who combined it with Indological perspective to develop a Marxological perspective to analyse social change.

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A R Desai pioneered the use of this perspective since 1940s and it is best exemplified in his *Social Background of Indian Nationalism, 1946*. However, this perspective couldn't become very popular because, firstly, before independence, British government was strictly opposed to Marxist thoughts. Secondly, after independence, due to the euphoria generated by the welfare state, Marxist perspective was given a pass. But, this perspective became popular during the eventful 1970s, after an article written by A R Desai titled *Relevance of the Marxist Approach to the Study of Indian Society*. It was on account of two reasons –

I. Two decades of planning was unsuccessful in meeting the aspirations of people and their fundamental problems still remained. It was felt that there was some deficiency in interpretation of Indian society.

II. Initially, it was felt that the academic perspective has to just provide inputs for planning rather than suggesting ideological alternatives. After 1970s, the whole conception of planning came under serious doubt for its apparent failures.

In this context, the Marxist perspective attempted to understand the Indian society in the following ways –

I. The Marxist approach understands society in terms of a process of historical developments in dialectical materialistic terms. Causative factors are the changing material conditions. For example, A R Desai in his book – *Social Background of Indian Nationalism, 1946* takes historical materialistic view and understands the process of historical change in Indian society in terms of changing economic activities.

II. The social structure and institutions are seen as rooted in productive relations. The dynamic conception is also based on changing production relations. For example, Kathleen Gough, in the context of *caste, class nexus,* uses Marxist perspective for generating an understanding of caste and class in society.

III. While understanding society, primacy is given to economic infrastructure; culture is seen as rooted in economic infrastructure. This also amounts to rejection of pure Indological views and the faulty interpretation it generates.

IV. Society is seen in systemic terms, conforming to model of economic interpretation of superstructure. For example, Marxist village studies emphasise more on the understanding of socio-political setup on the basis of network relations woven around land.

V. Indian society is studied in terms of conflict, and many social institutions are seen as exploitative and as existing for the benefit of the few. For example, *Jajmani* system was interpreted as coercive and exploitative institution by Marxists like Gerald Duane Berreman. A R Desai was critical of picture of harmonious and cooperative nature of the Indian village. Similarly, various village studies, a number of them compiled in his book *Rural Sociology in India, 1959*, assessed various other social institutions from Marxist point of view.

However, Marxist perspective suffers from a number of deficiencies, some of which are –

I. In a bid to give importance to material aspects, it ignored the importance of religion and culture in the lives of people of India. Religion occupies an important place in Indian society and world

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view of people is influenced by it. This perspective is not capable of portraying a total view of social reality in India and takes only a materialistic view.

II. Another deficiency is ignoring *caste* as the basis of traditional Hindu social organisation. Caste was often equated with class which generated an over-simplistic view of the pattern of social inequalities.

III. Over emphasis upon conflict led them to overlook aspects of integration and solidarity of Indian society. For example, institutions like *Jajmani* system and panchayats were also seen as exploitative.

Marxist Sociology of A R Desai

Akshay Ramanlal Desai was a pioneer of the use of Marxist perspective in Indian society. His seminal work *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* generates a detailed view of Indian society by using this perspective. This perspective was again revived in the tumultuous decade of 1970s and the sentiments of the decade were summed up by Desai at the Fifteenth All India Sociological Conference in his presidential address titled *Relevance of the Marxist Approach to the Study of Indian Society.*

A R DESAI ON STATE

He approached the idea of state also from Marxist perspective and hence, he was more interested in the capitalist dimension of the Indian state. He questioned the notion of *welfare state* for its many shortcomings in meeting the goals of a welfare society. In an essay called *The Myth of the Welfare State*, Desai provides a detailed critique of this notion. According to him, an ideal welfare state has three core features; it is democratic, it is a mixed economy and it is a positive state rather than a laissez faire state, i.e., it intervenes positively when things go out of hand. But according to him, welfare states around the world have failed on these three counts as they have not been able to remove poverty, reduce income gaps, eliminate social discrimination, check the capitalist greed and provide employment for all. For these reasons, he termed the idea of welfare state as a myth and according to him, in practice, only a capitalist state exists. According to him, even communist states have also failed on these counts, especially on democracy.

He used the dialectical-historical approach in understanding Indian society. His approach is unique as he gave lower importance to culture and religion in understanding the tradition of Indian society. Instead, he traced the tradition in terms of material relations. He lamented the uncritical use of foreign models in context of Indian society, which often lead to a distortion of the perspective. He also conducted village studies in order to identify the contradictions present in Indian society. He emphasised comparative approach in his writings. His approach witnesses a transition from an emphasis on understanding to suggestion of alternatives. Like other Marxist scholars, he also tried to expose the contradictions and anomalies in the process of change in Indian society.

He understood the Indian society in terms of process of historical development in terms of a dialectical materialist basis. The study of productive relations is used to interpret social structure and institutions.

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Indian society and its traditions are seen as influenced by economic infrastructure, i.e., culture is rooted in the economic infrastructure. Systemic view of Indian society is drawn from the Marxist model. Desai highlighted the contradictions and conflicts present in India during the turbulent decade of 1970s in the wake of apparent failure of planned growth. His main focus areas were state, nationalism, village, peasant struggle, caste, etc.

In contrast to his contemporaries like Srinivas, whose work had a somewhat implicit notion of upper caste values, Desai took a radical historical materialistic view. He firmly believed in the idea that *Man can change the direction of society* and was also convinced that social change was possible. According to him, the British rule destroyed the pre-capitalist forms of production relations and introduced modern capitalist property relations. As a result, the agrarian social structure was also impacted and the economic foundation of caste was shattered by the new economic forces and forms introduced by the colonial capitalism. He had a vision of an anti-bureaucratic and anti-imperialist Indian society. Desai was an avowed Trotskyite and he vouched for the Trotsky's formula of a permanent revolution. To him, every nation-state is imperialist by its nature and he saw the Indian state also being coercive on many fronts. On the issue of caste, he was influenced by the views of Nirmal Kumar Bose, and he asserted that the structural reality for caste would disappear when Indian society will progress to a higher level.

According to Desai, villages in India historically evolved much before pre-British era and village, as a social unit, was a relatively self-sufficient unit in economic relations. It never had considerable exchange relations with the outside world and relations within the village were feudal in nature. Contrary to the Indological view, he saw the *Jajmani* system as an exploitative one. According to him, land revenue and tenure system of the British led to formation of new classes and, hence, capitalist mode of production was introduced in India by the British.

He saw nationalism as a result of materialistic conditions created by the British. British rule transformed the Indian society by creating new classes and institutions. As a result, the old feudal mode of production was replaced by the new mode. New class structures also led to exploitation and oppression. Exploitation led to unification in society as there was an identifiable common enemy. Thus, instead of a pure socio-cultural explanation of rise of nationalism, he put forward an economic explanation. New means of communication like railways, press and post office brought people together. Various exploitative mechanisms used by the British led to unintentional unification of Indian society.

He saw peasant struggle as a result of introduction of the new mode of production in Indian agriculture. He attributed it to the introduction of exploitative capitalist system, as a result of which, new mutually antagonistic classes emerged in agriculture. According to him, the Indian state had assumed the norms of the capitalist society as the axis of developmental strategy. Desai moved beyond the academic discourse and suggested Marxist approach as a normative solution for the problems faced by the post-independence India.

Desai is criticised for being an indoctrinated scholar who refuses to recognise an alternative reality beyond the one visible through the Marxist lens. Many of his propositions are not backed by empirical evidences. He also downplayed the value of culture and religion in Indian society which is not necessarily true.

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	Ghurye	Srinivas	Desai
Influenced by	W H R Rivers, Bhandarkar Institute of Pune	Radcliffe Brown, Evans Pritchard	Marx
Major works	a. *Caste and Race in India* (on Caste) b. *Indian Sadhu* (on Religion)	a. *Social Change in Modern India* – (On order and change in Indian Society) b. *A Remembered Village* (On Caste)	a. *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* – (on change in Indian Society) b. *Relevance of the Marxist Approach to the Study of Indian Society*
Methods	Book view, Diffusionist approach (in understanding caste), Descriptive ethnography	Field view, Direct observation, Ethnography	Field view, Historical Materialistic approach
Concepts	Hinduised Tribes	Dominant Caste, Sanskritisation, Westernisation	Dialectic materialism in Indian context
General view of society	a. Hindu society b. Unique c. Order and change understood in terms of effect of British rule, changing Hindu tradition, etc.	a. Systemic, Holistic b. Functional organisation in society c. Order and change understood in terms of cultural change – analysed through case studies which yielded ideas of Sanskritisation and Westernisation	a. Historical Materialistic view b. Rejected a homogeneous and cooperative image of Indian society
Perspective	Indological, Modern sociological	Structural Functionalist	Conflict
Features in perspective	a. Culture is central b. Saw Indian Society as unique, so unique approach is required c. Western theories not applicable d. Develop an understanding and not build a theory e. Society as a *continuity from past* f. Ideal typical view of society, less of a field view	a. Systemic view – Didn't study entities as separate b. Relation to larger function, e.g. family is not studied just as a type but in terms of larger functions c. Structural cleavages studied as they appeared in newly changed structural context (not in just cultural perspective) d. Anthropological to structural functionalism	a. Contradictions were recognised and systems like *Jajmani* system seen as exploitative b. Change viewed in Historical Materialistic sense c. Caste viewed in structural terms within an overall economic framework d. For villages, land seen as central to conflicts
Contribution to subject	One of the founders of sociology in India and made Indology a balanced perspective	Added systemic view	Brought materialistic conception
Relevance	Indology is still used and serves as the basis of many field studies. New techniques like content analysis giving a new lease of life to the perspective	Structural Functionalism is still one of the predominant forms of sociological studies in Indian context today	His Marxist approach highlights the counterintuitive results of the sociological developments for example – Globalisation and conflict
Criticism	Indology has subjectivity in interpretation – British were negatively biased, Indian scholars had nationalistic bias	His perspective ignored conflict and many a times is also accused of justifying the upper caste values. It also lacked purity in approach	*He completely ignored the organisational aspect of social institutions like caste, religion and culture in Indian context*

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Question Bank

1. Indian society is a spectrum which is viewed differently by different schools of thoughts. Elaborate.
2. What is Indology? How it is different from History?
3. Indology looks at the past ignoring the present. Comment.
4. Discuss the differences between the book view and the field view.
5. G S Ghurye liberated the study of Indian society from the colonial biases and laid the true foundation of the discipline of Sociology in India. Substantiate this statement.
6. Indology remains relevant even today for being the only authentic and indigenous way of studying Indian society. Evaluate this statement in light of other available methods to study Indian society.
7. Ghurye focused on the Indian way of life as his subject of study, but was not averse to use the Western methods of investigation. Comment.
8. Ghurye not only laid the foundation of the discipline in India, but also created a magnificent edifice over it which was decorated by his distinguished disciples. Elaborate.
9. Critically examine the views of Ghurye on tribes and caste.
10. What do you mean by Structure Functionalism? How was this approach modified and used by M N Srinivas in Indian context?
11. M N Srinivas took the Structural Functionalism approach, but was not limited to its narrow boundaries. Comment.
12. M N Srinivas combined text with the context to present a more realistic picture of Indian society. Elaborate.
13. Marxist sociologists viewed Indian society as a box of contradictions. Comment.
14. What are the major limitations of studying the Indian society from a Marxist perspective?
15. A R Desai highlighted the contradictions present in Indian society which his predecessors ignored. Discuss it in light of the traditional institutions that are present in India.
16. Various perspectives to study Indian society were coloured by various biases which were rooted in the Western influence as well as indigenous ideological moorings. Comment.
17. No single perspective is sufficient to Indian society for its vastness, contradictions and unique traditional institutions. Elaborate.
18. A major criticism of various perspectives of studying the Indian society is that despite their claims of authenticity, they are all impure. Elaborate.

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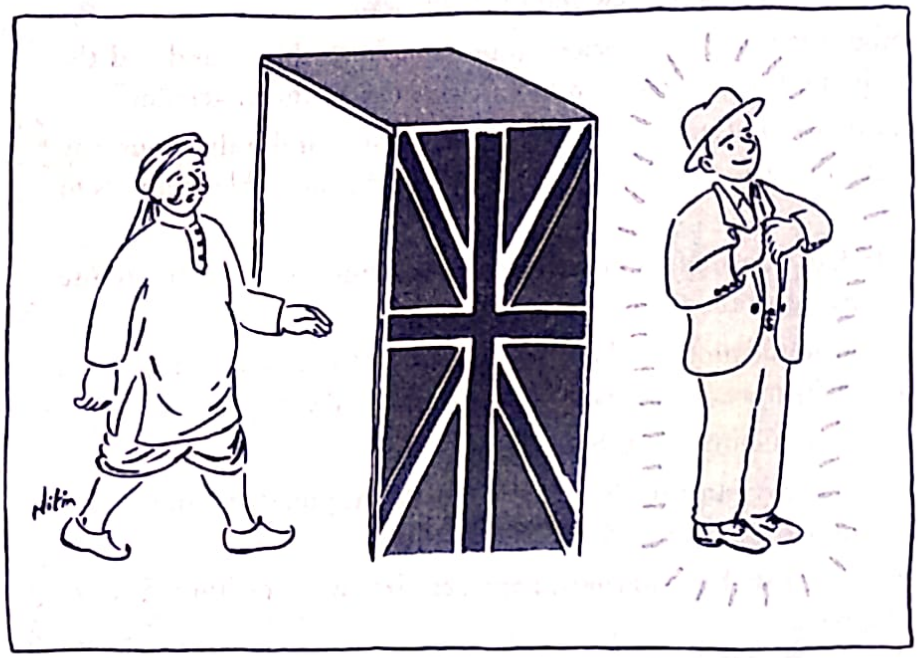
Impact of Colonial Rule on Indian Society

12



After reading this chapt you will be able to:

1. Understand the role of Colonialism in shaping the Indian society
2. Explain the social background of India nationalism
3. Know about protests and movements during the colonial period
4. Understand the reforms carried out during the colonial rule

Colonial rule in India led to a change in many social institutions. It was during the colonial rule that industrialisation started in India and the old occupations gave way to the new occupations. On the cultural front also, there were many profound changes. Eating and clothing habits also changed. Many activities that came into conflict with modernity were banished. Introduction of colonial laws led to certain degree of uniform administration in the country, but at the same time traditional institutions also came under threat. As a result, there were many instances of social mobilisation against colonial practices in various parts of the country. Colonial rule was oppressive and made a severe cultural dent on the Indian society, but at the same time it also had a silver lining in the form of the introduction of modernity, social reforms and formation of India as a nation.

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Colonialism and capitalism led to a complex integration of colonies into the world economy in a subservient manner. Indian raw material was cheaply exported and finished goods were imported and as a result, it destroyed domestic industries. This subservient and disadvantaged position led to extremely poor domestic savings which were less than three per cent of GNP at the time of independence, as compared to around 30 per cent today. Even this chunk of the savings was misappropriated by the colonial rulers in the form of economic drain, military expansion and administrative spending. Just to put to perspective, from 1890 to 1947, military spending alone amounted to around 50 per cent of the total government budget. State support to Indian industries was almost zero in contrast to the domestic support provided by most of the European countries to their industries at that time. While free trade was established with India, no tariff protection was given to the fledgling Indian industry. In contrast, aggressive protection was given to the industry by the British back at home. Similarly, currency policy was manipulated in colonial favour.

Further, tax structure was highly iniquitous, as peasantry was heavily taxed and upper classes like bureaucrats and landlords hardly paid any tax. In 1900, land revenue alone contributed to more than 50 per cent of government revenues and salt tax, another 16 per cent. Both were abolished altogether in Independent India. As a result, poor investment and lack of modernisation of agriculture led to poor produce and stagnation. Moneylenders, landlords and middlemen made the situation worse and they too, found exploitation of sharecroppers, tenants and laborers attractive than investing in agriculture. At the time of independence, 70 per cent of the land was with landlords, and landlessness was at a historic high level of 28 per cent. Land holdings had fragmented to highly uneconomical sizes.

British rule also transformed the administrative structure of India. New administrative units were formed in the form of provinces and new bureaucratic machinery was put in place. Rule of law was established, but it was not true to its spirit and Indians were discriminated against the Europeans. Indian political system was also impacted as ideas of democracy and equality became popular in India. Formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was the first step in this direction. Administrative unity also led to political unity as well and later, a pan Indian feeling also gave birth to nationalism.

In the cultural sphere, new education and missionary activities were the big influencing agents. English education on one hand led to the decline of older systems of education, while it opened up new avenues on the other, and as a result, Indians were introduced to modern ideas.

Port towns and coastal areas were the ones which were affected the most by the British rule as they emerged as the centres of new economic and political activity. Many erstwhile towns declined and new towns like Madras, Calcutta and Bombay gained prominence.

Social Background of Indian Nationalism

It was in the colonial period that a specifically pan-Indian consciousness took shape. Colonial rule unified all of India for the first time economically, administratively and geographically. Through a vast communication network, it brought in the forces of modernisation and capitalist economic change. But the economic, political and administrative unification of India, under the colonial rule, was achieved at a great expense. Colonial exploitation and domination scarred the Indian society in many ways, and different sections had their own reasons to get rid of the foreign rule. The British also tried their best to

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divide the population and prevent modernisation, fearing the development of a common feeling. But paradoxically, the same actions of colonialism gave birth to its own enemy; nationalism.

Social thinkers have different views on the growth and the path that nationalism took. Various social factors which played a role in the growth of nationalism can be clubbed as –

I. *Economic contradictions* – Contradictions of the British rule were exposed for the first time in the economic field and they were highlighted in the writings of many prominent nationalists like Dadabhai Naroji and R C Dutt. Unequal control over forces of production and export of surplus was exposed by early nationalists. Images of pre-colonial fabled riches of India were contrasted with the abject poverty of the British India. The Swadeshi Movement further strengthened loyalty to the national economy. A R Desai also suggested that rise of nationalism was rooted in the anti-imperial and anti-bureaucratic ideology.

II. *Political awakening* – First significant move was made in the form of the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885. It was realised by the national leadership that the way towards achievement of nationalistic goal is through political power. Political struggle led to gradual reforms and it also led to mobilisation of masses.

III. *Role of charismatic personalities* – Many charismatic leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Subhash and Tilak also played a leadership role in mobilising millions of masses and united them. These leaders made the masses to understand the social and economic contradictions of the British rule.

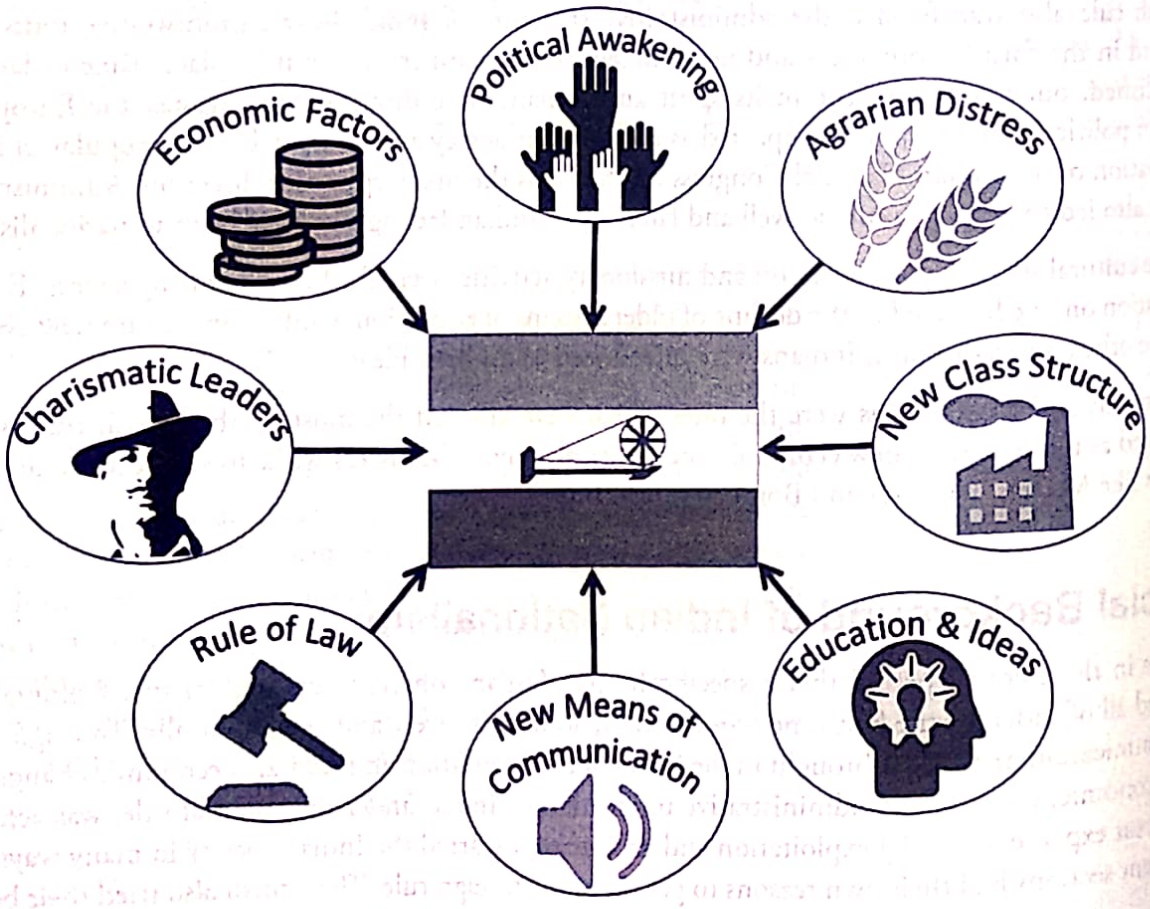

Fig. 12.1 Factors contributing to growth of Nationalism

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IV. *Role of modern ideas and education* – Indians, in the colonial period, read about western liberalism and freedom. Yet, they lived under a western, colonial rule that denied Indians liberty and freedom. This kind of contradiction shaped many of the structural and cultural changes. Indian nationalist leaders were quick to grasp this irony and took these ideas to masses. Use of vernaculars was capitalised to spread the ideas of modernity and democracy.

V. *Role of middle class* – Colonialism created new classes and communities which came to play significant roles in subsequent history. The urban middle class was the main carrier of nationalism and it led the campaign for freedom. The emerging middle class began, with the aid of western style education, to challenge colonialism on its own ground. Ironically, colonialism and western education also gave impetus for the rediscovery of tradition. This led to the developments on the cultural and social front which solidified emergent forms of community at the national and regional levels. Leaders from the middle class also formed early political organisations.

VI. *Cultural revolt* – Colonial interventions also crystallised religious and caste based communities, and they, too, became major players. In fact, attack on cultural identities became the basis of the First War of Independence of 1857. Cultural arrogance and a sense of superiority of white British also provoked Indians to prove them wrong. Along with secular ideals of liberty and self rule, cultural dimensions were also highlighted by leaders like Tilak, Annie Besant and Veer Savarkar. They declared that freedom or *Swaraj* was their birth-right and thus, they fought for political, cultural and economic freedom.

VII. *Reformist and revivalist agenda* – Social reform agenda was also clubbed with the agenda of liberation. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dayanand Saraswati preached nationalism as well. A R Desai saw socio-religious movements as an expression of national awakening due to contradictions between the old value system and new economic realities. The First War of Independence sought to revive the glorious period of Indian history and Bahadur Shah Zafar was chosen as its symbol.

VIII. *Impact of global events* – Events like the Russian Revolution aroused the revolutionary spirits in India as well. Defeat of imperial powers like Italy, at the hand of Ethiopia, also boosted the morale of nationalists in colonial countries like India. Socialist nationalism also grew, in the meanwhile, in 1930s, both within and outside the Congress.

IX. *Communalism and divisive politics* – The British policy of divide and rule also sowed seeds of a parallel nationalism which ultimately led to the bifurcation of the nation at the time of independence.

Thus, nationalism in India arose as a result of plurality of factors. It passed through various stages which are marked by various phases of national movement. Initial political movement was dominated by moderate nationalists who lacked a mass base and hence, nationalistic feelings were also limited to middle class and intellectual circles. Mass-based movement started with the arrival of Gandhian politics. A parallel aggressive nationalism also emerged in the form of revolutionary movements in various parts of India. However, nationalism was bifurcated while national struggle was still going on and a section of Muslims, led by Jinnah, started to demand a separate nation. There were other hurdles as well in the rise of nationalism including casteism, communalism, poor response of Southern provinces, divisive politics of the British, poor response of princely states and regionalism.

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The rise of Indian nationalism has been studied from different perspectives –

I. Historians like Romila Thapar, K M Panikkar and Stevenson argue that despite invasions, mixing and confrontation a single dominant culture never existed in India and no culture threatened the other to subjugation. As a result, composite culture evolved. In such an environment, nationalism in India evolved not out of a common single cultural heritage, but it developed under the same colonial ideology which it fought against.

II. Another strand tried to invoke nationalist spirit through re-interpretation of tradition and invoking past glory. Arya Samaj belonged to this category. Revival of traditional festivals like Shivaji Festival and Ganpati Festival by Tilak was also a part of this strand.

III. National leaders like Nehru realised that to fight colonialism, first regional aspirations have to take a backseat and spirit of nationalism needs to come to the forefront. Thus, to unify divided India and to prevent its Balkanisation, nationalism was a pre-requisite. So, nationalism emerged as an inherent need of an aspiring nation-state.

A R DESAI'S IDEA OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

A R Desai on the other hand considers Indian nationalism as a product of material conditions in India and nationalism was non-existent before the arrival of the British. New material conditions were a result of industrialisation, new land policy and Modernisation. British rule led to economic disintegration as well as economic reforms, which led to the birth of new social consciousness and class structure, through which, nationalism followed. Different classes like industrialists and peasants had their own grievances, which along with common desire for freedom led to the birth of nationalism. According to him, the role of education in the birth of nationalism is overplayed and instead, change in material conditions was the real cause. Class based inequalities and contradictions, according to Desai, determine the nature of social change. A common exploitative land tenure system, a uniform emergent pan-Indian working class and new classes were other contributing factors.

Amidst this, there was opposition to this process as well, especially from princely states and depressed castes. Periyar also debunked Gandhian idea of nationalism as alien to Dravidians. He saw in it an attempt to foist upon them, Brahminical culture. Similarly, Ambedkar, too, rejected Gandhian nationalism and argued that it gives moral justification to caste based inequalities. However, the most serious impediment emerged in form of the *Two Nation Theory*.

Modernisation of Indian Tradition

What is Modernisation? Is it about the way we live? Is it about the clothes we wear? Is it about the way we think? Or is it about everything that we do? Late professor Alex Inkeles links it with a set of attitudes which are not specific to any culture or civilisation. They include disposition to accept new ideas, a time sense that makes one interested more in present and future instead of the past, faith in rationality of thought, and belief in distributive justice. There can be many more additions to this list, but the core point is that Modernisation is about a set of values which is culture neutral. At the same time, there are other understandings of the term as well. Some make a little distinction between Modernisation and Westernisation.

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Some social thinkers, on the other hand, view Modernisation in terms of a binary of tradition-modern framework. Max Weber was one such thinker. He viewed Indian tradition in terms of *spiritual* values and the Western Modernisation in terms of *material* values. Further, modernity is viewed as foreign to the tradition. Tradition was also viewed as an obstacle in the way of modernity. But this view is not true completely. Historically, we have many accounts like *Arthshastra* and *Panchtantra*, in which, ample evidences are there that illustrate pragmatic views taken by the inhabitants of India. Many Western travellers have themselves left elaborate accounts of highly material oriented life of Indians. In fact, the notion of India being a traditional society is largely of recent origin and is also attributed to the ingenuity of the colonial rulers. The very existence of an unbroken history of more than 4,500 years is a testimony that we have been very resilient as well as very responsive to change.

According to Yogendra Singh, Modernisation is a form of cultural response, involving attributes which are basically universalistic and evolutionary; they are pan-humanistic, trans-ethnic and non-ideological. Though modern thoughts have been a part of all the cultures, including India, across the time and space, a rapid process of Modernisation of Indian tradition started during the British rule. However, it was not a linear uni-directional process as it happened in the West, but it also involved a dialectical relationship between modernity and tradition. The modern was also traditionalised in the process, though in a less significant manner. Modernisation of tradition includes change in traditional institutions, values and processes like caste, family, kinship, political and social organisation and religion.

There are different views on the process of Modernisation of tradition. According to Dumont, the elements of tradition like caste are independent from the institutions like polity. As a result, the Modernisation of political institutions doesn't affect traditional institutions like caste, to a great extent. According to Giddens, there is no single universal definition of modernity and there are actually, multiple modernities. Indian modernity can be unique in its own ways. According to Dipankar Gupta, in his *Mistaken Modernity: India Between Worlds, 2000*, modernity in India has to be defined in terms of social-historical and cultural conditions of different regions or social segments of the country.

Introduction of new means of communication like railway, telephone and telegram hastened the process. New administrative and judicial system changed the social outlook. New types of jobs changed the occupational stance. Literature and art made cultural and psychological impacts. A new type of scientific and rational thinking made ideological and value impacts. Universalism, individualism and secularism questioned the existing beliefs of hierarchy, particularism, etc. Industrialisation and urbanisation changed the social structure. Early carriers of Modernisation were urban middle class elite who first came into contact of westerners. Education became a big symbol of Modernisation and it influenced all aspects of tradition such as food habits, dressing, and language. According to Yogendra Singh, it not only impacted cultural aspects, but also impacted structural aspects. New social classes emerged. Power situation was altered. New political system and new economic practices led to the formation of new elite classes and new deprived sections. Due to industrialisation and urbanisation, professional classes and working classes emerged. Trade unions emerged as new organisations. Older economic institutions like *Jajmani* system perished with the arrival of money economy.

Modernisation was sometimes hindered by the undue emphasis by Indians on mysticism and renunciation. At times, a call to glorious past led to a dialectical situation, and tradition posed real challenge to the arrival of modernity. Even some negative elements like feudalism and casteism persisted. On the contrary, the West had succeeded in setting aside its feudal past. Individuals got prominence

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in modern industrial society which has not completely happened in the case of India. In fact, in various instances, caste and religion not only remained strong, but also became stronger. Technology, communication and literature were used to rediscover elements of tradition. So, Modernisation, in some way, strengthened some aspects of tradition as well. For example, now caste is not confined to ritual sphere only, caste association and casteism have made it even more conspicuous with better means of mobilisation.

There are many social thinkers who don not conform to the overall concept of Modernisation. K L Sharma, in his extensive studies conducted in villages of Rajasthan in 1960, concludes that Modernisation is not a *universalist* phenomenon in India, and it does not necessarily weaken traditional institutions like caste, religion and kinship. Instead, Modernisation in India is very selective and this *particularistic* Modernisation strengthened the traditionally privileged and elite groups, and weakened the position of the groups at margins. Due to many structural inconsistencies like bureaucratisation without universal values, democratisation without spread of education, modern legislations without the rule of law, Modernisation is very selective. As a result, democratic and nationalistic institutions have grown unevenly in India.

There is also a need to distinguish other similar sounding concepts like *social change* and *Westernisation* from *Modernisation*. Social change is a value neutral term and can be in any direction. It can be regressive as well. For example, radicalisation of society under the influence of right wing ideology is an example of social change sans Modernisation. Sanskritisation is another example where change is cultural and a community adopts the lifestyle of the upper castes or groups. Similarly, the change in food habits and attire that India has undergone in the past century or so is an example of Westernisation, but not of Modernisation. Similarly, whatever is contemporary is also not modern.

Modernisation is also deemed to have certain side-effects. Traditional Indian economic system was severely damaged and cultural values of Indians were represented as inferior in a prejudiced manner. Education was the worst sufferer and absence of mass education, along with the breakdown of traditional *guru-shishya parampara,* without its replacement, left the masses untouched from benefits of education. Modernisation itself was a lopsided one. Some regions benefited and others didn't, which laid the foundation of region based inequalities. Urban-rural inequalities were deepened even further and its repercussions are felt even today.

Today, in post-British period, in the sphere of rituals and religion also, Modernisation has influenced tradition. For example, a considerable part of rituals in India has direct reference to the pursuit of secular ends and morals. During the last few decades in particular, the economic, political and status dimensions of rituals have become increasingly conspicuous, and the number of cars lined up outside a wedding house and the VIPs who attended the wedding, provide the index to the household's standing in the local community. Religious leaders have also used technology to the hilt to increase their following. In fact, there has been an unprecedented growth of sects in recent times due to improved means of communication and mobilisation. Many of the temples in India offer e-*Darshana* for the devotees.

In political sphere also, democratic institutions are replacing traditional feudal institutions. Modern values of individualism and liberty drive most of the decisions in our lives. We are moving away from merely conforming to things to publically debating and discussing the traditional aspects of life. In

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the economic sphere, capitalism and market have largely replaced traditional forms of production and consumption. Indian society is becoming a consumerist society, in line with the global trend.

Cultural sphere is another big area where impact of Modernisation is very apparent. From eating habits to dressing, it is so prominent everywhere. McDonald and Domino's are household words. Levi's jeans have made a penetration into villages also. Vernaculars have absorbed numerous English words and the spread of English in India is perhaps most remarkable, as compared to other countries which became independent around the same time. This change is a mix of Westernisation and Modernisation. Religious celebrations have also gained secular meanings. Festivals like Diwali, Eid, Baisakhi and Christmas cut across religious lines in a cosmopolitan manner. Traditionally, seasonal cycles determined the days of the celebration, now dates for the celebration have been formalised on the official government calendars.

Yogendra Singh on Modernisation of Indian Tradition

He has critically examined the concept of cultural change through various processes like Sanskritisation, Westernisation and Little and Great Tradition in his work *Modernization of Indian Tradition, 1973*. He highlights the limitation of such concepts in explaining social change in India, as they explain only cultural dynamics and not structural changes. His idea of social change/Modernisation is essentially a combination of cultural as well as structural change. He has an integrated approach in analysing social change in India and he considers all factors of social change viz source of change (orthogenetic or heterogenetic), cultural change (Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Great Tradition, etc.) and structural change (at micro and macro level).

He adopts an evolutionary approach and his analysis has two dimensions –

I. First, he locates sources of social change as endogenous/orthogenetic or exogenous/heterogenetic. Orthogenetic sources include Sanskritisation, cultural renaissance, etc. which are endogenous sources of *cultural* change and migration, population change, elite circulation, royal successions, etc. are the endogenous sources of change at *structural* level. Heterogenetic sources of social change include Islamic influence in the medieval period and Western influence in the modern period.

II. In the second dimension, he views social change in India in terms of both changes in *social structure* and changes in *tradition/culture*. At the cultural level, Modernisation of tradition took place in the form of infusion of modern values of rationality, scientific outlook, modern education, urbanisation, struggle against social evils, and amelioration of caste system. According to him, theories of Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Little and Great Tradition, etc. were an attempt to explain only the ccultural change in society. On the other hand, at the structural level, institutions of bureaucracy, middle class, new class of industrial elite, army, working class, etc. were result of Modernisation of tradition in structural terms. These were largely at the macro level and had a pan-Indian effect.

III. Structural changes in tradition is studied from further two point of views –

   a. *Micro changes* in structure and are analogous to the Little Tradition, and they include linkages which have limited boundaries like related to a linguistic region and a kinship ties based territory. For example, changes in caste, family, village community, etc.

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b. *Macro changes* in structure and are analogous to the Great Tradition, and they include pan Indian relations like political, industrial, bureaucratic and urban structures. Roles of bureaucracy, industrial elite and political elite have been studied under this classification.

Both at micro level and macro level, structure offers resilience to the forces of Modernisation, and at times, a strain develops there as well. According to him, there is a relative independence between the two levels, and the changes at macro level often fail to have an effect at micro level. This explains the local cultural continuity in different parts of India and the selective syncretism it has witnessed. Similarly, innovation at one micro level didn't lead to breakdown of the social structure as a whole.

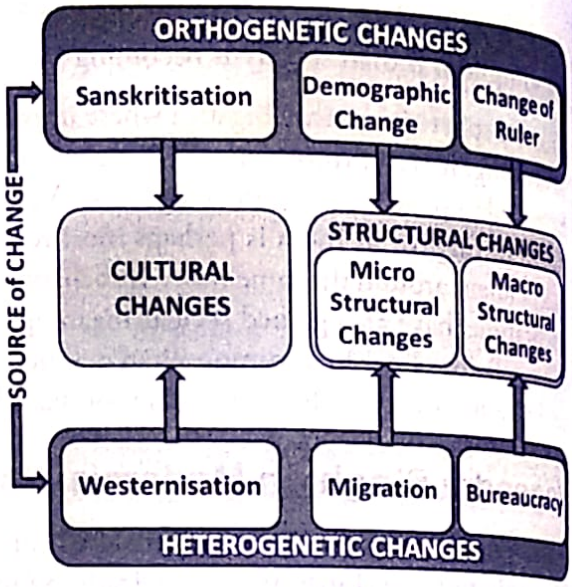

Fig. 12.2 Modernisation of Tradition

Changes in tradition started to manifest in considerable sense only after contact with the West, as earlier, contact with Islam didn't bring about Modernisation, as Islam also cherished values which were rooted in tradition. So, there was social change, but not Modernisation per se. Further, all the changes due to contact with the West were not modernising and some of them even reinforced traditional institutions. So, there is no clear contrariety between Modernisation and tradition.

In fact, Modernisation of tradition was selective, and micro structure was even deliberately left undisturbed by the colonial rulers. The colonial rulers distanced themselves from caste and village community. It was only after the communal electorate that some aspects of micro structure were significantly affected by modernising influence. National movement and social reforms also played their part in this Modernisation process.

He further argues that changes in tradition have been in nature of *adaptive changes* in traditional structure and not due to breakdown or dissociation. Thus, a form of *neo-traditionalisation* proceeds along with Modernisation.

Protests and Movements during the Colonial Period

From definitional perspective, protests are generally issue based and are relatively short lived as compared to movements. Colonial rule saw numerous types of protests and social movements arising out of discontent with colonial rules and structural disparities in Indian society. Colonial rule led to many changes in traditional social structure which were resisted by Indians. Their economic policies, religious policies and social policies led to reactions from various sections of Indians. There were some orthogenetic factors as well which played their role in giving birth to such movements and protests. Indian society, over a period of time, had developed certain defects which demanded intervention in the form of social movements. So, causes were both internal as well as external. For example, while peasant

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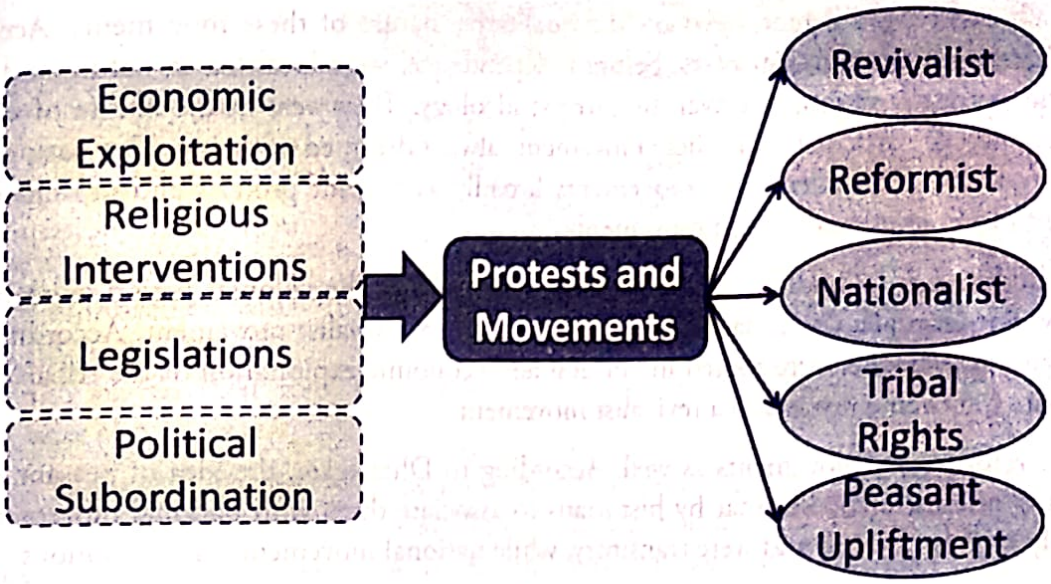

Fig. 12.3 Protests and Movements during the colonial period

movements were largely a result of excesses of colonial policies, caste movements were a result of internal fault lines in the Indian society.

Various social movements that evolved during the colonial period can be classified as tribal movements, backward class movements, peasants movements, women movements, religious movements, nationalistic movements, educational movements and industrial or labour movements. Most of them were issue based and concerned themselves with the fulfilment of certain minimum needs under an oppressive rule in an unequal society. Leadership of these movements was generally from inside, but some enlightened Europeans and leaders from emergent middle class also lent a helping hand. Most of them were driven by interest ideology, but some of them were also integrated with nationalistic ideology. For example, most of the peasant movements were guided by the interest ideology of a particular section of society, but women's movements were later integrated into mainstream freedom struggle. Ideology of many social movements was also influenced by the Western liberal ideas, to which, Indian society was exposed as a result of the colonial rule.

TEBHAGA MOVEMENT

It was a struggle of sharecroppers in Bengal and it was a militant campaign initiated by peasants with support of the *Kisan Sabha* (which was a peasants' front of Communist Party of India) in 1946. The demand of the *Tebhaga* (which literally means 'sharing by thirds') Movement was to reduce the share given to landlords to one third from the then existing half share.

In many areas, the agitations turned violent, and landlords fled from villages, leaving parts of the countryside in the hands of peasants associated with *Kisan Sabha*. As a response to the agitations, the then Muslim League ministry in the province launched reforms in the revenue structure, which provided that the share of the harvest given to the landlords would be limited to one third of the total harvest.

Main socio-religious reform movements were *Brahmo Samaj*, *Prarthna Samaj*, *Arya Samaj* and Aligarh Movement. Similarly, tribal movements were Rampa rebellion, Khond rebellion and Koya Rebellion. Peasant movements included Champaran Movement, Kheda Satyagraha and *Tebhaga* Movement.

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Different scholars have different views on the qualitative nature of these movements. According to Sumit Sarkar, movements and protests, before independence, were localised in nature and were not nationalistic as they were largely driven by interest ideology. They were in the nature of *millenarian movements* as people participating in these movements always dreamed of their golden past, which they aspired to revisit. He classified these movements broadly as peasant protests and movements, tribal protests and movements, and reform movements.

Similarly, Buddhadeb Choudhary classifies movements during the colonial period as revivalist and reactionary. For example, the Tana Bhagat movement was a revivalist movement. According to him, causes of such movements were rooted in cultural and economic exploitation of the tribals. Similarly, the Arya Samaj movement was also a revivalist movement.

There were reformatory movements as well. According to Dhanagare, the idea of peasant and tribal movement is often stretched too far by historians to associate them with national movement as they were mostly interest focused and were transitory, while national movement was continuous.

Many movements and protests gained considerable traction and also became part of nationalistic agenda. Peasant movements laid the foundation of agrarian reform agenda post-independence. Similarly, women's movements led to legislations like Anti Sati legislation and Sarda Act. Similarly, workers movement led to regulation of work hours. Religious reform movements like the Akali Movement led to reforms of Gurudwara management. Many of the movements, hence, achieved their objective fully or partially.

Protests and movements during colonial rules are also seen with scepticism by some scholars, as many of those movements, especially reform movements, saw only elite participation and they could never become mass movements to bring any significant structural change. So, they were often called as *denationalised and westernised* movements. Secondly, they are also accused of being narrow in their approach and most of the time, they were localised and often excluded those parts of India which fell under the princely states.

Movements during the colonial rule, in a way, also laid down the foundation of social change in India as many of them were institutionalised post-independence and ideas associated with them later took the form of legislative and policy reforms. They also, in a way, checked the decadence of Indian society and led to national awakening. Protests and movements during the colonial period also bred nationalistic sentiments and many of them worked in tandem with the national freedom struggle and ultimately helped in achieving independence.

Social Reforms during Colonial Rule

One silver lining of the colonial rule in India was that, it brought along with it, a set of modern ideas and a reformative approach. Much orthodoxy was prevalent in India when the British arrived. While Sati, child marriage and patriarchy ailed women, caste and untouchability ailed lower castes and educational backwardness, superstition and health problems ailed the society at large.

Social reforms during the colonial rule came as a result of both orthogenetic and heterogenetic changes. They were pursued by many enlightened British like William Bentick, Metcalfe and Ripon and by many other Western social activists like Madam Annie Besant. Many Western educated Indians like Raja Ram

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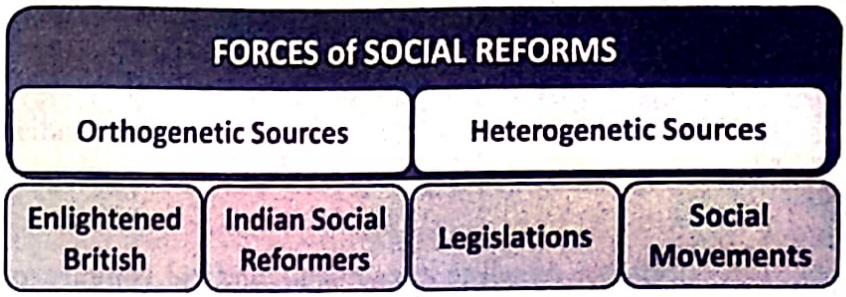

Fig. 12.4 Forces of Social Reforms

Mohan Roy and Justice Ranade and many local social reformers like Mahatma Gandhi, Jyotiba Phule and Narayan Guru also took the lead. Many indigenous social organisations like *Arya Samaj*, *Prarthana Samaj* and Women's organisations like Sarda Sadan and All India Women's Conference also played their role. Apart from these, various social legislations and institutional mechanisms were also in place.

Abolition of Sati Act, 1829 was perhaps the first major social legislation which was the work of enlightened Indian social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and British legislators. *Brahmo Samaj* worked especially for the upliftment of women. Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 was another landmark legislation which further strengthened the position of women. Later, other champions of women's rights like Margareta Cousins and Annie Besant strived for social and political rights for women. In 1843, The Indian Slavery Act was also passed.

Caste system was attacked by likes of Mahatma Gandhi and Jyotiba Phule, who also worked for women's upliftment. Ambedkar and Gandhiji also worked at ground level to reform the caste system. In 1850, Removal of the Caste Disability Act was also passed by the colonial government. Self-Respect Movement in South India was another example that opposed caste system. Temple entry and Guruvayur Satyagrah were other reformative movements.

Sarda Act, 1929 (Child Marriage Act) aimed at reforming institution of marriage in India, despite stiff opposition from conservative Hindu groups. Around the same time, many women driven institutions like All India Women's Conference were also formed.

Education was another area where social legislations were made. First major development in the field of education was made with the establishment of Woods Despatch in 1854 by the then Secretary of State Woods. It recommended promotion of both Western education at higher levels and vernacular education at primary level for education of masses. As a result of this Despatch, universities were established at Calcutta (in January 1857), Bombay (in July 1857), Madras (in September 1857), Punjab (in 1882) and Allahabad (in 1887). Another big push came in 1929, with the establishment of Hartog Commission, which recommended reforms at elementary level and university level.

Apart from the various state driven legislative and policy reforms, many enlightened Indians also pursued the reformative agenda. In fact, many of the government acts were a result of the active efforts by Indian social reformers. In princely states also, several efforts were made and Maharajas of Mysore and Baroda took many steps to promote education and to downgrade caste system. Social reforms were also an integral part of nationalistic agenda.

However, reformist agenda of British is taken with a pinch of salt by many scholars. Their educational policy undermined local knowledge base and traditional knowledge. Their bid to reform the tribals led to their alienation and tribal unrest. They also did not pay much attention on reforming caste due to fears of a cultural mutiny. Condition of women also remained deplorable till the time of independence. Condition of peasantry and rural inequalities worsened during the colonial rule.

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Question Bank

1. Colonial rule was both a boon and bane for the Indian society. Comment.
2. Colonial rule changed the basic structure of the Indian society in many ways. Explain with the help of examples.
3. Indian nationalism was authentic and real, contrary to the claims of some Western socio-political analysts. Comment.
4. What were the conditions that gave birth to the rise of Indian nationalism? Take one example of any other nationalism from the world and compare it with Indian nationalism.
5. Indian nationalism changed its form and character over a period of time to reach a stage of composite culture nationalism. Elaborate.
6. Why is nationalism a parochial ideology according to Guru Rabindranath Tagore?
7. What do you understand by Modernisation of Indian tradition? Are we modern?
8. Modernisation of India was a result of colonial rule. Comment.
9. While Indian tradition was influenced by the modernising forces, it was also affecting modernity in a dialectical fashion.
10. Is Modernisation same as Westernisation? If not, differentiate between the two terms.
11. Modernisation of Indian tradition was driven by both the external and internal forces.
12. Modernisation of Indian tradition purged the tradition of many distortions which had crept into the Indian society over the years. Elaborate.
13. Colonial rule was a basket of contradictions which gave birth to numerous social movements in India. Discuss this statement in the light of the various political, economic and social movements that started during the colonial rule.
14. Social movements in colonial India were driven by both interest ideology and nationalistic cause. Illustrate with the help of examples.
15. How did western ideas influence the reformist drive in India during the colonial rule?
16. The silver lining of the oppressing foreign rule was that it infused modern thought into the minds of an illuminated few, who later became the torchbearers of social reform agenda in colonial India. Elaborate this statement with reference to the contribution of early social reformers in India.
17. Despite centuries of social reforms, condition of certain sections of Indian society remains a matter of concern. Discuss the statement.
18. Indian society is still living with a colonial hangover. Comment.

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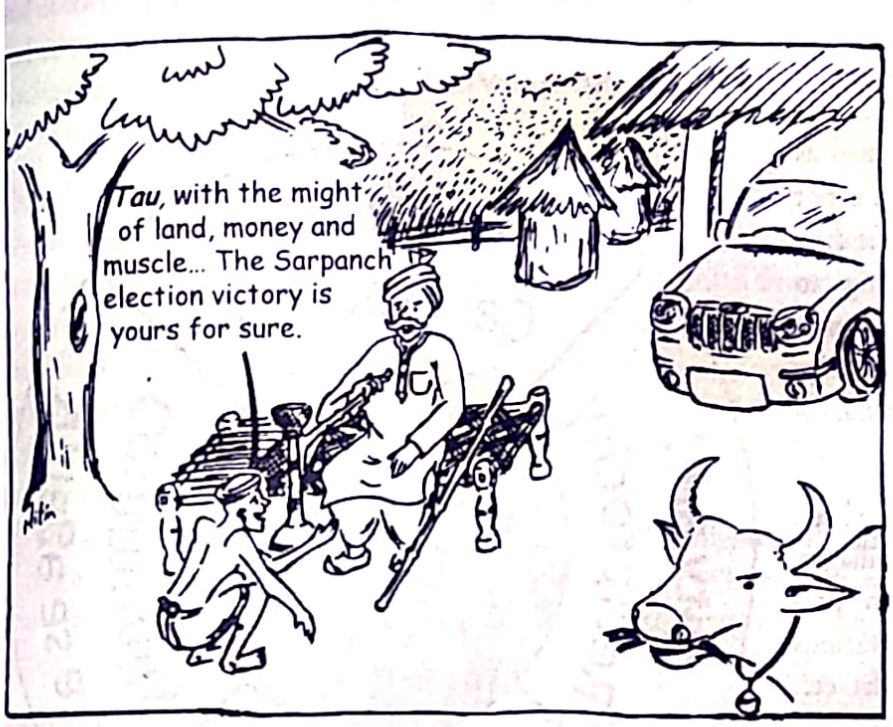
Rural and Agrarian Social Structure

13



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about the form and structure of Indian villages
2. Explain the role of villages in shaping the Indian society
3. Study about the various perspective of Indian villages
4. Understand the evolution of land tenure systems in India
5. Know about land reforms

Villages are the key ingredient of Indian national identity. British rulers derived most of their incomes from land revenue, and village administration was central to the overall maintenance of their empire. For this reason, they had to develop an intimate understanding of the villages and as a result, a lot of village studies were also conducted; first by the practicing administrators and later by ethnographers and anthropologists. Later, village studies became important for the implementation of the development agenda of the government of independent India. While colonial rulers viewed village as a closed and orthodox unit, the reality was much different and was challenged by Indian scholars. Even today, land is a key source of income and social status in rural areas. And for this reason, after independence, all the early governments have also laid great emphasis on land reforms.

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Rural Social Structure includes all the social institutions like caste, class, kinships and religion etc. and their interrelationships. Agrarian social structure primarily includes social institutions and relations which are directly linked with land and agriculture.

Changes have occurred in social structure and leadership in villages after gaining independence due to various factors like land reforms, social legislation, Panchayati Raj, parliamentary politics, development programs and agrarian movements.

Idea of Indian Village

Historically, India has been deemed as a land of villages. Village in India is not merely a spatial unit, but it is Indian society in miniature. According to Andre Beteille – *Village was not merely a place where people lived. It had a design in which were reflected the basic values of Indian society.*

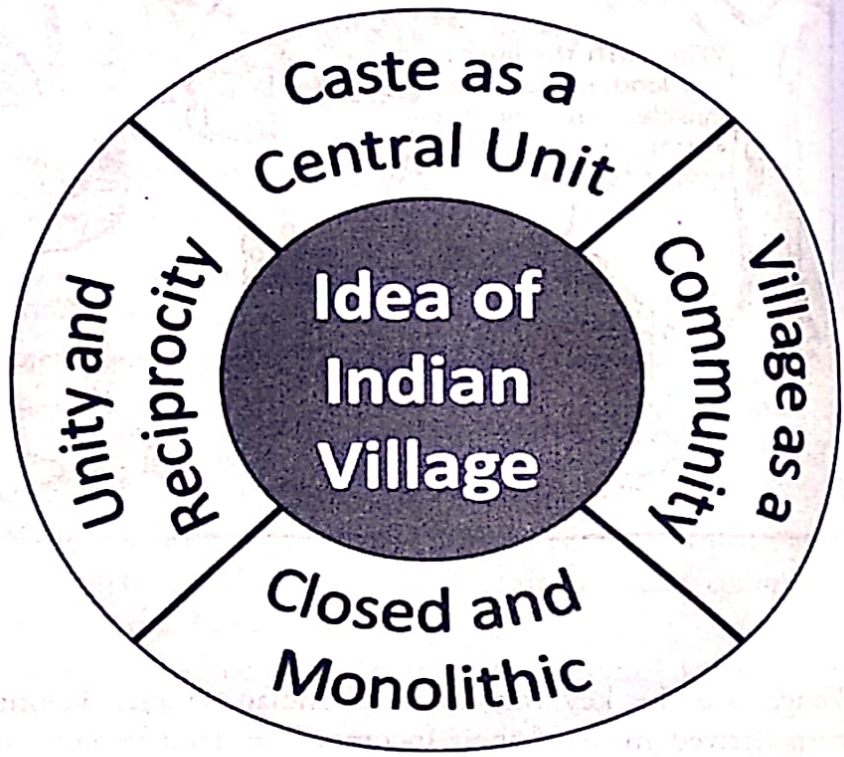

Fig. 13.1 Idea of Indian Village

Since ancient times, attempts have been made to understand Indian villages. The idea of Indian villages in pre-British period is drawn from various Indological sources, literary works, etc. Generally, villages were considered as micro-cosmos of traditional Hindu social organisation and were mainly understood in cultural terms.

Academically, the early idea of Indian village was developed mainly by using a book view by the British administrators and scholars. The Indian village was understood and portrayed as unchanging by British officials like Metcalfe. Metcalfe saw Indian villages as little republic monolithic, atomistic and unchanging. He wrote *Village communities are little republics, having everything they want within themselves and independent of any foreign relations.* Western writers saw in the Indian villages, a remnant or survival from what was called *the infancy of society.* Others like Maine, Munroe, and Baden Powell, too, had similar views. Religion was seen as an orthodox social unit and caste as an essential part of village life. Further, early view was also influenced by the colonial interests. Land was the biggest source of colonial revenues, and to have an effective control over the masses, the colonial masters needed an adequate understanding of Indian villages.

There was another extreme view of the Nationalists, who glorified Indian village as an *authentic model* of true India and a storehouse of Indian culture and civilisation. They also used Indological sources selectively and highlighted the positives of ancient Indian society. Village was seen as an over-

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harmonised social unit which embodied the core values of the Indian society. Village life was deemed as a symbol of pure and simple life. However, there were the likes of Gandhi too who were careful enough to not glorify the decay of villages over times, but at the same time, they also celebrated the simplicity of a village life. Gandhi also recognised the centrality of villages in the development and upliftment of the society as a whole. Another contrasting view is provided by Ambedkar, who himself witnessed the contradictions and even tragedies of the village life. He had a dim view of the village life and according to him, the Indian village is a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and communalism, marked by exclusion, exploitation, and untouchability. Marxist scholars also don not have a very benign view of Indian village. They view it as a bag of contradiction in which a powerful few dominate the social and economic life of the Indian village.

The colonial idea of Indian village was greatly corrected upon by later Indologists like Ghurye and other scholars. Some rural surveys done post 1920s, to get an economic picture of hinterlands, also helped in the formation of a new picture. For example, the Punjab Board of Economic Enquiry in 1920s and the Bengal Board of Economic Enquiry of 1930s conducted such surveys. J C Kumarappa, a Gandhian economist, also made significant contributions. At Gandhi's request, he prepared an economic survey of rural Gujarat, which he published as *A Survey of Matar Taluka in the Kheda District, 1931*. He strongly supported Gandhi's notion of village industries and promoted Village Industries Associations. Idea of an Indian village matured significantly with the establishment of Sociology as a discipline. Oppression of British rule and its socio-economic impact were highlighted. Peasant struggles and impoverishment of peasantry were also highlighted. It was shown that villages were not as isolated as the British had projected them to be. There was migration, village exogamy and inter-village economic ties in the form of *Jajmani* system.

A more realistic picture was presented by the numerous field studies that were carried out right after independence in 1950s, i.e., the book view gave way for field work for a more realistic assessment of villages. Villages were also studied in terms of their economic basis. Cropping patterns were studied and the agrarian structures were analysed. Evils prevailing in the Indian villages were also realistically assessed and a holistic account of not only the economic condition, but also of the social and cultural situation was taken.

According to Dumont- *A 'village is far more than a locale, more than just a collection of houses and fields'.* Similarly, according to Andre Beteille in his study *Sripuram: A Village in Tanjore District, 1962*, '*At least as far back in times as living memory goes, there was no reason to believe that village was fully self-sufficient even in economic sphere*'. Observations by others scholars also indicate that due to enormous structural and cultural variations among the villages, they cannot be confined in strict typological terms.

After independence, riding on the civic reforms, land reforms and establishment of rule of law, traditional inequalities in village came under great strain in 1950s. With the abolition of land revenue, villages developed a different pattern of relation with the revenue officials. New schemes of Panchayati Raj and Community Development also changed the picture of the traditional Indian village. Today, competition for resources has increased in villages and at times, there are conflicts too. Power dynamics have also changed due to the arrival of universal adult suffrage and elections. As a result, the role of caste Panchayats has also been diluted except in a few ritual spheres.

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In the past couple of decades, the ideal typical image of the villages has undergone a sea change. Introduction of a uniform Panchayati Raj system after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1992 has significantly altered the power equations in the villages. Power struggle is now open to all sections as the numerical strength provides voice to even the erstwhile voiceless sections. In the recent years, the spread of communication media has also altered the cultural profile of the villages. Urban and modern values are penetrating villages at a speed never witnessed before. According to Dipankar Gupta, the Indian village is shrinking as a sociological reality, though; it exists as a spatial unit. Village as a social unit is now so well-connected with the outside world that the colonial notion of village as a closed unit seems now to be almost redundant.

A realistic conceptualisation of the Indian village remains important even today because as per the 2011 census of India, almost 70 per cent of the Indian population still lives in villages. However, village, as a social concept, has become less romantic to the social researchers as well as to the popular mass media. A very few village studies have been commissioned by the government of academic institutions. If we look at the recent Bollywood releases, there are hardly any movies which depict the village life or village issues, a trend quite contrary to the early decades after independence. For contemporary scholars like Ashis Nandy, village is no longer a village in itself but a counterpoint to the city, a fantasy village for the city. According to him–'*It is no longer a living presence in mainstream Indian intellectual life, and is gradually taking on the form of a demographic or statistical datum only and even something like some lost objects in Indian society*'.

Dipankar Gupta, in a recent article *Whither the Indian Village, 2005* (in the Economic and Political Weekly), has argued that – '*The twin shackles that once decided matters for India's villagers, caste and agriculture, no longer exercise their vigorous hold*'. This is largely possible because, according to him, agriculture is no longer the mainstay of rural economy and caste no longer the only determinant of social status. Fluidity of occupations, identity politics and so on, has weakened the caste as an institution. Similar conclusion about the decline of these two markers in shaping the identity of Indian village has been arrived at by Harriss, Nagraj , in their article *Land, Labour and Caste Politics in Rural Tamil Nadu in the 20th Century: Iruvelpattu, 2010* and they demonstrate how village, as a social unit, has changed over the past century in the rural hinterlands of Tamil Nadu. According to them, caste as an institution in the villages has weakened as Dalits have delinked themselves significantly from the agrarian labour and non-farm employment accounts for 40 per cent of all employment.

Villages may no longer contribute that significantly to economy, but they are still a storehouse of cultural and social values for many social analysts. Even today, most of the schemes of the government have a distinct rural focus. Due to the apparent distress in agriculture sector in the recent years, idea of Indian village has again come into a sharp focus. Farmers' suicides, rural-urban inequalities and honour killings are the new dimensions that accentuate the idea of Indian village.

Village Studies

Village studies, as the name itself implies, are the field studies of rural areas. They are a departure from the earlier prevailing Indological approach which was more of an arm-chair approach focused upon forming an image of the present with the help of past inferences. Village studies used participant observation and ethnographical approaches as the primary investigative tools to generate an empirical image of the villages which was closer to contemporary reality.

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Though some field work was also done in the pre-independence period, village studies became a prominent feature of study of Indian society in 1950s-60s. Earlier they were either led by colonial administrators or Indologists. Study of Indian villages began in 18th century itself with intensive survey of land holdings. Early approaches included those influenced by the book view and such studies formed a textually informed orthodox view of Indian villages. Purpose of such colonial studies was either to make an economic assessment or to draw a cultural map of India for its rulers. W H R River's study of the Todas of Nilgiri in 1906 was based on intensive field work and was perhaps the first monograph on people of India in the modern anthropological tradition. '*Behind Mud Walls, 1930*' was another landmark study written by William H Wiser and his wife Charlotte Wiser, a missionary couple who lived for five years in a village in United Provinces. W H Wiser also wrote *The Hindu Jajmani System, 1936* based on his extensive village studies from 1925-30 in the town of Karimpur near Agra.

Village studies marked a subtle shift from book view to field view in Indian sociology, and rejected the static view of village and even corrected the colonial stereotype. Since sociologists considered village as the foundation for understanding the Indian society, village studies are important. They were also important to gauge the true picture of villages to properly plan and implement developmental policies in a newly independent nation whose population was predominantly rural. The 'village community' was identified as the social foundation of the peasant economy in India. Village studies also meant study of caste, inequality and other social evils that marred the rural Indian society.

After Independence, the major agenda was to study villages so as to find out the socio-economic makeup so that realistic policies may be formulated by the government. Economic surveys were done along with anthropological studies. While economists used quantitative techniques and their method was 'more scientific', the anthropological approach had its own advantages. Anthropological studies provided qualitative analysis. Village studies now included all the dimensions of study – structure, culture and change.

In the 1950s, many anthropologists and sociologists, both Indian and foreign, began working on village life and society. Village studies were important because they provided Indian sociology with a subject that was of great interest in newly independent India. The government was greatly interested in developing the rural India. Government was sceptical about the information provided by the officials whose British umbilical cord was still not completely severed and wanted to conduct fresh academic surveys of villages. Even urban educated Indians were interested in village life because most of them retained some kinship and historical links to villages. Above all, villages were the places where most Indians lived (and still do).

Among the first works on the subject, *Village India: Studies in the Little Community, 1955* by McKim Marriott, was published under the direct supervision of Redfield. The book carries the anthropological accounts by M N Srinivas, Kathleen Gough, Bernard Cohn, Oscar Lewis, Mandelbaum, etc. and of McKim Marriott himself. In this book, eight Indian villages, in seven different linguistic areas and five provinces are illuminated with a detailed analysis of caste, community structure, personality, religion, world view and the then prevailing forces of social change. Marriott also introduced the concepts of *Universalisation* and *Parochialisation* to describe the historical process of interaction between village and the greater culture. This was perhaps the first book to bring together a number of authoritative studies on a number of Indian villages.

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M N Srinivas compiled many essays in the form of a book with the title *India's Villages* in 1955. Perhaps the best known example of field work is reported in M N Srinivas' famous book, *The Remembered Village, 1976*. Srinivas spent nearly a year in a village near Mysore that he named Rampura. The Indian village and village society remained a life-long focus of interest for Srinivas. Using historical and sociological evidence, Srinivas showed that the village had, in fact, experienced considerable change. Moreover, villages were never self-sufficient, and had been involved in various kinds of economic, social and political relationships at the regional level.

Andre Beteille in his study *Sripuram: A Village in Tanjore District, 1962* stated that – '*At least as far back in times as living memory goes, there was no reason to believe that village was fully self sufficient even in economic sphere* '. Such later studies broke various previous stereotypes of Indian society.

A R Desai, on the other hand, viewed Indian village as isolated, at least, in economic terms. He added a new dimension by using Marxist perspective in his works *Rural Sociology in India, 1969* and *Peasant Struggles in India, 1979*.

Village studies presented many results and explained village in terms of its features like –

INDIAN VILLAGE

S C Dube published his full length study of a village Shamirpet near Hyderabad, in his *Indian Village* in 1955. It is a milestone in village studies tradition in India as it was the first full length work on a single village and was holistic in its approach. As a social anthropologist at Osmania University, Dube was a part of a multidisciplinary team including the departments of agricultural sciences, economics, veterinary sciences and medicine; that studied Shamirpet. This large collective project was meant not only to study the village but also to develop it. In fact, Shamirpet was meant to be a sort of laboratory where experiments in designing rural development programs could be carried out. Dube had identified six factors that contributed towards the status differentiation in the village community of Shamirpet which were – landownership, position in government service and village organisation, wealth, age, religion and caste, and distinctive personality traits. Dube described the village on the same lines on which Robert Redfield conducted his first village study in Mexico in 1930. Later on, in 1958, in collaboration with The Cornell-India Program, he came up with *India's Changing Villages*, where he advocated an interventional role of social sciences.

I. These studies helped in contesting the dominant stereotype of the Indian village made popular by the colonial administrators. They showed that India's villages had been well integrated into the broader economy and society of the region even before the colonial rule introduced new agrarian legislation.

II. These studies also offered an alternative to the dominant book-view of India constructed by Indologists and Orientalists from the Hindu scriptures. They broke many notions like caste is completely a closed group.

III. Village is not a homogeneous entity in time and space and is internally differentiated in diverse groupings and has a complex structure of social relations. Studies by Karve and Kolenda studied variations in kinship and family.

IV. Primary focus of these studies was on the social and ritual life of the village people, but they also deepened our understanding of the political and economic life in the rural society.

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V. Village is an important source of identity for villagers. They attach notions of respect, insult and pride with their village. Insult of one's village, according to Srinivas, has to be avenged like insult of one's father, brother and wife. Adrian Mayer termed such solidarity as *Village patriotism*.

VI. Despite caste and community diversity, village is united in its economic, social and ritual patterns by ties of mutual and reciprocal obligations. Great value is attached to neighbourhood and village as a community. At the same time, these studies also highlighted various dysfunctional aspects of village life.

VII. Village life is also viewed as essentially a religious life.

VIII. Some of the studies also cautioned against an over harmonised picture. Studies by F G Bailey, Lewis, Andre Beteille, etc. also highlighted divisive tendencies. F G Bailey, for example provided a radical critique of the *unity-reciprocity* thesis and highlighted the coercive aspects of caste relations. Similarly, Beteille had argued in his study of village Sripuram that – *'Village as a whole is constituted a unit in a physical sense and, to a much lesser extent, in the social sense.'* He also highlighted the gender dimension and according to him, village was not only caste conscious, it was also class and gender conscious.

IX. It was from the village studies that the concepts like Sanskritisation, dominant caste, segmental structures, harmonic and disharmonic systems emerged.

Village studies post-independence, thus, provided a much holistic, diverse and authentic picture of the Indian village. However, village studies were also constrained by a number of factors. According to Yogendra Singh, they were limited in their focus as they studied micro cosmos and didn't develop any new theoretical perspective which could be applied in other villages as well. The method of participant observation that was the main strength of these studies also imposed certain limitations on the fieldworkers. It also limited their access to the dominant groups in the local society. They chose to avoid asking all those questions or approaching those subordinate groups, which they thought, could offend the dominant interests in the village. The anxiety of the researchers to get accepted by the village community sometimes made their work conservative in outlook. Further, different sections of village had a different picture of village based on their social position. This made the choice of researchers difficult to arrive at a single narrative.

Studies during 1980s and 1990s were far less, yet, much focused in approach. These mainly contained the idea of revisiting the village or focusing on specific issue like status of women, Dalit issues and impact of green revolution etc. Surinder S Jodhka, in his *Village Society, 2012*, calls for a reformation in the approach of the village studies to keep pace with the contemporary developments. According to him, new theoretical concerns such as gender and ecology should also be combined with the existing preoccupations. To this end, he suggests new approaches, under which, the sociologists may go and put up tents on railway platforms or visit *taluk* headquarters or local *thanas*, rather than taking the usual approach of staying with the old village *pradhan*, to understand new kind of *ruralities* which are not confined to the physical boundaries of the villages per se. This will be different from the approach of the conventional village studies as the new approach will be like a multistage ethnographical venture.

New areas of village studies have also been explored in recent decades, but their scale and scope has remained limited. A M Shah lamented this situation and said that after the first major wave of village studies in 1950s, no major studies have been done into subjects like horizontal groupings of the caste,

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marriage and gender issues specific to India. In some recent examples, like, Professor Leela Gulati, in her *Male Migration from Kerala: Some Effects on Women, 1987*, analysed the contribution made by women, both in terms of participation in preparing for migration and coping with it. Mukul Sharma in his, *Everyday Life of Musahars in North Bihar, 1999*, explored the struggle of *Musahar* or the mouse eating community and its attempts to break the shackles of caste, disrupt the privileged order and create a new one.

Agrarian Social Structure – Evolution of Land Tenure System and Land Reforms

The term *agrarian structure* is often used to refer to the structure or distribution of landholding and tenure systems because agricultural land is the most important productive resource in rural areas and the access to land shapes the rural class structure as welllso Historically, caste and land were also linked. Usually, dominant and upper castes had the control over the land and the lower castes barely had any land. Thus, land, caste and class were intimately linked.

Tenure is derived from the Latin word *teneo,* which means *to hold.* It refers to conditions under which land is held and describes the nature of the relationship between the owner and the tenant. Land was the centre piece of Indian economy in the past and still holds an important place in it.

Historically, land in India was not a private property and was held as a matter of traditional right. Coomaraswamy indicates that it belonged to the village community. Majumdar indicates it belonged to the king. According to A R Desai, king was only a partial owner as he had given rights over the land to certain groups like officers and priests. During the Sultanate period also, big changes in tenure system didn't happen, however Mughal period saw considerable changes and traditional right was still accepted, but in exchange of taxes. Monetary tax was also introduced over a period of time and the empire was systematically divided into units like *Pargana* and Taluks and officers like *Zamindars* and *Talukdars* were appointed to extract revenue. Some other forms of tenure like *Ryotwari*, *Patta* were also in vogue. After Aurangzeb's death, centralised power of Mughal Empire declined and land was leased to the highest bidder for a fixed sum. However, land tenure system in modern sense evolved only during the British period.

British rule made significant changes in land tenure system and land was linked to the market for the first time. British introduced three broad systems of land tenure (which they termed as *land reforms*) viz *Zamindari* System, *Ryotwari* System and *Mahalwari* System.

Zamindari System was introduced during Cornwallis in 1793, in areas of Bengal and Bihar. This was also called *Permanent Settlement System* as land was settled permanently with the Zamindar, who was given the land for a fixed sum and payment to British government at a fixed rate. In turn, Zamindar was given the right to collect land revenue. This system didn't work out as envisaged and sub-Zamindars and a hierarchy of Zamindars emerged. Zamindars often charged unreasonably high land revenue over and above the official limits. Land revenue was as high as three fourth of the produce in some areas. It led to mass impoverishment in these areas and it also pushed the agriculture into backwardness as Zamindars had no incentives to invest in land for improving its productivity.

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Ryotwari System was introduced in Madras and other provinces by Munro and Reed and was extended to Bombay as well. Munro became the Governor of Madras in 1820 and introduced this system. Under this, in contrast to the Zamindari system, each Ryot or peasant was recognised as a proprietor by law. Thus, revenue was paid directly by the peasant to the government. Hence, this reduced some of the hardship of the peasantry. However, this system was no less exploitative. Small Zamindars were replaced by the state as a bigger Zamindar and government officials often exploited the peasantry class. A new class of peasants was created in the long run which were subordinate to Ryots or proprietors and instances of agriculture labour increased. As Ryots were often expected to pay revenue even in case of crop failure and natural calamities, the system led to mass abdication of land rights by the distressed peasantry.

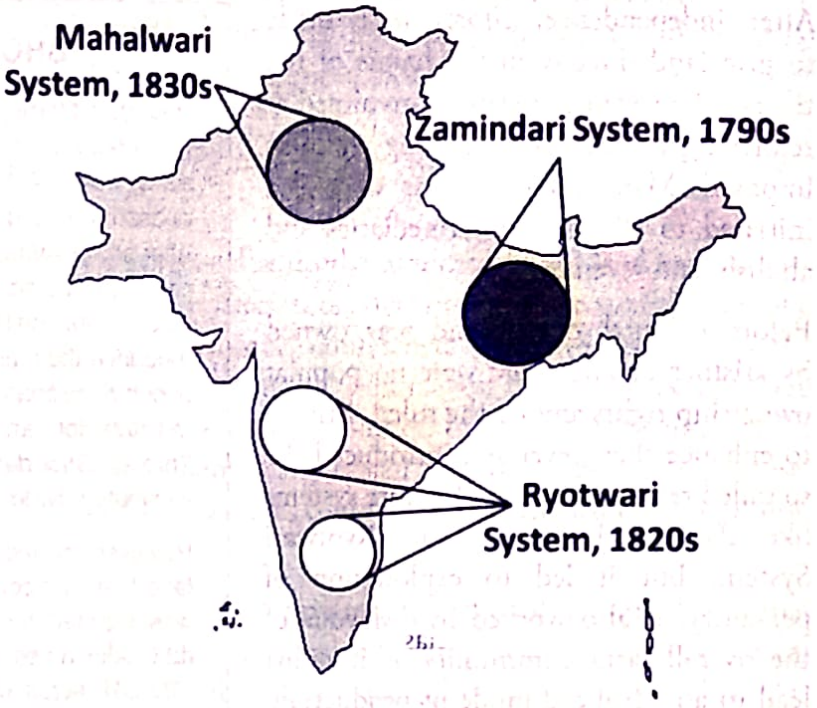

Fig. 13.2 Agrarian Social Structure

Mahalwari System was introduced by McKenzie in UP and Punjab in 1833. In this, settlement was done with the entire village. Panchayat acted as an intermediary in this system. Each villager had a fixed share and in distress, other villagers could make up for his share. *Mahal* or village was a fiscal unit in this system instead of small land tracts.

Apart from these three predominant systems, there were also other systems like *Jagirdari and Talukdari*. Land tenure system during the British period negatively affected the rural economy and social setup in multiple ways –

I. *Economic impact* – It led to mass proletarianisation of peasantry and its impact was the maximum in Zamindari areas. Land was commercialised. In some areas, commercial farming was also promoted. Traditional crops gave way to cash-crops. In many areas, good land was diverted to cash-crops. High taxes pushed rural areas into indebtedness. These systems discouraged investment and capital formation in Indian agriculture and as a result, Indian agriculture remained backward. It was compounded by the slow pace of industrialisation in India, and as landholdings depleted, agriculture became over-crowded and its consequences were visible in the prolonged distress in the agrarian economy in the years to come.

II. *Social impact* – It was closely wedded with economic impact as it gradually altered the agrarian social structure. New social classes were formed. Caste was compounded by class. Social inequalities were widened leading to conflicts. Whole social fabric including *Jajmani* system, family and Panchayat underwent a change.

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After independence, efforts were made to give land directly in the hands of the tillers. Many state led legislations aimed at reforming tenancy laws. Ceiling was also imposed. Many other reforms were also initiated to eliminate intermediaries and abolish land revenue.

Before colonial times, land was owned by aristocracy and there were no popular ownership rights among the ruled. British, to enhance their revenues, introduced the so called reforms in form of tenure systems like Zamindari System and Ryotwari System, but it led to exploitation of peasantry. It also worked in disfavour of the overall farm community as it didn't lead to an advanced mode of production. Agriculture in India remained backward, productivity declined as land holding's size decreased and peasants often left their lands to escape oppressive revenue and tenure terms. In this background, land reforms were required to both ameliorate the condition of farmers as well as to introduce a scientific outlook in Indian agriculture.

BHOODAN AND GRAMDAN

Bhoodan literally means giving away of the land. The *Bhoodan* movement was launched in 1951 by Gandhian social worker Acharya Vinoba Bhave immediately after the peasant uprising in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. After some years, another movement known as *Gramdan* came into being in 1957. The objective was to persuade landowners and leaseholders in each concerned village to renounce their land rights, after which all the lands would become the property of a village association for egalitarian redistribution and for the purpose of joint cultivation. Through *Bhoodan* and *Gramdan*, Vinoba Bhave hoped to eliminate private ownership of land.

However, the movement failed to meet its target, and the land that was collected was also either of poor quality or was disputed in many instances. Of the total land of about 42.6 lakh acres received through *Bhoodan*, more than 17.3 lakh acres were rejected as that was found unfit for cultivation.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, a series of land reform laws were passed by the Indian government and the state governments to improve the condition of farmers, to bring food security, to bring agriculture out of colonial backwardness and to improve the efficiency of Indian agriculture. Thus, goal was not only to bring about social justice, but also to improve productivity of land. Social justice was planned by eliminating intermediaries, conferring land rights on landless and removing taxes.

First major landmark was in form of *Report of Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee, 1949* authored by J C Kumarappa. Its biggest recommendation was abolition of feudal intermediaries. It called for land to the tiller. Second Plan also suggested sweeping reforms. Land reforms in India were primarily from *above* in form of legislations. However, some movements like *Bhoodan*, *Gramdan* were also started, aiming at reforms from *below*. There were also some other efforts in the form of militant movements as in case of Telangana Movement, Naxalbari and Bargadari Movements, which coerced governments to enact enabling legislations. Major areas of reforms included –

I. *Abolition of intermediaries* – The first important legislation dealt with the abolition of the Zamindari system and elimination of intermediaries. Revenue system and taxes were abolished. This was relatively successful as there was general negative perception towards Zamindars and intermediaries. As a result of abolition of intermediaries between 1950 and 1960, nearly 20 million cultivators in the country were brought into direct contact with the Government.

II. *Tenancy reforms* – Among the other major land reform laws that were introduced, were the tenancy reforms, security of tenure and rent regulation Acts. In West Bengal and Kerala, there

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was a radical restructuring of the agrarian structure that gave land rights to the tenants. In West Bengal, *Operation Barga* was launched under communist leadership which led to the passing of legislation as well as forced occupation of sharecroppers. But in other parts of the country, it didn't take off very well. Land owners were apprehensive of entering into formal contracts as they were sceptical that prolonged occupancy of tenants may deprive original owners of their lands. As a result, tenancy reforms were implemented in just four per cent of the area.

III. *Land ceilings and redistribution of land holdings* – The third major category of land reform laws were the Land Ceiling Acts. But in most of the states, these Acts proved to be toothless despite their major revision in 1972 after the Chief Ministers' conference. Only two per cent of the operational area could be brought under it. Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and Assam were a few exceptions. Flawed laws, frequent litigations, and collusion of landlords, administrators and politicians marred these reforms. Government clearly lacked a political will to pursue these. By the end of the tenth plan, only 2.09 million hectares could be distributed among 5.5 million beneficiaries.

IV. *Reorganisation and consolidation of land holdings* – Reorganisation of agriculture was also carried out in the form of consolidation of land holdings, cooperative farming, etc. Small uneconomical landholdings were grouped together and redistributed to make cultivation economical. It also had a limited impact, except in states of Haryana and Punjab, where, Green Revolution made it a requirement as fertilizers and HYV application required consolidated holdings. As of 2003, the total area consolidated was 66.10 million hectares, against a total cultivable area of 142 million hectares.

V. *Cooperative farming* – It was mooted on the pattern of socialist economies to gain from economies of scale, but remained almost a non-starter.

VI. *Up-gradation of land records* – It was also taken up as lack of land records was one of the biggest hurdles in the implementation of land reforms and conferment of titles. This activity is still going on. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) brought out a *Vision Document for Computerisation of Land Records* in 1999 to bring uniformity in land administration. This document, for the first time, spoke about the standardisation of a Land Information System. States like Karnataka have taken a lead in this direction and with the launch of the programs like *Digital India Land Record Modernisation Program*, by the year 2017, most of the states have rolled out their respective programs. Some states like Haryana have even gone ahead with plans of seeding *Aadhar* into the land record data.

VII. *Granting of homestead rights* – It provided for construction of homes on agriculture land. It was also a pressing issue as the colonial laws had put severe restrictions on the construction of homes on the agricultural lands and it compounded the problem of landlessness with homelessness.

However, there were marked hurdles in implementation of land reforms. The old system resisted the new. Many big Zamindars took the benefits of the loopholes in legislations. Major hurdles in Land Reforms included –

I. *Socio cultural factors* – Traditional sentiments attached with land, ignorance about the potential of land-reorganisation, etc. hindered consolidation and redistribution. Caste hierarchies also

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obstructed the process and community farming failed. As a result of these, consolidation was also largely dropped by every state.

II. *Legal factors* – In the case of tenancy laws, burden of proof lied with the tenant. Loopholes were liberally exploited by rich farmers. According to Khusro's 1959 study, land was forcefully evicted and was fraudulently shown as *voluntarily surrendered.*

III. *Politico administrative factors* – Bureaucracy was uncommitted and was hand in glove with rich farmers. Courts also failed to deliver uniform and time-bound judgments in favour of the implementation of the legislations.

The agrarian structure varies greatly across India, and the progress of land reforms has also been uneven across the states. In West Bengal, redistribution work was carried out quite successfully; in Haryana and Punjab consolidation work was done quite effectively, in Karnataka land record Modernisation was implemented effectively. However, in all the instances, rights of women on land were totally ignored.

Consequences of land reforms were felt in the form of tenant-owner relations, power equations in villages, impact on rural inequalities, food security, etc. and social impacts of which were both positive and negative –

I. *Redistribution of land* – Land reforms have resulted in redistribution of land and systematisation of land records. Intermediaries were largely abolished and ownership rights were awarded to some 200 lakh tenants. More than 53 lakh acres of land was redistributed and most of the beneficiaries were SCs and STs.

II. *Impact on joint family* – Concept of individual ownership under revised land ceiling Acts led to the breakdown of joint family as authority of the *Karta* declined. To escape land ceiling, theoretical partition of land was done in many instance which eventually led to the actual divisions in the family.

III. *Increased rural inequalities* – A section of social researchers also claim that rural inequalities increased due to land reforms. For example, incidence of land lease reduced due to fear of alienation of land and as a result, incidences of agricultural labourer increased. A form of *concealed tenancy* was put into practice. Due to ineffective land distribution, landless household number increased from 9.6 per cent in 1971 to 11.2 per cent in 1992. The 2011 Socio Economic and Caste Census puts nearly 5.40 crore households in the landless-labourer category.

IV. *Impact on agrarian class structure* – Agrarian class structure underwent complete transformation. Landlords were replaced by rich farmers and tenants were replaced by marginal farmers and agricultural laborers. Due to redistribution of land, share of Backward Castes/Classes swelled. As per a study by Zoya Hasan, share of Backward Classes in ownership of land increased from eight per cent before Independence to 38 per cent in 1989.

V. *Social conflicts* – Land has also been a symbol of power and domination. When land was being redistributed, the erstwhile dominant castes retaliated the land alienation in many ways, which also included violent backlashes. In Bihar, caste *senas* like Ranvir Sena and Diamond Sena were formed.

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VI. *Migration* – Poor implementation of land reforms and eviction of tenants rendered large population in poorer states to take to agricultural labour in other prosperous states. Rich farmers also resorted to self cultivation and traditional social ties broke. This led to rural-urban migration.

VII. *Impact on caste system* – Land reforms led to emergence of strong middle peasant castes. Traditional cultivator classes were the largest beneficiaries. After the success of Green Revolution, many such castes emerged as dominant castes. Post 1970s, political consolidation of these castes projected their interests on national and state level political theater as well. Rudolph and Rudolph, in their book *In Pursuit of Lakshmi, 1987* termed this growing of rich middle class farmers as *Bullock Capitalists*

VIII. *Homestead rights* – Peasants also derived the right to make homes on agricultural land without change of use of land.

With limited success of land reforms, several steps need immediate attention. Proper identification of land above ceiling and identification of *Benami* transfers is the top most issue today as it is also linked with the land redistribution policy. Improvement of wasteland and transferring it to the needy is another area which can go a long way, given the fact that land is a limited resource. Legal and physical support to tenants against their eviction from the homestead is another area of concern. New emerging issues like land degradation (in areas like Punjab), watershed management and wasteland management have given the agenda of land reforms, a new direction. Concerned intelligentsia and social activists have also warned of the complacent position that government has taken in the wake of liberalisation and the fact is that it has almost de facto declared land as a market commodity. Hence, land acquisition has also become a much debated issue. As a result of the overwhelming demand from the agrarian community, the government was forced to bring a new land acquisition Act in 2013 which replaced the archaic Land Acquisition Act of 1894.

Land reforms did not create much upheaval as they did in China, nor did they bring radical changes as they did in Japan. In words of Professor M L Dantewala – '*Reforms had been more or less in the right direction, but due to lack of implementation, results were far from satisfactory.*' M S Swaminathan, Chairman of the first National Commission on Agriculture, termed land reforms as an *Unfinished Agenda* in his report.

Question Bank

1. Why is sociological study of villages important? What are the various approaches to study the Indian village?
2. Villages are Indian society in miniature. Comment.
3. Indian villages were described as monolithic social units by the early British administrators. Discuss the validity of their assessment.
4. Villages of India were self-sufficient, but were never closed units. Elaborate the statement.
5. Why did Gandhi emphasise on taking village as the starting point of the developmental strategy for an Independent India?

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6. Indian village is not an over-harmonious social unit as depicted by the nationalist scholars. It also has its share of conflicts and contradictions. Illustrate with the help of some major schools of thought.
7. What is your idea of contemporary Indian villages? Explain with the help of examples.
8. Various field studies conducted in the mid-20th Century presented a more realistic picture of the Indian village. Comment.
9. Why was there a spurt in village studies in 1950s?
10. There is a need to revive the field studies in villages to develop a deeper understanding of the modern villages. Comment.
11. Land was the central element of Indian village economy and continues to remain so. Comment.
12. What were the major forms of land tenure systems in British India? Discuss.
13. Agrarian social structure of Indian society was based upon land ownership relations. Comment.
14. British land revenue policy impoverished the Indian peasantry and introduced inefficiencies in the system that are still ailing the Indian society. Elaborate.
15. Land reforms in India were ambitious, but their implementers were not. Comment on the present situation of land reform agenda as well.
16. What is the effect of land reforms on the peasantry of India? In what ways have the land reforms helped in ameliorating the condition of the landless in India?
17. Land reforms are now an abandoned agenda. Comment.
18. As the average land holdings decline, India stands on a critical juncture where agrarian social structure will come under a huge strain. Comment.

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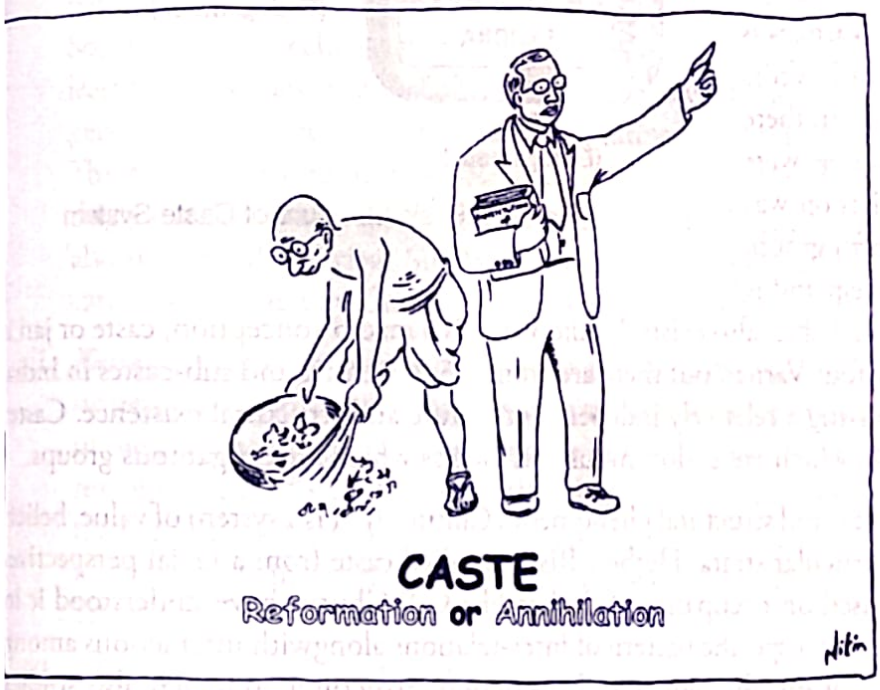
Caste System

14



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Learn about the evolution of caste system and its contemporary forms
2. Understand the theories of origin of caste system in India
3. Explain the various perspective on caste system
4. Know about state and non-state initiatives to deal with caste system in modern India

Caste is a form of social stratification which is unique to India. It is largely a feature of the Hindu fold, but has also affected other religions and sects in the Indian subcontinent. Outsiders even term it as an integral part of Indian society. Caste has its own share of inglorious past and present and this often makes it a subject of contemporary debate and discourse as well. It evoked strong and radical solutions from the likes of Ambedkar who called for its annihilation. On the other hand, a pragmatic path was followed by the Constitution makers who allowed it to exist, but put in place, all provisions against discrimination based on it. Sociologists have also tried to explore its features and character by adopting various models. Some view it as a purely cultural concept, while others think that it has shaped the Indian social and power-sharing structure as well.

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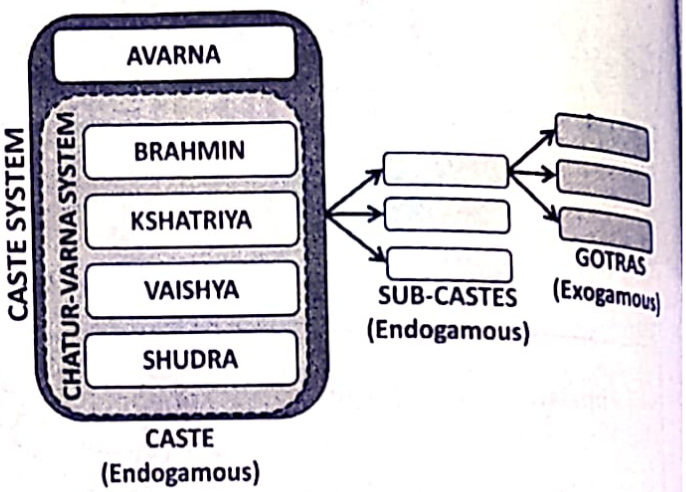

Fig. 14.1 Basic Structure of Caste System

Caste system is a closed system of stratification which has existed for more than 3000 years and its exact origin is still not known. Primarily, at the base of it is a system called Varna System under the Hindu fold of Indian society. This divides the society into four groups or Varnas based on birth Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras (the term Varna was probably used for colour in the early Vedic period and not for caste. And earlier, there were only three Varnas, the Shudras were added later and occupational division was not rigid). Apart from these, a fifth group, which falls outside the Varna system and is called Avarna or outcaste or untouchable, also exists. While Varna is a macro conception, caste or jati is the ground reality. There are only four Varnas, but there are around 3,000 castes and sub-castes in India. Caste is an endogamous group having a relatively independent culture and structural existence. Castes are further divided into sub-castes which are endogamous and Gotras which are exogamous groups.

Caste is considered as both, a cultural and structural phenomeon. Culturally, it is a system of value, beliefs and practices associated with a particular strata. Herbert Risley studied caste from a racial perspective. Nesfield gave a theory of caste based on occupation. Scholars like G S Ghurye have understood it in cultural terms. Structurally, it refers to a specific pattern of inter-relations alongwith interactions among the various castes on the basis of various disabilities and restriction. Structural approach also studies actual power relations between caste groups and inequalities thereof. Andre Beteille, Dipankar Gupta, etc. subscribe to this perspective. Caste is also viewed in terms of its specific features. For example, Bougle has identified three core features;heredity, occupation and hierarchy. Similarly, Ghurye has also identified six features.

A HISTORICAL PEEK INTO CASTE

According to some social analysts, historically, caste was not a closed group since the beginning. During the Vedic times, it was an open system and occupations were open to all. Even inter-caste marriages were allowed. It was during the later Vedic period that caste became a rigid institution. Mythologically, Purushukta hymns of Rigveda trace the origin of different *Varnas* to the different parts of the progenitor Brahma. Detractors of caste reject such divine explanations.

Caste is also viewed from two broad perspectives; *attributional* and *interactional* perspectives. Attribut are considered as inherent inalienable qualities associated with the caste system. For example, Boug used this perspective to focus on three key features of caste. Interactional approach takes into accou how castes are actually ranked with respect to one another in a local empirical context. Though also mentions attributes, but its prime focus is on interactions. Beteille is one such sociologist w subscribed to this view.

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Caste – Origin Theories

According to D N Majumdar, origin of caste system is vague and uncertain. According to him – *There are today, as many theories regarding the origin of the caste system as there are writers on the subject.* Census of India done in 1931 also made references to five theories with regards to the origin of caste. Various general theories of the origin of caste are –

I. *The divine origin of caste* – It is one of the most widely discussed theories of the caste. Most of the religious authorities, *Shastra's* and *Puranas* have advocated the divine origin of the caste system. So, the general feeling among Hindus is that it has been established by the order of God or at least by his wishes, and so, it should be religiously followed. As per the *Purushasukta* in Rig Veda, people belong to four main *Varnas* constituting the four body parts of the *Purusha* or the creator. The *Brahmin* was mouth, the *Rajanya* or *Kshatriya* formed his arms, the *Vaishyas* constituted his thigh and the *Shudra* sprang from his feet. Manu, whose pronouncement is cited as an authority, also supported this view. Similarly, in the Bhagwad Gita, it is stated that the fourfold division of castes was created by God according to appointment of qualities and duties.

II. *Karma and transmigration theory* – As an extension and corollary to the divine origin of caste system, this theory attributes the caste status in this life as determined by one's action or *karma* in the past incarnations. Thus, even the most wretched man with his most degrading occupation remains satisfied with the belief that the miseries of his present life are the result of his sins in his previous life, and if he submissively performs his caste duties in this life, he will be born in a higher caste in the next life. Karma Theory, thus, also acts as a justification to the division of labour.

III. *Occupational theory* – This theory, propounded by Nesfield, advocates that the occupation is the lone factor for the development of this system. According to him, before this system, priesthood was not the exclusive monopoly of *Brahmins*. But later on, when hymns and rituals became more complex, a section of people got itself specialised and its members became the *Brahmins*. Similarly, other occupations came to be identified with other groups and over a period of time they became hereditary.

IV. *Tribes and religious theory* – It argues that from the very early times, there has been a gradual and silent change from tribes to caste. This change has taken place in a number of ways, and it is believed that most of the lower or exterior castes of today were formerly tribes. Risley has mentioned four processes by which the transformation of tribes into castes was affected.

V. *Racial theory* – According to this theory, propounded by Herbert Risley in his book *The People of India*, racial differences and endogamous marriages led to the origin of the caste system. According to him, caste system developed after emigration of Indo Aryans from Persia where the society was divided into four classes; priests, warriors, cultivators and artisans and they maintained this even after coming here. They differed from the non-Aryans in culture and racial tracts. So, in order to maintain their superior status, they started practicing hypergamy and imposed restriction on *Pratiloma* marriages. MacIver also leans towards the theory of the racial origin of caste structures.

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VI. *Colour theory* – The colour question in the formation of caste has also been considered. The colour question at the root of the *Varna* system is apparent from the word *Varna*, which means colour. The class, which retained utmost purity of colour by avoiding intermixture normally, gained precedence in the social scale. Karve, however, does not accept the view that the original meaning of *Varna* was *colour*. She argues that in the early scanned literature and in grammatical works *Varna* meant *class*.

VII. *Broken Men theory* – Ambedkar, in his Broken Men theory, suggests that *Shudras* were the tribal people who were defeated in war.

Despite various theoretical viewpoints, it is generally agreed that in its earliest phase, in the later Vedic period (roughly between 900-500 BC), the caste system was really a *Varna* system and consisted of only four major divisions. Further, the *caste system* stood for different things in different time periods. So, it would be grossly misleading to think of the same system continuing for three thousand years. Movement across the categories seems to have been not only possible, but quite common as well. It was only in the post-Vedic period that caste became the rigid institution that it is and we are familiar with in its contemporary definitions.

G S Ghurye's Perspective on Caste System

G S Ghurye was one of the earliest sociologists who offered a systematic perspective on the caste system. G S Ghurye's academic reputation was built on the basis of his doctoral dissertation at Cambridge, which was later published as *Caste and Race in India, 1932*. In this and his other works, he has examined caste from a historical Indological, comparative and integrative perspective. According to him, caste and kinship have played an integrative role in India.

He was initially influenced by the reality of diffusionist approach – according to which, caste originated in the plains of Ganges and then spread to other parts of India – of the British social anthropological tradition, but, he later shifted to both Indological and anthropological perspectives.

Herbert Risley, a British colonial official who was deeply interested in anthropological matters, was the main proponent of the dominant view that caste must have originated in race because different caste groups seemed to belong to distinct racial types. According to him, in general, the higher castes approximated Indo-Aryan racial traits, while the lower castes seemed to belong to non-Aryan aboriginal, Mongoloid or other racial groups. Ghurye did not disagree with the basic argument put forward by Risley, but believed it to be only partially correct. Ghurye believed that Risley's thesis of the upper castes being Aryan and the lower castes being non-Aryan was broadly true only for northern India. In other parts of India, the inter-group differences in the anthropometric measurements were not very large or systematic. So, Ghurye played a lead role in toppling the racial theory of caste, propounded by western anthropologists, led by Risley.

According to him, the whole Indian society is caste based and even tribes are also part of this system as opposed to the western notion that tribes and castes are two different concepts. According to him, tribals are *backward Hindus,* who are at various levels of assimilation in Hindu society. He, thus, also opposed the colonial view of isolating the tribals.

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Ghurye is also known for offering a comprehensive definition of caste. His definition emphasises six features which were derived from various Indological studies done by him –

I. Caste is an institution based on *segmental division*. This means that caste society is divided into a number of closed, mutually exclusive segments or compartments. It is closed as caste is decided by birth; the children born to parents of a particular caste will always belong to that caste.

II. Caste society is based on *hierarchical division*. They are arranged in a top-down fashion. No two castes are ever equal.

III. The institution of caste necessarily involves *restrictions on feeding and social interaction*, especially regarding the sharing of food. These rules are governed by ideas of *purity and pollution*.

IV. Following from the principles of hierarchy and restricted social interaction, caste also involves *differential rights and duties* for different castes and *civil and religious disabilities* and privileges.

V. Caste restricts the *choice of occupation*, which, like caste itself, is decided by birth and is hereditary.

VI. Caste involves strict *restrictions on marriage*. *Caste endogamy*, or marriage only within the caste, is often accompanied by rules about *exogamy*, or whom one may not marry. His greatest emphasis among these features was on endogamy as it maintains the boundary of caste groups.

Ghurye's definition helped to make the study of caste more systematic. He has also analysed the changing pattern of caste system and has opined that it will diminish with the rise of modern education, but at the same time, also admits that as caste based social and political organisations are developing, it will be difficult to eliminate it very soon. According to him, scramble for benefits will destroy the unity of Indian society. His conceptual definition was based on what the classical texts prescribed. In actual practice, many of these features of caste were changing, though all of them continue to exist in some form.

He has, however, tried to glorify the culture of India, in general and of Hindus, in particular. He also depicted caste as an integrative force in society in the past, but also acknowledged its disharmonious present role. He proposed a revival of culture to infuse spirit of fraternity to get rid of the current evils from the caste system.

His critics accuse him of relying too much on text and not going for empirical studies. According to Beteille, his understanding of caste is confusing, as he continuously changes his goal post from Indological to diffusionism to comparative to outright nationalism. Ghurye is also accused of taking a Hindu centric view of society which is apparent by his labelling of tribes as *backward Hindus*. Srinivas also takes exception to understanding of caste rooted in *Varna* system as it makes the caste system rigidly hierarchical, but in practice, caste structure is dynamic. So, he makes a shift from *Varna* view to *caste view*.

Despite numerous criticisms, Ghurye will always be known for challenging the colonial notions of caste as unchanging, and he was the first to approach caste from a sociological point of view. He provided a springboard for later research on caste and his disciples like Srinivas and Desai drew heavily upon him.

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M N Srinivas' Perspective on Caste System

Srinivas introduced dynamism into the otherwise static concept of caste. Through terms such as *Sanskritisation, Dominant Caste, vertical (inter-caste) and horizontal (intra-caste) solidarities*, Srinivas sought to capture the fluid and dynamic essence of caste as a social institution. Through his works and concepts, he rejected the monolithic and pan-Indian view of the caste system. In his seminal work *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India, 1952*, he uses a theoretical framework, derived from Structural Functionalism of Radcliffe Brown, which he combined with sociological Indology. He considered *Varna* as a broad framework of reference used for the study of caste system, but draws deeper understanding of caste as an empirical reality from ethnographic studies. He viewed caste as rooted in local hierarchy rather than in broader *Varna* framework. He wrote numerous books and essays on caste like Caste in Modern India, 1962, The Dominant Caste and Other Essays, 1987 and Village, Caste, Gender and Method, 1996 to elaborate upon his idea of caste system.

He predominantly used field studies to explain the working of caste, but also resorted to Indological sources. In fact, he used a multidimensional approach and focused on not just tradition, but he also understood caste in terms of status, wealth and power. He rejected mono-causal approach of Dumont in understanding the caste in terms of purity and pollution only. Srinivas didn't profess himself as a structure functionalist, but considered Indological and Marxist approaches as too ambitious for the study of Indian society as they claim an absolute understanding of Indian society.

He also had a *segmentary view* of caste. According to him, castes have numerous sub-divisions in form of sub-caste and study of all of them, under an all-encompassing theory, is doing an injustice to the study of caste. He made a clear distinction between *Varna* and *Jati* or caste. According to Srinivas, *Varna is a macro theoretical schema, whereas caste or Jati is an all India phenomenon defining reality.* He viewed caste system as dynamic and rejected the Varna view which considers caste system as a rigid hierarchical system. Srinivas insists that the social reality of the caste system in not *Varna*; the ideological categorisation but *Jati*; the sub-caste that is actually the interacting group. According to him, concentration on *Varna* also meant stressing on the ritual factors in mutual caste ranking at the expense of economic and political factors.

At the same time, he also acknowledged that each caste and sub-caste has certain common attributes like hierarchy, occupational differentiation, restrictions and purity-pollution based relations. Hierarchy, according to him, is the core of the caste, and caste structure is guided by two hierarchies, one guided by ritual and other secular. Ritual hierarchy is manifested in dressing, rules of segregation, rules of eating, marriage, etc. Secular hierarchy is manifested in power, wealth, education, etc.

According to him, mobility in secular hierarchy, by way of migration, ownership of land, government jobs, etc. is a historical fact and this mobility in secular hierarchy also leads to change in the ritual/ cultural position of different castes and sub-castes also, which he termed as Sanskritisation. Hence, according to him, caste system is not as rigid as depicted by historians and social researchers. He also bolstered his claim with numerous empirical examples like *Kayasth* of Bengal, during the Mughal times, started to come close to ruling the elite and eventually declared themselves as *Rajputs*. Similar is the example of rise of *Jats* in North India and *Lingyats* in Karnataka as dominant castes. He viewed caste in much dynamic terms and deemed secular mobility as a pre-condition for ritual mobility. According to him, caste mobility is essentially group mobility, as it leads to upliftment of the whole group in the local

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hierarchy. He also mentions the concept of *Dominant Caste* to illustrate the fluidity of caste system. According to him, castes, which are even ritually lower in hierarchy, can have a dominant position by the virtue of their numbers and land resources.

For long, he believed that caste will remain an important dimension of the Indian society, but in his last public speech in 1999, in Bangalore, at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, titled *Obituary on Caste as a System*, he acknowledged that caste will ultimately fade away. He attributed it largely to the disappearance of caste-based division of labour in most parts of India, and delinking of production from *jati*.

His combination of book view and field view opened numerous avenues to understand caste in India. Also, his theoretical strands were picked up by scholars like F G Bailey and M S A Rao in the understanding of mobility in caste system in different parts of the country. However, he is often criticised for taking a view of society from the perspective of the dominant sections of the society. He is accused of giving Sanskritisation undue importance and ignoring the culture of lower castes. Others argue that Sanskritisation was also not a new concept and just a cosmetic makeover of the universal process of reference groups.

Dominant Caste

The concept of Dominant Caste was used for the first time in sociological literature by M N Srinivas in his essay *Social System of a Mysore Village*, which was written after his study of village Rampura and later elaborated in his paper by the same title *The Dominant Caste in Rampura, 1959*. In the Mysore village, he described, the peasant *Okkalinga* (or Vokkaliga) composed of nearly half of the population and *Okkalinga* were also the biggest land owners.

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 castes look up to them as their *reference group* and try to imitate their behaviour, 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. According to him, emergence of a dominant caste due to modernising influence is attributed to following factors –

I. *Economic and political factors* – Landed elite in Northern states like Punjab are more powerful than *Brahmins* due to better economic status.

II. *Numerical strength* – It also play an important role. And apart from economic condition, numbers also matter.

III. *A fairly high place in local hierarchy* – Okkalinga, in the Mysore village of Rampura were dominant because they had a fairly high place in the local hierarchy. He further says that, chances of a caste to dominate become higher if it is not placed too low in ritual hierarchy.

IV. *Education* – In his later writings, he also attributes Western/Non-traditional education as one of the factors determining dominance.

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Thus, he gave importance to politico-economic factors also, apart from cultural factors. The dominant caste also wields economic and political power over the other caste groups. It also enjoys a high ritual status in the local caste hierarchy. The dominant caste may not be ritually high, but enjoys high status because of wealth, political power and numerical strength. The presence of educated persons and high occupation rate also play an important role in deciding its dominance over other caste groupings.

The concept of dominant caste is important for the following reasons –

I. Dominant castes also play an important role in resolving disputes, and not only dominant castes, but non-dominant castes also approach them.

II. Study of dominant caste is necessary to understand power equations in a village society. It explains the rural society in more pragmatic terms as compared to the Indological or Marxist approaches.

III. According to Srinivas, this concept is central to understanding all aspects of village society, them being; – Sanskritisation, settlement of disputes, hierarchy in multi-caste village, patronage, power, etc. Thus, it is a multi-dimensional concept.

IV. It has some other inferences as well. *Brahmins,* ritually at the top, may not be a dominant caste. This concept is a relative one. One caste dominant in one context and geography may not be so at other.

Concept of dominant caste explains the rural dynamics beyond a cultural perspective, but it is also criticised on various grounds –

I. T K Oommen questions Srinivas' conclusions, as according to him, there can be alternate scenarios as well. For example, a numerically stronger caste may be historically depressed. A numerically weaker class may hold most of the land and so on.

II. According to Dumont and Pocock, Srinivas used the analogy of dominant caste from African Society and his definition gives importance to population which may not be the deciding factor.

III. According to S C Dube, it's not caste as a whole, but there are some *Dominant Individuals* who prevail.

Louis Dumont's Perspective on Caste System

French sociologist Louis Dumont, in his seminal work *Homo Hierarchicus: Caste System and Its Implication, 1966,* synthesised macro perspective of Ghurye with micro perspective of empirical studies, thus, combining *text* with *context.* His theory of caste hierarchy locates its basis in *pollution and purity* distinction and it is a special type of inequality according to him.

I. He borrowed theoretical framework from Levis Strauss which calls for identification of binary opposites, and he applied it in Indian context as caste is about opposition of pure and impure.

II. He was also deeply influenced by Bougle's cultural explanation of caste and his ideas that division of labour in caste system is not on economic basis, but on cultural basis and hence, is not exploitative. Bougle further argues that position of every other caste is relative to *Brahmins* and these castes evaluate themselves taking the position of *Brahmins* as reference and every caste

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is concerned with its boundary maintenance. He condensed the three core features of Bougle into one all-encompassing principle of caste as an *ideology* of separation of pure and impure.

Thus, he views caste from an *ideological perspective* and not just as an empirical realty. Louis Dumont constructed a textually-informed image of caste which, according to him, is a combination of Indological and structuralist approach with dual focus on ideology as well as structure.

According to him, caste plays an integrative role in Indian society and is distinctive of India. He views caste system in terms of *ideas and values,* i.e., caste system is an ideology peculiar to Indian society. Ideology of Indian society is in binary opposition with Western ideology, modern against tradition, holism against individualism, hierarchy against equality, purity against pollution and status against power. Dumont emphasised on ideology because it is also reflected through ancient texts.

According to Dumont, caste hierarchy is a peculiar feature of Indian society and there cannot be any cross cultural comparisons of the caste system. He further says that hierarchy is of status and hence, is independent of power. According to him, even kings were subordinate to priests. This hierarchy, and hence, separation of pure and impure, is evident in other fields of Hindu life as well. *Jajmani,* as an economic system, is also dominated by hierarchy and not principles of economics. Similarly, aspects of civil life such as marriage, eating and socialisation are governed by hierarchy.

Louis Dumont, in his *Homo Hierarchicus – The Caste System and Its Implication, 1966,* conceptualised caste as *opposition of pure and impure.* Three elements are central to his analysis –

I. Division of labour on basis of pure and impure

II. Superiority of pure over impure

III. The separation of the two

These unique core principles of caste-hierarchy, according to Dumont, are observed in scriptural formulation as well as in the every-day life of all Hindus. He identified a number of pure and impure practices which are attached with notions of purity and impurity. Endogamy, cleanliness, vegetarianism are considered pure and superior. Accordingly, impure occupations are separated from the class of sacred/pure occupations. Pure and impure are attached to not only occupation, but to the entire structure of ideas.

The interactional approach to caste (as used by Beteille) draws attention to the structural aspect as opposed to attributional/ritual/cultural one. However, for an institution like caste the *ideology,* supporting it is of critical importance for proper understanding of caste and the identity politics of today. According to Dumont, caste is a set of relationships of economic, political and kinship systems, sustained by certain values which are mostly religious in nature. Thus, Dumont gives primacy to values, culture and tradition over and above the secular markers of Indian society.

In the Indian context, Dumont has made an incisive statement against the use of the universal stratification model for caste in his *Homo Hierarchicus* concept and he has attracted attention to the ideological approach once again. According to him – '*Caste is not a form of stratification, but a special form of inequality and hierarchy, is the central tenet of this system.*' According to him, in the Indian context, opposition of equality is hierarchy. Dumont defines hierarchy *as the principle by which the*

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elements of a whole are ranked in relation to the whole. His concept of *Homo-Hierarchicus* has built up a model of Indian civilisation based on non-competitive ritual hierarchical system.

In urging the relevance of the principle of hierarchy, Dumont notes how alien it is to the modern mentality. Modern man's ideology is decidedly egalitarian and individualistic, diametrically opposite to a hierarchical and collectivist one.

According to him, principle of purity and pollution is universal in Indian society irrespective of region and class. He, thus, rejects Srinivas' idea that caste hierarchy has both ritual and secular streams. Ritual hierarchy always dominates secular status. Division of labour is culturally defined and not by economic needs.

He also analysed caste in changing times and according to him, the overall framework has not changed. *There is change in society and not of society*, declares Dumont. One significant change that has taken place is that traditional interdependence has been replaced by competing interests which he termed as *substantialisation of caste*.

However, critics question his approach for being too textual. Andre Beteille says his views are much on what caste ought to be and not what caste today is. Superiority of *Brahmins* claimed by him is also questioned by others who see, even in the past, power concentrated in the hands of kings. Beteille also blames Dumont for encouraging a *caste-view* of Indian society. Gerald D Berreman rejects his idea of impurity or pollution and cites an example of foothills of Himalaya, where people never considered themselves impure in terms of mannerism, food habits, etc. According to him, caste is a product of domination and sub-domination. Dumont has almost tried to represent caste as a static concept and Indian society a stagnated society. Gerald D Berreman has also criticised Dumont's notion that power and economic factors are distinct from caste. Similarly, Dipankar Gupta's study of *Jats* in North India indicates that *Jats* consider *Brahmins* as idle, lazy and greedy, contrary to Dumont's understanding of *Brahmins* as pure, sacred and highly placed. His critics compare him to *new Manu* and his idea of Homo-hierachicus as *new Manusmriti*. Yogendra Singh accuses him of being obsessed with integrational aspects of caste. According to Professor Hira Singh, in his *Recasting Caste, 2014*, Dumont's approach is overburdened with religion and it also fails to see that caste was never a rigid fixed entity even in ancient India.

Despite criticism, his approach to caste study is unique and thought provoking. In words of T N Madan, *Indian sociology must have been poorer to a great extent without the contribution of Dumont*. Dumont rejuvenated the cultural dimension of the caste at a time when field studies, structural functionalism and the Marxist perspectives were ruling the roost. According to Appadurai, his concept of hierarchy provided useful shorthand for summarising cultural complexities of the Indian society.

Andre Beteille's Perspective on Caste System

Beteille is a contemporary of Dumont and both have used relatively different approaches to caste. While Dumont's approach is rooted in a culturally informed imagery of caste, on the other hand, understanding of Beteille is diffusive and he adopts an interactional approach rather than a uni-dimensional approach to describe caste. He started his analysis of caste from the empirical study of the village of Sripuram in Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu (*Sripuram: A Village in Tanjore District, 1962*) which he also explained in his book *Caste, Class and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village, 1965*. He also

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wrote many other essays and books like *Inequalities among Men, 1977, Social and Cultural Reproduction of Caste, Kinship and Occupation in India, 1991* and *The Backward Classes in Contemporary India, 1992.*

While Ghurye and Dumont focused only on ideological/ritual aspect of caste, Beteille casts his net wider to understand the Indian society and adopts a trinitarian approach of Weber. According to him, along with caste, one should also study kinship, class and power as well. So, according to him, structural aspects of caste, mainly economic and political dimensions, have remained underestimated by the other thinkers. He advocates studying of relations between upper caste and lower caste, between landowning and land landless caste, between *Jajman* and *Kameen* and these should be studied from a structural perspective by using universal stratification as a general phenomenon. His analysis is also useful in showing that empirical reality of caste is remarkably different from the cultural ideal type of caste.

His multi-dimensional view renders a better view of society as a whole and caste in relation to other social dimensions. For example, he concludes that Kinships also played an important role as individuals often chose the occupation of their parents. This influence of kinship is evident in industry, cinema and politics as well. So, his focus is not on hierarchy of caste alone, but is also on stratification in general. His understanding of caste is reflexive and it doesn't take a stereotypical approach.

In Sripuram, it were not only *Brahmins* that maintained distance from other castes, but Adi-Dravidians (the so called *depressed classes*) also avoided mixing with *Brahmins* as they saw doing so will attract misfortune. Thus, it rejects the view of Ghurye, Dumont and others who saw caste as a uniform phenomenon with implicit superiority of *Brahmins*. Further, lower castes were equally concerned about boundary maintenance and were less keen on Sanskritisation. He also noticed that sub-castes, even among *Brahmins* have unequal relations. For example, Iyengar *Brahmins* deem themselves ritually the purest.

He observes that, as education becomes open, the Dravidians, too, are able to place themselves in white collar jobs. Within the village also, land had come into market and *Brahmins* have sold their land in many instances and Adi-Dravidians have bought in other instances. As land comes in the open market, the productive organisation of village tended to be free from the structure of caste. Thus, due to these factors, power structure in villages also changes. Caste is now not the only determinant of status and power. According to Beteille, shift from traditional occupation also impacted social standing of caste groups. Most *Brahmins* are now either in government jobs or in agriculture. This has also impacted the relations of *Brahmins* with other castes.

According to him, inter-relation between caste, class and power is not as harmonious as it was before which is attributed to factors like growth of education, secularisation of society and occupations, migration, politics and democracy. However, despite these changes in the secular realm of the Indian society and their impact on the caste identity, caste dimension still remains and India has gone for only *selective Modernisation* and not complete Modernisation, as explained by Yogendra Singh. At the same time, it has also not remained totally traditional as Dumont had put it. Andre Beteille observes that power has shifted from one dominant caste to another and it has diverged from the caste structure itself, and has come to be located in more differentiated structures such as Panchayats and political parties.

Beteille is sometimes criticised for being obsessed with the understanding the dynamism of caste only through three hierarchies, and he is also accused of narrow empiricism for making sweeping generalisations from the study of a single village of Southern India.

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	Dumont	Beteille
Work	Homo Hierachicus – Caste System and Its Implications – 1966	Caste, Class and Power – Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village, 1965
Perspective	Structural Indological	Weberian Trinitarian; Multidimensional view
Methods	Book View	Direct Observation; Ethnographic studies
Key idea	Purity-Impurity	Caste, Class and Power nexus
Features	a. Hierarchy is the core of caste system. b. Indian society is based on hierarchy; Homo Hierarchichus and Western Society is based on equality; Homo Aquealis. c. Hierarchy is understood in terms of purity and impurity. d. In distinction of purity and impurity, implicit is notion of superiority and inferiority. e. *Ritual Status* and *Power* are distinct in caste system. This also implies that there is no parallel of Indian caste system.	a. Ritual status is not the only determinant of structural relations. b. Power and Class also play important role. c. Systemic view – Villages are integrated with wider society. d. Structural shifts are happening – Landed elite from upper caste no longer call the shots.
Future of caste	a. Ritual Status to remain significant. b. Substantialisation of caste going on. c. Change *in* society will happen and not change *of* society.	a. Social dynamics to become more complex; Caste, Class and Power Nexus. b. Caste is no longer the basis of occupations.
Criticism	a. Berrmen criticised him for looking at power and status in dichotomous terms as more often than not they are two sides of the same coin. b. Too much of Indology, sweeping inferences drawn from Sanskritic classical texts which contradict with today's ground reality. c. Caste is almost seen as functional when he talks of it as a *functional necessity* – ignoring the conflict that exists.	a. Narrow empiricism – A single village study cannot be generalised for entire India.

Dipankar Gupta's Perspective on Caste System

His concept of caste is based on *differences'* and *multiple hierarchies*, which are in contrast with Dumont's concept of *hierarchy* in caste system. Gupta claims that empirically as well as logically, it is wrong to say that a single all inclusive hierarchy, based on the principle of the opposition of purity and pollution, is the core defining feature of the caste system. This is not only a contemporary fact, but also a historical reality.

Gupta argues that different *origin tales* or *Jati puranas* of different castes justify different hierarchies and the *Brahmins* are not always at the top. The existence of various models of Sanskritisation for upward mobility also strongly indicates the presence of multiple caste hierarchies. Each of these *origin tales* or caste legends, according to him, *capture independently the essence of difference between castes and are therefore, logically of equal status*. According to him, the constitutive elements of these differences *are not arranged vertically or hierarchically, but horizontally or even separately*. Therefore, in this unique system of

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differences, one encounters discrete categories in place of a continuous scale. None of the castes in this system considers that it is made up of unique substance, or that the substances in it are less pure. So, the notions of superiority and inferiority are not attached so strongly by these castes on themselves and on others. Each caste maintains its own traditions, customs and ideologies and, therefore, differentiates itself from others without necessarily accepting that other castes have superior or inferior customs, traditions, etc. In fact, no caste accepts that it is a degraded caste, but on the other hand, each claims that there are other castes which are more degraded than it. Lower castes also explain their lowly status in terms of *misunderstandings*, *tricks* and or *crookedness* of others. Robert Deiege also collected many such original tales from different untouchable communities from different parts of India which substantiate the point made by Dipankar Gupta.

Therefore, Gupta opines that *difference* and *ritualisation of multiple social practices*, and not a monolithic hierarchy, constitute the essence of the caste system. To quote him – '*Any notion of hierarchy is arbitrary and valid from the perspective of only certain individual castes. To state that pure hierarchy is one that is universally believed in, or one which legitimises the position of those, who participate in the caste system, is misleading. The separation between castes is not only on matters which connote the opposition between purity and pollution. Conversely, distinctions relating to purity and pollution do not systematically affect caste status. The cultivating Amot caste solemnizes their Goraiya festival with the sacrifice of a pig and yet Brahmins take water from them*'. The biggest feature of his theory is that by acknowledging the existence of multiple hierarchies, caste no longer remains a highly closed system as it is often portrayed.

Features of Caste System

Caste system is viewed from structural, cultural and attributional terms. Attributional approach focuses on features of the caste system. And among the various features, the principle of purity and pollution is the foremost feature of the caste system. Six such features have been identified by Ghurye. Other scholars have also identified different features. Bougle identified three such core features which are hereditary occupation, hierarchy, mutual repulsion in terms of pollution and purity. Dumont has considered *hierarchy* and separation of *polluted and pure* as the core features of caste system.

Some commonly understood features of the caste system are –

I. *Hierarchy* – Like the universal process of stratification, but with a different basis, hierarchy is one of the core features of the caste system in which castes are arranged in the order of their deemed superiority in relation to each other. Theoretically, *Brahmins* were at the top and they were considered so on the basis of religious scriptures and some cultural values. Srinivas, like Ghurye, identified hierarchy as the first and foremost principle of caste. However, according to Srinivas, this hierarchy is symbolic and in various regions, other castes which are ritually lower may be dominant. Louis Dumont in his *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications, 1966* identified *purity and pollution* as the single true principle of hierarchy. Today, ritual hierarchy is fast losing its significance due to modernising forces and rise of democratic institutions.

II. *Caste based occupation* – Occupations were graded on the basis of principles of pollution and purity. For example, ritually purest *Brahmins* got the task of preaching and teaching, and *Avarnas* have to do polluted tasks like scavenging. In reality, however, such an occupational

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differentiation has never been very concrete. At times, India had been ruled by different rulers who were not *Kshatriyas*. According to K M Pannikar, *Nandas* were the last true *Kshatriyas*. Today, this feature is significantly overshadowed by the secular nature of modern occupations. Even a Brahmin can be a barber and a *naai* can teach.

III. *Endogamy* – Rules of marriage have played a key role in preserving the caste identities to a great extent. As a result, caste endogamy and *gotra* exogamy are commonly practiced throughout India. Hypergamy/*anuloma* is allowed, but hypogamy/*pratiloma* is not allowed to preserve the caste identities. Despite modernising influence in public life, this feature is perhaps most persistent, at least in private lives, as this has very personal notions which are much less affected by legislations. Ghurye also termed this features as the core characteristic of the caste system and a principle agent which has helped in maintaining caste boundaries.

IV. *Feeding and social intercourse restrictions* – Such rules have been laid down even in *Smritis* which had rules pertaining to inter-dining and serving of *kachha* and *pakka* food. Similarly, social interaction was also limited. Government, after independence, has declared imposing such disabilities as illegal and constitution also prohibits them.

V. *Civil and religious disabilities* – Among many such disabilities, in villages, there used to be separate wells and schools for different castes. Permission from upper castes was necessary to construct even a *pukka* house. Religious disabilities included restrictions on temple entry, performance of ritual, etc. Such disabilities are now prohibited by the government, but many of these are still practiced in a subversive manner.

VI. *Social mobility* – Caste is generally considered a closed system, but avenues of mobility were there according to scholars like Srinivas, who demonstrate it through the concept of Sanskritisation. Royal patronage, conversions and census operations were other avenues of mobility.

VII. *Segmental organisation* – Castes also involve sub-divisions within themselves, i.e., castes almost always have sub-castes and sometimes sub-castes may also have sub-sub-castes.

VIII. *Common name and common decent* – Sub-castes and castes often trace their origin to a common mythological personality.

IX. *Ascriptive* – Caste is assigned at birth and remains the same throughout one's life. So, it is an institution which operates in a closed fashion.

Apart from these features, it is also clear from the historical evidences and current experiences that caste was, and to a certain degree, still remains, a very unequal institution. Some castes benefitted greatly from the system, while the others were condemned to a life of endless labour and subordination. It also became ascriptive in nature in the post-Vedic period and it was in principle, impossible for a person to ever change his or her caste.

However, caste system and many of its features have diluted because of many new developments like urbanisation, secularisation of society and Modernisation. Occupations have diversified and are now chosen by the will of an individual. At the same time, the working of democracy has affected the caste system. Many of the disabilities are banned in theory by the constitution of India and many enabling legislations have been floated to curb such disabilities. It is in the political field that caste has been impacted the most. In 1980s, many caste based political parties were formed. *Rule of Law*, as basic

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principle of modern polity and concept of fundamental rights, especially right to equality and right against exploitation – and human rights have also helped in mitigating the menace of the caste system. Electoral process has provided a base to the numerical strength and hence, a voice to the depressed castes. This has also led to caste groups emerging as *interest groups* which are becoming more assertive and are now leveraging upon their numbers. These new developments have diluted some of the typical features of the caste, while others still remain persistent.

Untouchability – Forms

Despite the limited literal meaning of the word, the term *untouchability* refers not just to the avoidance or prohibition of physical contact but to a much broader set of social sanctions and social disabilities which are ascriptive in nature within the ritual framework of the caste system. It refers to a practice in which, various types of segregations are imposed within the cultural framework of the caste. It is also understood in terms of the *social distance* that various castes maintain with respect to each other. Three main dimensions of untouchability, namely, exclusion, humiliation-subordination and exploitation are all equally important in defining the phenomenon. At a broader level, the concept of untouchability is analysed in two contexts –

I. In terms of restrictions imposed on *Avarna* by all other higher castes – Various forms in which untouchability is practiced are social disabilities (prohibition from wearing new clothes, shoes, etc.), social isolation, religious disabilities, separation of roads and wells, working at night (so that even their shadow doesn't fall on *dwijas*), no ownership of property, and imposing *Begaar* or work without wages.

II. As an integral aspect of caste system – While *Shudra* consider Dalits as untouchables, they themselves are untouchable to the other upper castes in the hierarchy. Similarly, untouchability operates in a relative manner. Historically, *Vaishyas* and *Kshatriyas* also faced some disabilities or others at the hands of ritually superior *Brahmins*. In the same fashion, *Kshatriyas* too, treated some other castes as untouchable on certain social aspects.

Segregation can be physical or social. Under physical segregation, there is a limitation on physical contact; there are separate utensils, prohibition from temple entry, prohibition of using village wells and ponds, etc. Social segregation includes restriction on marrying, eating with members of the other castes, prohibition from entering homes and restriction on occupational mobility. Untouchability has different forms, but is more acute in rural areas. Prasad, in a study conducted in 50 Andhra villages, enumerated more than 150 forms in which it is practiced. Untouchability, today, is practiced at two levels; less prevalent manifest form and more prevalent latent form. Similarly, in a more recent empirical survey of around 565 villages in 11 states, Ghanshyam Shah, Harsh Mander and Sukhdev Thorat have, in their *Untouchability in Rural India, 2006*, concluded that untouchability is still practiced in various forms in around 80 per cent of the villages. They have also concluded that the more blatant and extreme forms of untouchability appear to have declined, subtle discrimination still continues and it is most prevalent in the religious and personal spheres.

Violence is the extreme manifestation of untouchability. According to a report released by National Commission for Scheduled Castes, UP, Bihar and Rajasthan lead in the registered crimes against the

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Dalits. UP registered 8,946 crimes against Dalits in 2015. Even the institutes of higher education have succumbed to such incidences of discrimination.

Common forms of untouchability that exist are –

I. *Habitation segregation* – Segregation of Dalits is seen almost everywhere in most of the rural parts of India. Traditionally, Dalits used to live either on the outskirts of the villages or in designated pockets.

II. *Occupational segregation and manual scavenging* – In 2016, 98 per cent manual scavengers were from the lower castes. Even after almost 70 years of independence, manual scavenging is still going on and government has failed to curb this form of inhumane untouchability despite repeated orders by the Supreme Court. Irony is that government is the biggest culprit in promoting it as most of the 13 Lakh manual scavengers in India are employed by railway and municipal corporations. Earlier, tanning, lifting carcasses, removing hides, etc. were branded as occupations of untouchables.

III. *Civic segregation* – In villages, still there are prohibitions on commensality, social mixing, using common wells, separate dwelling and so on. The *Puruda Varnar* of Tamil Nadu is the most striking example of this segregation. They are a sub-caste who are given the duty of washing clothes and providing other services to untouchables. They were deemed untouchables even by the *untouchables* themselves. They had a nocturnal sub-human existence and worked only during night as creatures of extreme abhorrence.

IV. *Ritual segregation* – Scriptures and holy texts were disallowed for the untouchables. Certain rites, like *Upnayana* ceremony, are preserved for twice born castes. Deities worshipped by different castes were different. Hindu temples were forbidden for lower castes and such practices still continue. In September 2014, the then Bihar Chief Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi visited a temple in Bihar's Madhubani district and the shrine was *purified* after his visit. In Karnataka, temple entry restrictions are as high as 94 per cent.

V. *Inter caste marriages* – Especially in the villages of North India such as Haryana, Western UP and Punjab; Khap Panchayats still dis-allow inter-caste marriages with a tacit support from the society at large. As of 2016, government in Madhya Pradesh offers Rs two lakh as an incentive for inter-caste marriages (with one of the spouses from Scheduled Caste), but incidences of such marriages still remain very low. Other states also provide similar incentives with limited success.

VI. *Cultural segregation* – There are restrictions on the ways of celebrating festivals and fairs. According to Dipankar Gupta, separate cultural traditions have been developed by the different members of different caste groups. In the past, under the *Devdasi* system, which often bordered on prostitution as well, women used to be predominantly from the Dalit community. Even burial grounds are separate for the Dalits.

VII. *Political segregation* – Earlier, Dalits were even prevented to cast their votes in the elections. Rise of parties like BSP has ameliorated their condition to a great extent. Even after the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment, Dalits face numerous hurdles while contesting elections. Dalit *Sarpanchs* are often given an ill treatment by the dominant castes in the villages. Rise of Dalits is taken as a challenge to the existing political order.

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VIII. *Economic exploitation* – Historically, most instances of bonded labour were related to Dalits and the other lower castes. Even today, Dalits are denied wages at market rates. Average land holdings are also the lowest among Dalits. According to Sukhdeo Thorat, former chairman of UGC, in his *Dalits in India: Search for Common Destiny, 2009*, almost 75 per cent of the Dalit households are either landless or near landless and as a result, they find jobs only as low paying casual labour.

IX. *Violence* – Violence is used as a tool of suppression and it perpetuates untouchability. As per the 2015 statistics of National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), 45,003 cases of crimes were reported against the members of Scheduled Castes.

X. *Other forms and practices* – Postmen don't deliver letters to Dalit homes. Teachers in government schools call the caste Hindus by their caste names. In a survey undertaken by National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, it was revealed that in 38 per cent of government schools, children are made to sit separately while taking the Mid Day Meal. Even at PDS shops, days of ration for Dalits have been fixed separately.

Historically, Mahatma Gandhi had popularised the term *Harijan* (literally, children of God) in the 1930s to counter the derogatory notions carried by caste names. However, the ex-untouchable communities and their leaders have adopted another term, *Dalit*, which is now the generally accepted term for referring to these groups, especially in popular media. The term is also used to assert their identity as a part of their struggle for rights and dignity. Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and other legislations have been enacted that criminalise practice of untouchability in every form. However, the greatest hurdle is the attitude of people. Caste is still alive in mental systems and especially so, in rural setups, where customs still outweigh rationality.

Untouchability – Perspectives

Perspectives on untouchability address two major, but inter-related issues –

I. **Origin of untouchability**

Most often cited accounts are historical Indological perspectives. Historical accounts and religious texts have suggested various names for untouchables like Nishads, Chandals and Kirat as the people outside the Varna system. Earlier, Avarna were not untouchables, but the system evolved gradually in the post-Vedic period as mentioned in texts like Manusmriti. Untouchability glorified Brahminism on one hand and helped in strengthening and rigidifying of occupations on the other. Ghurye, Vivekananda Jha and Ambedkar have used this approach. Ghurye traces it to the post-Vedic period while Vivekanada Jha gave a more detailed account and traces its origin in four phases. Ambedkar gave Broken Men theory. Structural Functional perspective was used by Srinivas and Dumont. Dumont used ideology of separation of pure and impure behind its origin. He views caste based discrimination as unique to India as untouchables are a part of a single ideological structure, but are still discriminated. Thus, there is discrimination within the system despite an apparent unity of the system. D P Mukherji used a dialectical approach and considers it as imposed by higher occupation doers on low ranked occupations. Berreman rejects the unity perspective of Dumont and considers untouchables as outsiders in the Hindu

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caste system. According to him, untouchables are oppressed and excluded and hence, are a symbol of the *disunity* of the caste system.

II. **Untouchability as a problem and a solution**

Broadly, solution to the problems can be divided into two categories – *reformative* movements against untouchability and *alternative* movements against untouchability. The reformative movements aim to reform the caste system in order to put an end to the problem of untouchability. The alternative movements aim to create an alternative cultural environment, often by conversion to another religion. The reformative movements that came into being during different periods in India are broadly of three types; *Bhakti* movement; neo-Vedantic movements like *Arya Samaj*, Ramakrishna Mission, Mahatma Gandhi led reform movement and Sanskritisation movement.

VIVEKANANDA JHA ON ORIGIN OF UNTOUCHABILITY

He uses a historic Indological perspective to trace its origin. He traced the origin of untouchability using ancient texts by finding words which would have been used for untouchables. He considered rise of Jainism and Buddhism as contemporary events which intensified the notion of untouchability. Before later Vedic period, it was almost non-existent. He traced the origin in four phases –

I. In first phase, around sixth Century BCE, later Vedic texts carry words like *chandals* and tanners are referred as objects of abhorrence, but not untouchables per se.

II. Second phase was around 400 BCE, *Dharamshastras* mention transmission of infection, but it was not institutionalised. However, there is mention of the word *Nirvasita* in Panini's grammar to describe a person whose touch can be defiling for pots. It talks of some castes living in separate quarters.

III. In the third phase, untouchability is clearly in the manifest form. In *Vishnusmriti*, the word *Apurusya* is used for untouchables.

IV. Finally, the process of segregation is complete and there are sharp demarcations. By the third Century CE, it was a wide spread phenomenon.

Apart from these two broad classificatory frameworks, specific views have been expressed by many social thinkers and leaders. Most important among these are the contrasting perspectives of Gandhi and Ambedkar.

Perspective of Gandhi

Some critics argue that Gandhi was a political revolutionary, but not a social revolutionary. On the issue of caste also, he never supported the view that caste, as an institution, should be overhauled or should be scrapped altogether. His views on caste were influenced by his core political ideology, cultural values and pragmatism. Although, he supported *Varna Vyavastha* and *Ashram Vyavastha* as organising principles of Indian society, he condemned the current form of caste system. In his opinion *Untouchability has made Indians untouchables in the whole world.* According to him, while *Varna Vyavastha* united society, untouchability was exploitative. So, in this way, he differentiated the theoretical framework from the empirical reality of the caste system. To Gandhi, the continuance of untouchability meant a slow destruction, taking over Hinduism. He was also of the opinion that without integrating the vast sections of the depressed classes in the Hindu society and without removing untouchability, it would be difficult to achieve *Swaraj*. He wrote numerous articles like *Caste Must Go* and *Untouchability as a Crime* and

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focused on a reformative approach, an approach to reform Hinduism from within by getting rid of evils of untouchability. He deemed untouchables as equal children of god and called them *Harijans*. He aimed at reforming the Hindu society from within to get rid of evils of the caste system. He led by example and he lived and worked with the untouchables for two years and did all those works which were considered polluting to dispel various notions attached with untouchability.

Perspective of Ambedkar

He had a radical view of caste system and called for annihilation of caste system. He viewed caste system as so degraded and dehumanised that he deemed it beyond repair. He considered Gandhian view as utopian, where castes should voluntarily come forward to bridge their differences. He believed that Gandhian idea of Varnisation of caste system will only make it stronger. So, he considered legislative measures and political empowerment as the only ways to get rid of untouchability. According to him, in a liberal society, where merit and equality are the guiding principles, there should be no place for hereditary status. Ambedkar analysed the impact of the division of the society into *Varnas* on the Hindu social order. He argued that because of this division, Hindu social order has failed to uphold liberty, equality and fraternity; the three essentials of a free social order.

BROKEN MEN THEORY

Ambedkar provided an alternative view about the origin of caste and untouchability in his Broken Men Theory. In ancient times, as a result of wars and consequent defeats, a group of tribes became fragmented and hence, became wandering *Broken Men*. Over time, they became distinct from the settled village-based tribes. They were followers of Buddhism and even in the wake of resurgence of Brahminism, they refused to accept the dominance of Brahminism. To retaliate, Brahmins started to brand the Broken Men, as untouchables. Gradually, the practices like beef eating, which the Broken Men followed, were also dubbed as untouchable. As the Broken Men became *different* from the settled men, they were prevented from mixing with the village men and were allowed to settle only on the outskirts. So, Dalits of today are Broken Men of the past.

According to the French social thinker Christophe Jaffrelot, in his *Ambedkar and Untouchability, 2004*, Ambedkar employed four strategies to fight caste system –

I. First was to build a respectable identity for the Dalits by reinterpreting the history.

II. Second was to build a legitimate electoral space for them.

III. Third was to lift the condition of the Dalits by working with those at the top, be they colonial forces or the people in Indian National Congress.

IV. His final strategy was to convert en masse outside Hinduism.

Ambedkar also recommended abolition of religion and advocated for state appointed priests in temples, selected on the basis of merit and not caste. Ambedkar saw that inter-caste marriages would be the structural antidote to the religiously administered social poison that was causing the *hideous* degradation and alienation of society in modern India. He was the face of Dalits in pre-independence India and rise of Dalit consciousness in India is attributed to him. Ambedkar was born a Hindu, he often swore that he wouldn't die one, and, being true to his words, he converted to Buddhism, along with 200,000 of his followers, weeks before his death in 1956 and lived up to his vow. He remained in steadfast opposition

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of caste and untouchability during the constitution assembly debates and as a result, many provisions, envisioning a caste and discrimination free India, were incorporated in the Constitution of India.

Gandhi on Caste	Ambedkar on Caste
Gandhi challenged the caste system from above.	Ambedkar challenged it from below.
According to him, *Varna Vyavastha* was integral to the Hindu social organisation, though it needed reforms.	He deemed it as a product of Brahminical distortions and gave the theory of *Broken Men* to explain the subjugation of untouchables. According to it, untouchables were the people who lost the wars and were merely *Broken Men* in the beginning.
Gandhi's views on caste evolved slowly over the years, he remained deeply spiritual and sought social change within Hinduism.	Ambedkar had radical views on caste and argued that beliefs of people cannot be altered and, thus, he favoured using state as an instrument for establishing forward-thinking social policies.
Gandhi saw solution to untouchability in terms of gradual change of hearts of Hindus.	Ambedkar, on the other hand, envisaged a political-economic solution in terms of change of the structure itself.
Gandhi gave untouchables a new name – *Harijan* – to denote that they are equal children of god.	Ambedkar also rejected Gandhian notion of Harijan as *soothing palliative* to disguise the hard reality of caste.
According to Gandhi, every work was sacred and the type of work performed by one caste doesn't make it superior or inferior to other castes.	Work assigned to untouchables was not held in similar respect as of other caste's work and it was the most dehumanising.
He wanted *reformation* of caste and Hindu society.	Ambedkar wanted *annihilation* of caste.

There are various other approaches like the constitutional legal approach, which includes reservation based positive discrimination, Fundamental Rights like Article 17 prohibiting untouchability, legislations like Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, Reformist approach, which includes the rise of new sects and revival of old glory by Arya Samajis, who viewed Vedic Hinduism as free from untouchability. People led approach which includes work by civil society, NGOs and leading by example. There are many other specific perspectives on the issue of untouchability. For example, Dalits of South India call themselves *Adi-Dravidians* to disassociate themselves from the dominant castes. They claim themselves to be the original inhabitants of the Dravid land and victims of Brahminic oppression.

State and Non-State Steps towards abolition of Caste and Tribal Discrimination

The Indian state has been running many special programs for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes even before Independence. The *Schedules* listing the castes and tribes, that were drawn up in 1935, by the British Indian government, were a recognition of the massive discrimination practiced against them.

After independence, policy of reservation was used as a tool of positive discrimination, which was extended later to OBCs also. In addition to reservations, there have been a number of laws passed

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to end, prohibit and punish caste based discrimination, especially untouchability. *The Travancore-Cochin Removal of Disabilities Act, 1825*, in the today's state of Kerala, was the first anti-untouchability legislation in India. One of the earliest pan-India laws was the *Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850*, which disallowed the curtailment of rights of citizens due to change of religion or caste. The Constitution also abolished untouchability under Article 17. *The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955* has been enacted which criminalises practice of untouchability in every form.

The Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 revised and strengthened the legal provisions, punishing acts of violence or humiliation made against Dalits and *Adivasis*. However, the fact that legislations were passed repeatedly on this subject is a proof of the fact that the law alone cannot end a social practice. Governments are also trying some innovative ways like monetary incentives for inter-caste marriages. In Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, etc., governments are providing cash benefit to the newly married couples in which one of them is a Dalit.

State action alone cannot ensure a social change. Human beings are always capable of organising and acting on their own, often against very heavy odds, to struggle for justice and dignity. Dalits, too, have been increasingly active on the political, agitational, and cultural fronts. From the pre-Independence struggles and movements launched by people like Jyotiba Phule, Iyotheedas, Periyar, Ambedkar and others to contemporary political organisations like the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh or the Dalit *Sangharsh Samiti* of Karnataka, Dalit political assertion has come a long way. Media has also played a leading role in recent times by giving adequate coverage to incidences of violence and discrimination against Dalits and tribals.

Mobility in Caste System

Caste was never a static system. Before the origin of caste system, its parent *Varna* system itself underwent many changes and it was not strictly based on birth. Later, *Varna* specific gods also emerged. For example, *Pushan*, a god of *Shudras*, who looked after the cattle, emerged. Similarly, *Rudra* and *Marut* are *Vaishya* deities. Thus, various social groups had made efforts to delink themselves from the hegemony of the dominant groups even in the ancient period by creating their own unique cultural and mythological identities.

Caste has been considered as a closed system of stratification. Ideological basis behind this closeness was belief in *Karma* which stipulates that individual cannot undo his or her past deeds. Kings, in the past, were also ordained

K L SHARMA ON MOBILITY IN CASTE SYSTEM

He defines three levels of mobility in caste system –

I. Mobility of Individual – Some individuals, even of low caste, may have a better status and prestige compared to other members of their family. In contrast to it, scriptures also have accounts of a Brahmin liable to lose his status if he recourses to such things which are unbecoming of a Brahmin.

II. Mobility of a minority of families – The improvement in status could be a result of acquisition of land and education which is further reiterated by emulating the practices of higher castes with regard to dress, lifestyle and rituals. Mobility of this type is not corporate in nature.

III. Mobility of majority of groups of families – This kind of mobility is *corporate* or collective in nature. Sanskritisation was the chief process which helped such castes to move up in hierarchy and legitimise their claim to the upward mobility.

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to prevent intermixing of caste to maintain social order. However, in reality, no system was absolutely closed. In fact, social mobility has always been present within the caste system. Mobility was more frequent in intermediate castes, i.e., *Vaishyas*, *Kshatriyas* and *Shudras*. Buddhist scriptures mention *Kshatriya* as the superior caste and Jaina scriptures mention *Vaishyas* as *Mahajana* or superior. These two accounts reflect the relative positions of caste during different historical times. According to K M Pannicker, *Nandas* were the last true *Kshatriyas* and the later rulers were from lower castes, who usurped power. Thus, mobility in caste is a historical fact.

Various contemporary and historical avenues of mobility in caste system are –

I. *Political power and mobility* – In the older days, Srinivas points out, there were two major sources of mobility. Fluidity of the political system was the one such factor, which made it feasible for new castes to assume the status of *Kshatriyas* and exercise power. Gautamiputra Satakarni, the mighty Satvahana ruler, proclaimed himself a Brahmin, though he is believed to be from a tribe. Guptas were also *Vaishyas*. They rewarded *Brahmins* with rich tributes and lands as they needed Brahminical support to exalt their ritual status and, hence, *Brahmins* in turn, termed the Guptas *Kshatriyas* and even compared them with the Gods.

II. *Land ownership change* – Land was central to the agrarian economy in the ancient and medieval India. Land ownership was a measure of status and clout as well. According to Srinivas, *availability of marginal land* was the second important factor which defined mobility in the caste system. Marginal land could be brought under cultivation and hence, to uplift one's status. Leaders from dominant castes such as Reddis and Marathas could seize political power by utilising this marginal land and were able to claim *Kshatriyas* status.

III. *Matrimonial alliances* – Marriage is also one of the oldest vehicles of mobility within the caste hierarchy. *Anuloma* or hypergamous marriages even had the sanction of scriptures. In a patrilineal society, marriage has, inadvertently, provided avenues for social mobility for women from lower castes.

IV. *Cultural mobility* – Sanskritisation and Westernisation, as identified by M N Srinivas, were two major sources of cultural mobility in caste system. They have resulted in the upliftment of castes in local hierarchies.

V. *Wars and mobility* – All the invaders were given the status of *Kshatriyas* for their warrior nature. Even Hunas were termed as one of the Rajputs. Greek ruler Menander also emerged as a *Kshatriya* due to similar reasons.

VI. *Social movements and mobility* – Those castes, which cannot benefit from Sanskritisation and Westernisation, resorted to collective mobilisation. Temple Entry Satyagraha, SNDP movement, etc. are some of the examples.

VII. *Caste and occupation discrepancy in modern times* – Social mobility in caste system is evident in the increasing discrepancy between caste and occupations, withering away of *Jajmani* obligations, weakening of the rigidity regarding purity and pollution and acceptance of secular lifestyle. Occupations have differentiated today and they are secular in nature. Occupational segregation was the backbone of caste system. As it breaks away, more avenues of mobility have opened up.

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VIII. *Policy measures* – Policy of positive discrimination and legislative measures have also helped in the mobility in the caste system.

IX. *Census and mobility* – Census 1901, which was conducted under supervision of Herbert Risley, also recorded caste information. Many lower castes registered themselves as higher castes in census data.

X. *Geographic migration and mobility* – When migrants settle down in new areas, where their identity is not known, they are free to adopt new identities. As a result, many individuals in the past have shifted to other areas and adopted different titles to gain mobility.

XI. *Education, secularisation, democracy, industrialisation and urbanisation* – Religious sanction is also the core of caste segregation. In modern times, when religion itself is weakening, caste also weakens. Modern education instils universalistic values and ideals of justice and equality. Democracy and equal franchise have also weakened the civic basis of caste and it is now largely limited to ritual and private spheres only. As a result, status is not defined by caste alone. Secular status can overshadow caste status and offer new avenues of mobility.

Thus, fluidity of caste system is a historical fact. Flexibility in caste laws permitted very low-caste religious clerics such as Valmiki, to compose the epics such as Ramayana, which became a central scripture of Hindu beliefs. Today, democratic state provides larger opportunities of mobility. High stress on secular status has also aided the process of mobility.

Caste and Class Nexus

Caste and class resemble each other in certain respects and differ in others. Caste constitutes the status groups or communities that can be defined in terms of ascriptive attributes, occupation and style of life. Social honour is closely linked to ritual values in this closed system. Class positions are also associated with social honour, but they are defined more in terms of ownership or non-ownership of means of production. The classes are much more open and fluid and have a scope of individual upward social mobility. In caste system, mobility is much slower. Despite such differences, it will be too simplistic to assume that they are two binary opposites, as some Western scholars have tried to depict them as. For example, Edmund Leach's understanding that co-operation refers to caste, and competition refers to class is relatively both naive and unconvincing. Not only families of dominant castes compete with each other to extend patronage to the lower castes for maintaining their dominance, but also the lower caste families, too, compete to seek favours from the families of the dominant castes. According to Weber, castes are the most advanced form of status based stratification. Dumont differentiates caste from class, as caste is based on hierarchy and on the difference between pure and impure.

Caste and class point towards inequality and hierarchy. In both the cases, the principle of organisation differs. However, the view that caste and class are ideological opposites is not correct. For example, an organisation like *Jat Sabha* is not a simple caste association, but in effect, it is an organisation of peasants. Similarly, a typical contemporary *Kisan Sabha* is not a simple organisation of peasants; it is very much an association of castes, engaged in agriculture, particularly of *Jats*, *Gurjars*, *Yadavs*, etc. in Northern India.

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Historically, both ritual and secular status in caste were overlapping as secular benefits, appropriated by one class, were proportional to the ritual status. Class dimension had slowly started to emerge as distinct from caste in ancient India itself with the formation of guilds, banking systems, trade, land ownership, etc., but it was still overshadowed by caste. Class dimension became apparent only during the British rule. According to A R Desai, *caste inheres an underdeveloped, but potentially explosive class character and Indian state is also capitalist in essence and in reality.*

Nexus does not imply a correspondence or symmetry between caste and class. Interdependence, contradictions, symmetry and hegemony of social relations are integral features of this nexus. Andre Beteille notes that *the hierarchies of caste and power in the village overlap to some extent, but also cut across.* According to Kathleen Gough, there is a caste-class nexus which is highlighted by interconnections between caste, marriage and kinship on one hand and forces of production and production relations on the other. According to Yogendra Singh, caste and class represent the same structural reality. Although there is considerable divergence between the hierarchy of caste and that of class, the top and the bottom segments of the class system are largely subsumed under the caste structure. Classes largely operate within the framework of castes. Empirical studies suggest that there is a considerable correlation between caste and occupational status. In 2016, 98 per cent works of manual scavenging were done by people belonging to lower castes. If caste and class show a fair degree of overlap at the top and at the bottom level and in some cases, appears almost co-terminus, the picture is quite ambiguous at the intermediate level of caste hierarchy.

Caste conflicts are also class conflicts as the upper and lower classes correspond to the high and low castes respectively. With substantialisation of caste, castes also functions as classes as they operate as interests group in a materialistic social set-up. Caste associations undertake many economic and political activities of its members. According to Joan Mencher, caste system is effectively used as a tool of economic exploitation as well by some dominant castes.

Whether there is a transition or not from caste to class, the fact remains that one form of inequality is replaced with another. Thus, differentiation in society in a *Chaturvarna* system is not necessarily related to the reduction of caste inequalities. Differentiation of roles in modern economic ecosystems may even bring about certain new inequalities which might strengthen the existing ones. In such a situation, differentiation becomes a double-edged sword for the lowest groups in caste system that now bear the brunt of class also, apart from facing ritual discrimination.

Caste and Politics

Theoretically speaking, caste and democratic political system stand for opposite value systems. Caste is hierarchical. On the other hand, democratic political system advocates freedom for an individual and equality of status. There is an alternative empirical view as well. Politics, notwithstanding, the ideals in any society, do not function in vacuum and political systems (and democracy) also do not function in an ideal typical manner. They operate within a social milieu. Hence, in practice, in a society like ours which has limited resources, caste and other concepts like kinship seek to establish new identities and strive for positions of power. In such a competitive scenario, politicians also find caste groupings readily available for political mobilisation.

British rule provided the founding ground of interaction of the two. Caste and religion were often used as emotional tools for managing the masses. On the constructive side of it, there were also many

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groupings like Justice Party in South and leaders like Ambedkar who called for political empowerment of the depressed castes for an equitable society. Republican Party, formed in 1956 by Dalit leaders under Ambedkar, was perhaps the first formal political venture after independence to mobilise Dalits. Hence, political mobilisation was viewed as a source of social empowerment. Post-independence system of universal franchise, democracy and Panchayati raj system further fuelled these dynamics.

RAJNI KOTHARI ON CASTE AND POLITICS

Kothari, while analysing the intrusions of caste into politics and politics into caste, distinguishes three stages in the progression of political Modernisation after Independence –

I. In the first stage, he says, the struggle for political power was limited to the entrenched and the ascendant castes.

II. In the second phase, competitions within these castes for power, led to factionalism.

III. In the third stage, lower castes were mobilised and are now asserting themselves in the political domain.

In his words – *'It is not politics that gets caste-ridden; it is the caste that gets politicised.'* He has a relatively positive outlook towards caste in politics. According to him, politics has been able to give voice to the powerless and has uplifted them from oblivion.

The study of *Nadars* of Tamil Nadu is a case in point about the positive role played by politics vis-à-vis caste. Defining the importance of caste in Indian politics, Rudolph and Rudolph, in their *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India, 1967*, revealed that political clout can also be used to change the status in the caste hierarchy and many rights can be acquired which were once denied to a caste. They took the case of an untouchable community, i.e., *Shanans* of Tamil Nadu and explained how it could change the social status with the help of political mobilisation and association, and ultimately is now known as *Nadars*. Caste associations have provided a new vitality to the depressed groups. Similar conclusions were also drawn by Beteille. Andre Beteille holds that while westernisation is taking individuals away from caste identity, the role of caste in politics is taking people towards the caste identity and thereby strengthening it. Thus, political process has a dual effect on caste system.

With the extension of franchise in the post-colonial India, each social group and sub-group got mobilised for a share in the developmental process and competed for positions in the state-bureaucracy. The Indian polity is, thus, governed by both, vertical mobilisation by the dominant castes and horizontal alliances in the name of *Jati* and *Varna*.

After independence, caste and politics interaction unfolded in different phases. In the first phase, some caste associations were formed with political objectives to compete in elections. Such caste associations were associated with different leading political parties to see that their caste members get party tickets in elections. These parties initially resisted such pressures because of the counter pressure from the dominant castes that controlled the party.

In the second phase, some of the political parties identified with certain castes for nomination of the party candidates and mobilisation in elections. For example, Bharatiya Kranti Dal evolved as an alliance of four major peasant castes of UP in 1969 elections. The alliance was called AJGAR, which stood for *Ahirs*, *Jats*, *Gujjars* and *Rajputs*. Lok Dal was identified with *Jats* in Uttar Pradesh in 1977 and 1980 parliamentary elections. Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh was identified with backward castes in general and *Yadavas* in particular, in 1997 state assembly elections. BJP is generally identified with upper castes and especially the business class.

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In the third phase, since the 1980s, we have also seen the emergence of explicitly caste-based political parties. It seemed as though caste solidarities were decisive in winning elections. But, the situation soon got very complicated as parties competed with each other in utilising the same kind of caste calculus.

In the fourth phase, and more recently, the advent of democracy and decentralised politics, in the form of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system, saw politics carried down to the grassroots level. Caste became a prominent variable in electoral calculations.

Substantialisation of caste and *identity politics* are two important aspects of Caste and Politics in contemporary India. Caste is now used for material gains as well as for a common marker for collective identification in the elections. It is now acting like an interest group. However, with over-emphasis on the identity politics, the political parties sometimes exacerbate the existing cleavages in a developing society like India and it gives birth to *casteism* in elections. As a result, often elections are not fought around real issues, but are sensationalised around caste related issues. Castes are pitted against each other and the numerically weaker castes lose in this process. It also breeds animosity among the caste. However, interaction of caste and politics also has positive fallouts. It has led to new government policies like abolition of Zamindari system and untouchability. It has provided strength and support to the voices of the underprivileged as well, and in this process, it has undermined the inequitable traditional social order and value system. It has led to a shift in location of power in society from a few dominant groups to the larger masses.

Competitive political process has led to the weakening of intra-caste cohesiveness. The members of the same caste vote for different parties or leaders. Thus, it is not the caste alone that influences politics, but the political system also influences caste and induces changes in it.

Caste among Other Religions

Caste among Christians

The caste system among Indian Christians often reflects stratification by sect, location, and the castes of their predecessors. Social practices among certain Indian Christians parallel much of the discrimination faced by lower castes in other religious communities. About 70–80 per cent of Indian Christians are members of the Dalit or backward classes.

Caste system in Christians is due to two reasons –

I. *Influence of Hinduism* – Saint Thomas Christians of Kerala accord themselves a high status as they regard themselves as the erstwhile caste Hindus like *Namoodris* and *Nairs*. Similarly, work of Christian Missionaries before independence led to conversions on a large scale in the North East, Kerala and Goa. Many of these converted people retained their caste statuses.

II. *Their own internal classification* – The earliest reference to caste among Indian Christians comes from Kerala. Christians in Kerala are divided into several communities, including Syrian Christians (upper castes) and Latin Christians. In the pre-independence period, untouchability was prevalent in Kerala. The Syrian Christians also practiced it in order to maintain their upper-caste status. Even today, the Syrian Christian community accords itself high status and operates very much as a caste.

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In Goa, mass conversions were carried out by the Portuguese Latin missionaries from the 16th Century onwards. In many instances, the Hindu converts retained their caste practices. Thus, the original Hindu *Brahmins* in Goa now became Christian *Bamonns'* and the *Kshatriya* and *Vaishya Vanis* became Christian noblemen called *Chardos*. The Christian clergy became almost exclusively *Bamonn*. Those *Vaishya Vanis* who could not get admitted into the *Chardo* caste became *Gauddos*, and *Shudras* became *Sudirs*. Finally, the Dalits or *Untouchables* who converted to Christianity became *Maharas* and '*Chamars*. Indian law does not provide benefits for *Dalit Christians*, however Christians have been agitating for the same rights given to Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh Scheduled Castes.

Caste among Muslims

Islam is considered as an egalitarian religion, but there are regional variations due to cultural contact with other cultures and places. Sources indicate that the castes among Muslims developed as a result of close contact with the Hindu culture. The converts, who remained within the Hindu cultural universe and retained many of its associated beliefs and practices, exhibit caste like features in their social organisation. As a result, apart from religion and historical, socio-cultural factors have also helped in defining the bounds of endogamous groups for Muslims in India.

In some parts of India, the Muslims are divided as *Ashrafs'* and *Ajlafs*. *Ashrafs* claim a superior status derived from their foreign ancestry. The non-*Ashrafs* are assumed to be converts from Hinduism, and are therefore, drawn from the indigenous population. They, in turn, are divided into a number of occupational castes. Historically, The *Sayyeds*, the *Sheikhs*, the *Mughals* and *Pathans* formed the upper strata, i.e., *Ashrafs* or the rulers among the Muslims. And, the converts comprised of *Ajlaf*, a lower order. Among the first generation converts, the *Brahmins* became *Sayyeds*, and the *Rajput* converts merged with *Sheikhs*, *Mughals* and *Pathans*. Next came the converts from occupational castes such as the *Julaha* (weaver), *Nai* (Barber), *Dhuniya* (Cotton carder), *Kumhar* (potter) and *Teili* (oilmen). M N Srinivas says *the Muslim Jatis in many respects are comparable to Hindu Jatis having specialised occupations and gradation of status*. In addition to the *Ashraf*/*Ajlaf* divide, there is also the *Arzal* caste among Muslims, which is regarded as the equivalent of the untouchable castes. The term *Arzal* literally stands for *degraded* and the Arzal castes are further subdivided into *Bhanar*, *Maugta*, *Mehtar*, *Kasbi*, *Lalbegi*, *Halalkhor*, etc. In the Bengal region, some Muslims stratify their society according to *Quoms*. Caste division among Muslims is not strictly on the basis of ideology of purity and pollution, but there are various other considerations like sectarian (*Shia* or *Sunni*), ethnic (e.g. Sindhi, Baloch, Punjabi, etc.) tribal/clan affiliation and religious orientation within the sect (*Ismaili*, *Isnashari*, *Ahmedi*, etc.).

Caste: Change and Continuity

Even in the ancient and medieval times, caste was not as static as it is represented in its ideal typical form, but the most far reaching changes in caste system started during the British rule. Setting up of modern institutions of law and justice, industries, legislations, reservation, etc. led to the decline of *Jajmani* system in the economic sphere, caste Panchayats in political sphere and dilution of ritual status in cultural sphere. Social movements launched by social reformers saw a decline of superior position of *Brahmins* as well as of untouchability. This was more conspicuous in South India where self-respect movement, SNDP, etc. initiated such changes. After Independence, this process was further hastened with legal and constitutional provisions.

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But caste, as a system, still remains persistent. Continuity can be seen both at manifest and at latent level. On one hand, youth has adopted a liberal attitude and caste refuses to die. Major areas of continuity of caste are –

I. *Marriage and endogamy* – It was in the cultural and domestic spheres that caste has proved to be the strongest and stickiest. Endogamy, or the practice of marrying within the caste, remained largely unaffected by Modernisation and change. Inter-caste marriages within the upper castes (e.g., *Brahmin, Bania and Rajput*) have become more likely now than ever before, but marriages between an upper caste and a backward or scheduled caste person remains rare even today. Even matrimonial websites promote caste marriage and most of the marriage portals have caste specific domains names like Jatmatrimony.com and punjabimatrimony.com. According to a 2014 survey by National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and the University of Maryland, there were only about five per cent inter-caste marriages in India out of the total marriages. In Madhya Pradesh, this figure was the lowest at one per cent.

II. *Caste in private lives* – Harold Gould in his study of the rickshawallahs of Lucknow, titled *Lucknow Rickshawallas: The Social Organization of an Occupational Category, 1974*, observed that the rickshaw-pullers, whom he studied, belonged to different castes. While working, they interacted with each other without observing any caste restrictions. However, when these rickshaw pullers went back to their homes in the evening, they observed all the ritual practices of their caste. So, ritual notions have not died yet, but they are retreating to a private sphere from a public sphere. Thus, while workplace might have become secular, private lives are still religious.

III. *Economic and occupational sphere* – The ideology of caste prescribed specific occupations for specific caste groups, which had a specific place in the social hierarchy. As new economic measures like ownership of land and market forces were introduced, caste also underwent change. According to F G Bailey, in his study of Bisipura village of Orissa, though economic relations have changed due to change in ownership after marketisation of land, caste still remains a force to reckon in defining political and economical relations. According to Rajni Kothari, Brahmin sections responded first to English education and therefore, benefited from political and administrative power. The same pattern is visible in the commercial sector too. Great business houses like Birlas and Dalmias belong to the traditional commercial castes. In banking, castes like the Chettiars of South established themselves in the modern system of banking and commerce which was an extension of their traditional occupation. Today also, many low key jobs like manual scavenging are performed by lower castes. Repeated studies have shown that there is poor representation of the depressed castes on the higher posts in government. As per 2011 Census, less than four per cent Dalit households had a member in government jobs.

IV. *Political sphere* – At the village level, caste Panchayats and caste councils functioned as the local governing bodies and provided a self-sufficient image to the Indian village. Khap Panchayats in Western UP and Haryana still hold significant power. Casteism, substantialisation of caste, identity politics, etc. are gaining strength and according to M N Srinivas, the role played by caste in politics is in close approximation to that of the pressure groups. Andre Beteille holds that while westernisation is taking individuals away from caste identity, the role of caste in politics is taking the people towards the caste identity, thereby, strengthening it. This is evident, for example, in the case of the political mobilisation of caste groups in Madhopur, UP. In this

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village, the ranks of *Noniyas*, the salt-makers and *Chamars*, the leather-makers joined hands in opposing the locally dominant upper caste *Thakurs*.

V. *Reservation* – After independence, positive discrimination policy is pursued and it has created a consciousness among castes. Castes are now uniting along economic lines. After independence, through the policy of reservation, an economic basis has been provided to the castes. The policies of reservation and other forms of protective discrimination instituted by the state, in response to political pressure, serve as their lifelines. Agitations by *Patidars* in Gujarat in 2015, by *Jats* in Haryana in 2016, etc. show the transformed nature of reservation where even the purported dominant castes are uniting on the issue of the reservation.

VI. *Caste associations* – They now act as pressure groups and have transformed themselves as agents of social as well as economic activity. *Jat Mahasabhas, Aggarwal Sabhas* and other groups have played a key role in demanding increased prices for the crops. Ghurye had predicted it as long back as 1930s when he said that attacks on hierarchy are likely to lead to horizontal consolidation of caste groups.

espite the above factors, there have been significant changes in the institution of caste. Factors that ve led to such change can be enumerated as –

I. *Urbanisation* – Urbanisation and the conditions of inclusive living in the cities made it difficult for the caste-segregated patterns of social interaction to survive.

II. *Complex division of labour* – Modern industry created all kinds of new jobs for which there were no caste rules. Traditional caste based services are no longer there and there is free choice for everyone. Money economy has weakened the *Jajmani* system. In his studies, Beteille shows how Adi-Dravidians undermined the authority of *Brahmins* in Tanjore village.

III. *Ritual sphere changes* – During the last few decades, as a result of the forces of Modernisation, the ideology of caste has become less pervasive in an individual's day to day life. Caste rituals have become an increasingly personal affair rather than public due to changed circumstances of living, forces of industrialisation and urbanisation. Concept of purity and pollution has significantly declined.

IV. *Geographical and occupational mobility* – In his study *Caste, Class and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village, 1971*, Andre Beteille wrote that earlier, (i.e., in the pre-British period) education was a virtual monopoly of the *Brahmins* who dominated this area. But at the time of his study, the educational system had become far more open, both in principle and in practice. Many non-Brahmin and even untouchable boys attended schools at Sripuram. According to Beteille, in the towns and cities, white-collar jobs were relatively caste-free. Non-*Brahmins* from Sripuram could work as clerks or accountants in offices at Thiruvaiyur and Tanjore along with the *Brahmins*. Within the village, land had come into the market since, due to several factors; some of the *Brahmins* had to sell their land. This enabled the, non-*Brahmins* and even a few Adi-Dravidas (lower castes) to buy it. Thus, as land came into the market, the productive organisation of the village tended to become free from the structure of caste. In a very recent study, Hira Singh highlighted, in his *Recasting Caste, 2014*, that Indians who live in other countries have almost lost their caste identities and some have even dropped their caste names.

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V. *Democratic values and political changes* – Society is evolving from ascription to an achievement based one, so caste is gradually disappearing. Srinivas, in his study of Mysore, found out that over time, the attitude of villagers is changing and they attach less and less importance to the ritual status as democratic and modern values started to show their impact. In the legal-political sphere, it is widely believed that civil and penal codes introduced by the British, over the sub-continent of India in 1860, took away the power exercised by caste Panchayats. The new political order is universal in constitution and in principle rejects the demands of caste. Every adult now has a universal franchise. According to Rudolph and Rudolph, caste has, in its transformed state, helped the Indian masses (of which nearly 70 per cent live in the villages) to make a success of representative democracy.

VI. *Social movements* – Social movements and campaigns against the evils of caste system have led to a considerable change in caste system. Arya Samaj, SNDP Yogam, Self-Respect Movement, Satyashodhak Samaj, etc. made a considerable dent in caste.

In case of upper castes, caste as an identity is less prominent as successive generations in prosperity tend to attribute their well being to their education, occupation, etc. and caste tends to become invisible. It is also said that the more caste is weakening, the more it is becoming stronger. While in the ritual sense, it may be becoming weaker, in secular sphere it is also becoming stronger when it comes to garner, the caste associated interests like reservation and political gains.

There is also another view which tries to reconcile the change and continuity aspects of the caste. According to this view, caste undergoes a constant process of fission and fusion. Fission is generally seen as a process of claiming a separate identity by a group of *Jatis* or castes almost of same ritual hierarchical position. This happens when one of them has progressed better than the others in terms of education, economy, etc. Such a group tries to move away from its earlier identity and claim a new or higher position in the local hierarchy. Fusion, on the other hand, is generally a process by which a group of *Jatis* having the same ritual status or possessing the same traditional occupation claim the same identity, often a new one which may provide for collective social or political advantage. Fission can be explained by Sanskritisation, fusion, on the other hand, is always a means to social mobilisation and action. Fusion is often associated with *Jatis* of artisans and peasant communities and rarely with the upper castes.

Question Bank

1. What is caste? How is it different from other forms of social stratification?
2. Caste as a social reality is viewed differently by Gandhi and Ambedkar. Their perspectives diverge, but meet at a common end. Discuss.
3. Ambedkar was an iconoclast who has himself assumed a demi-god status in contemporary anti-caste narrative. Evaluate this statement in the light of the contemporary adoption of Ambedkar as a cultic figure by the depressed classes across India.
4. Write a critical note on Ghurye's Indological perspective on caste system.
5. Srinivas combined text with context to improve upon the Indological descriptions of caste. Quote any of his field studies to substantiate this argument.

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6. How helpful are Dumont's constructs like *Homo Hierarchicus* and *Purity and Pollution* distinction in understanding the caste structure?
7. Dumont's conceptualisation of caste is more textual, but is significant for devising a theoretical framework unique to India. Elaborate.
8. Andre Beteille offered a dynamic view of the caste system which was not bound by a cultural framework alone. Discuss.
9. Dipankar Gupta has infused dynamism in a static concept like caste. Examine in context of his idea of multiple hierarchies.
10. Untouchability is a scar on Indian conscience. Comment.
11. Open forms of untouchability are less prevalent now, but subtle forms still prevail. Comment with a few illustrations.
12. What are the institutional and legal measures that have been taken by Indian states to abolish untouchability? Also discuss the effectiveness of these measures.
13. Caste is a closed form of stratification. Do you agree? Give reasons in support of your arguments.
14. Mobility in caste system is a historical fact. Comment.
15. In the recent times caste is politicised and politics is casteicised. Comment on the role of caste in Indian politics in the light of this statement.
16. Caste is just another form of inequality and similar forms of stratifications exist all over world, but with different names. Do you agree?
17. Caste has undergone substantialisation, especially after the attachment of reservation benefits. In this light, examine the dynamics between caste and class.
18. What is the future of caste system in India? How has modernity and democracy affected it?
19. Discuss the nature of change described by M N Srinivas through his dual concepts of Modernisation and Sanskritisation.

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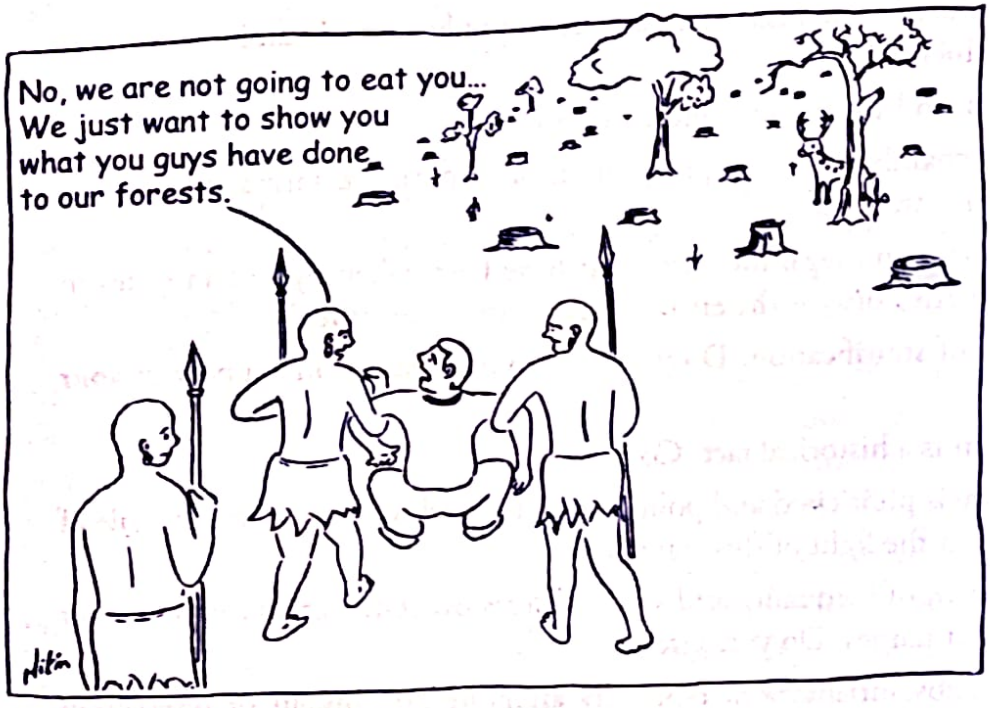
Tribal Communities in India

15



After reading this chapte you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept and definitio of tribes in Indian context
2. Assess the distributio of tribal groups in India
3. Understand the relationship between caste and tribe
4. Learn about the colonial impact on tribes of India
5. Understand the issue of tribal integration and autonomy

Tribes in India are different from similar groups around the world. First of all, they are not a homogenous group unlike many other tribal groups in other parts of the world. Secondly, even within themselves, they are at various stages of integration with the larger society and hence, within a particular tribe also, they exhibit heterogeneity. Unlike other parts of world, tribes in India had historically a largely harmonious existence with the larger society until the arrival of the British when their cultural and social practices became subservient to colonial economic interests. Their plight continued even after independence and as a result, in some areas, unrest also followed. Successive governments also found themselves at sea when it came to defining the tribes and as a result, we have lacked a coherent policy towards their development. Recent issues of deforestation and mineral exploration in the tribal areas have once again raised the issues of displacement and tribal development.

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owhere in the world is there so much concentration of tribal population among the mainstream pulation as in India. There are over 700 Scheduled Tribes notified under Article 342 of the onstitution of India. According to the 2015-16 Annual Report of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, e population of the Scheduled Tribes in the country is 10.45 crore, which as per 2011 Census, nstitutes 8.6 per cent of the total population. Tribals in India are not a homogeneous group and eir features vary from one part of the country to another in terms of their traits like religion, kinship les and political organisation. Their spread is also uneven, with some states like Haryana and Punjab hich have almost nil tribal population while most of the central Indian states have significant opulation.

eatures of Tribal Groups

ribals in India are distinguished by their distinctive socio-cultural features. Mandelbaum mentions the llowing such features of Indian tribes –

I. Kinship is an important instrument of social bonds among the tribals.

II. There is a lack of clearly defined hierarchy among men and groups.

III. There is also an absence of strong, complex and formal organisation.

IV. There is a communitarian basis of land holding and, hence, absence of concept of private property.

V. Tribal societies are segmentary in character.

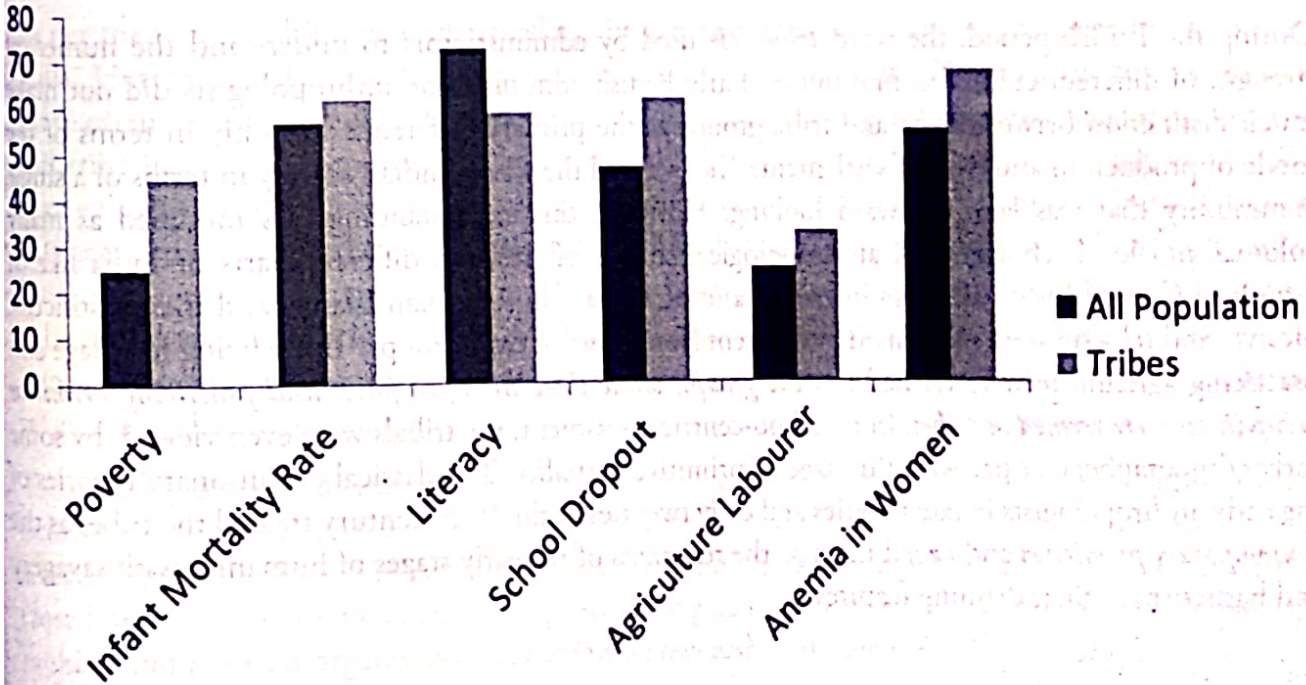

Fig. 15.1 Graph Comparing Social Indicators of Tribes with General Population

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VI. They place little value on surplus accumulation, use of capital and on market trading.

VII. There is an apparent lack of distinction between form and substance of religion among the Indian tribals.

VIII. They have a distinct psychological bent for enjoying life.

Apart from the aforementioned typical ideal description of Indian tribes by Mandelbaum, there are various other typical traits associated with the Indian tribes. They have simple religions like totemic religions, have absence of caste in general and distinct language. Apart from these, on the basis of racial features (though racial theory of demographic division stands largely rejected in the light of recent scientific genetic research), Guha considers that they belong to the three racial groups – The Proto-Australoids, The Mongoloids and The Negrito.

Apart from describing tribes in India in terms of their characteristics, sociologists are also interested in understanding their social organisation and their general problems. Tribals have their own problems which are distinct from the problems of the mainstream. Land and forest alienation, indebtedness, displacement, health problems and insurgency are some of such problems. As per 2011 Census, tribals in India have a sex ratio of 990, but have a poor literacy rate of just 59 per cent. School dropout rate is more than 60 per cent.

Definitional Problems

Historically, tribes have been addressed by different authorities by different names like *Adivasi*, aborigines, primitives and backward Hindus. Definitional problem of tribes deals with two inter-related problems; problem of defining the tribes and evolving an understanding of tribes in the Indian context.

During the British period, the word *tribe* was used by administrators to understand the numerical strength of different cultural communities. Early British administrator-anthropologists did not make much distinction between caste and tribe groups as the primary difference was only in terms of the mode of production and style of settlement. They viewed the whole Indian society in terms of a single community that was largely inward looking. However, this understanding was modified as many colonial and local scholars took anthropological studies of tribes in different parts of India like of Gonds in Central India, of Todas in Nilgiri and of *Adivasis* in Andaman Islands and their distinctive lifestyle and religion were recognised as different from those of caste groups. Those living in village and practicing agriculture were termed as *caste groups, while those living in forest and practicing primitive occupations were termed as tribes*. In an ethno-centric assessment, the tribals were even viewed, by some early ethnographers, at par with the stage of primitive bestiality. The classical evolutionary theories of the early anthropologists in late nineties and early twenties of the 19th Century treated the tribes as the *contemporary primitives* and called them as the remnants of the early stages of humanity with savagery and barbarism as their defining features.

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CASTE AND TRIBE

Caste and tribes are two important ingredients of the Indian social setup, but the inter-relationship between them has been viewed from different angles by different scholars. According to one perspective, caste and tribe are seen along a continuum. Srinivas' Sanskritisation model also illustrates how tribal groups enter into caste system. Similarly, Ghurye has called tribals as *Backward Hindus* and he presented a framework for classification of tribes from the Hindu perspective. F G Bailey gave a *tribe-caste continuum* model. But such a simplistic correlation between caste and tribes is rejected by the modern anthropologists. Alternative view holds that *tribe* and *caste* are different social categories which are mistakenly viewed by earlier sociologists and anthropologists as being a part of one larger *Indian society*. Caste has been treated as the social institution regulated by the hereditary division of labour, hierarchy, principle of purity and pollution, civic and religious disabilities, etc. Tribes, on the other hand, have been seen as being characterised by the absence of features attributed to the caste. The differences in the two can be summed up as –

I. According to Herbert Risley, the convention of endogamy is not rigidly enforced in tribes unlike in the case of caste.

II. According to Max Weber, when a tribe loses its territorial significance, it assumes the form of a caste.

III. Tribal societies have an egalitarian social order. Status of the members of tribal group is equal, but in case of caste, it is not.

IV. Caste is not a political association per se, but a tribe, often, is.

Over the years, as tribal groups came in close contact with the larger Hindu society, they also acquired some of the traits of the Hindu society. Study by Mandelbaum in Nilgiri hills, dating back to as far as 1930s, showed that Todas had, even at that time, acquired many caste-like attributes. Many of them practiced endogamy and had occupational segregation as well.

As per their own subjective understanding, British administrators gave many names to the tribes of India. Hutton called them *Aborigins* and the famous Anthropologist Elwin called them *Aboriginals*. More often than not, Indian scholars, however, disagreed with the British view. They never saw caste and tribe in binary or mutually opposite terms. S C Roy contended that *Jana* or tribe and *Jati* or caste existed in India for long. According to Mandelbaum also, there are no strict cultural differences between caste groups and tribes. Similarly, S C Dube asserted that Great Tradition of Hinduism and the Little Tradition of tribes existed together for long. Likes of L P Vidyarthi and Ghurya cited ancient texts as historical proofs of their assertion. A R Desai, however, classified tribes by their degree of assimilation into mainstream society. Beteille also differentiated different tribal groups on the basis of language, religion and degree of isolation. Thus, later Indian views were more empirical and rooted in reality.

Today, tribes are generally defined in terms of various general features rather than in the form of a fixed definition or identity and are thus, defined as a group of individuals with a shallow history – at least a recorded one, indigenous in nature, having a common name, having a particular territory, tied by close bonds of kinship, practicing endogamy, having distinct customs, rituals and beliefs, simple social ranking and political organisation and common ownership of resources.

Earlier, the use of a single term for a very disparate set of communities was more a matter of administrative convenience. For example, *Imperial Gazetteer of India* defined them as – '*Collection of family, bearing*

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a common name, common dialect, occupying or professing a particular territory and not endogamous, though originally might have been.'

Tribes in India have also been defined in terms of *what they are not*. Tribes are communities that did not practice a religion with a written text. They did not have a state or a political form of the normal kind that was there in the wider society. They also do not have sharp class divisions and rather have relatively greater equality of status. They also don't have deep notions of history. And, most importantly, they generally do not have caste and are neither Hindus nor peasants in the classical sense of meaning.

S C DUBE'S FIVEFOLD CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBES

Dube provided a fivefold classification of Indian tribes to highlight the diversity that lies among them –

I. Aboriginals living in seclusion.

II. Tribal groups having an association with the neighbouring non-tribal society, but maintaining their distinctiveness.

III. Tribals living in villages along with caste, sects and religious groups, but maintaining their identity.

IV. Tribals who have been degraded to the status of untouchables.

V. Tribals who have assimilated into the mainstream and enjoy high economic, social and political status.

In terms of positive characteristics, tribes have been classified according to their *permanent* and *acquired* traits. Permanent traits include region, language, physical characteristics and ecological habitat. In terms of languages, predominantly, they speak Austric and Tibeto-Burman languages, but they also speak Indo-Aryan and Dravidian. Classifications based on *acquired* traits use two main criteria; mode of livelihood, and extent of incorporation into Hindu society or a combination of the two. On the basis of livelihood, tribes can be categorised into fishermen, food gatherers and hunters, shifting cultivators, peasants, and plantation and industrial workers.

Tribes are also classified by scholars on basis of various other parameters like –

I. *Linguistic classification* – Dravidian, Austric and Tibeto Chinese.

II. *Racial classification* – Herbert Risley in his book *The Peoples of India, 1908* classified people of India into seven racial groups. Similar attempts have been made by some other scholars as well.

III. *Geographical spread* – Tribes are also divided according to their geographical spread. This is also linked with purported racial groups. For example, tribes of North eastern India are said to belong to Mongoloid stock.

IV. *Economic classification* – On the basis of economic activity that they are engaged in, they are classified in various categories like fishermen and shifting cultivators.

V. *Classification on the basis of degree of cultural contact* – Scholars like Verrier Elwin classified four types of tribes on the basis of their degree of acculturation.

But these traits and definitions were never uniformly applicable, even historically. Such definitions are insufficient as most of them are of typical primitive tribes and don't account for a proper picture of the diverse tribal groups in India. Tribes in India are a highly heterogeneous group. Tribal groups vary from highly underdeveloped like *Jarawas* of Andaman to almost assimilated in the mainstream as *Meenas*

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of Rajasthan and *Negis* of Himachal. They also have their distinct culture, habitats, occupation and lifestyle which vary from one group to another. Some of them still practice animistic religions while others have come into the fold of dominant religions like Hinduism and Christianity. Some speak their own distinct languages while others speak dialects of mainstream languages like Hindi and Dravidian languages. Some tribes are no longer geographically isolated nor do they practice simple primitive occupations. Backwardness is also no longer a criterion of distinctiveness as many of them are no longer backward and many non-tribes are equally backward. This makes the task of defining them difficult. India exhibits a composite culture where indigenous identity is greatly fluid and hence, European concept of indigenous group cannot be extended to the tribes of India.

In the wake of such definitional limitations, several scholars have used some other methods like using a flexible definitional criterion. Even before independence, likes of Ghurye offered such an alternative view. He said that tribes always had close association with the larger society and he called them *backward Hindus* and identified three types *Hinduised Tribes*, *Partially Hinduised Tribes* and *the Hill Section*. F G Bailey famously gave the concept of *Tribe Caste Continuum*. However, his critics argue that tribes are wholly different from castes as they had no notion of purity and pollution which is central to the caste system. Similarly, corollaries to Sanskritisation thesis argue that tribes gradually became part of caste society.

During the 1960s, scholars debated on whether tribes should be seen as one of the ends of a continuum, with caste-based (Hindu) peasant society on the other end, or they are an altogether different kind of community. But, by the 1970s, all the major definitions of tribe were shown to be faulty. It was pointed out that the tribe-peasantry or tribe-caste distinction did not hold in terms of any of the commonly advanced criteria such as size, isolation, religion, and means of livelihood. Today, tribal identity is defined in terms of interactional process with the mainstream and the resulting resistance and opposition from tribes to preserve their unique identities rather than any purportedly *primordial* or *original* characteristics peculiar to tribes. Constitution makers of India were also sagacious enough to recognise the definitional problem and instead of focusing on definition, they focused on the future developmental strategies.

Owing to a lack of consensus on a uniform definition, tribal definitional problem still remains significant because it is closely related to their identity and to the question of their development. Without knowing who exactly they are, it is not possible to chart out a proper developmental plan. A change in definition from colonial time to present time also shows the changing attitude of mainstream towards them. Thus, definition is an important starting point that charts out the course of action for their socio-economic and cultural development and preservation of their identities.

Geographical Spread of Tribes

As per some estimates, tribals are concentrated in about 15 per cent of the geographical area and as per 2011 Census, they constitute about 8.6 per cent of total population. There are more than 700 notified tribes under Article 342 and there are many more sub-tribes as well. About 85 per cent of the tribal population lives in central India. Chhattisgarh, parts of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh form the heart of this region. Of the remaining 15 per cent, over 11 per cent inhabit North Eastern states, leaving only a little over three per cent living in the rest of India.

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P Vidyarthi has suggested a fivefold classification on the basis of their geographical spread and Dube suggested a fourfold classification. Roy Burman also makes a fivefold territorial classification. In general, the tribal population can be demarcated in the following geographical zones –

I. *North eastern Zone* – North East, comprising of eight states of Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura consist these areas. Main tribes that live in these areas include Abhor, Kuki, Mismi, Khasi, Garo and Naga. Most of them belong to Mongolian stock.

II. *Himalayan Region* – It includes the tribal areas of Laddakh (Jammu & Kashmir), Himachal Pradesh, Uttrakhand, etc. Major tribes in this area are *Lepchas*, *Bhotias*, *Gaddi* and *Jaunsari*. They are also mostly from the Mongolian stock.

III. *Central or Middle Zone* – It includes West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Southern Uttar Pradesh, Southern Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Tribes in these areas include *Bhumij*, *Gond*, *Ho*, *Dhangar*, *Oraon*, *Munda* and *Santhal*. They primarily belong to Proto-Australoid stock.

IV. *Western Region* – It includes Gujarat and Rajasthan and the main tribes include *Bhils*, *Grasia*, etc. and they also belong to the Proto-Australoid stock.

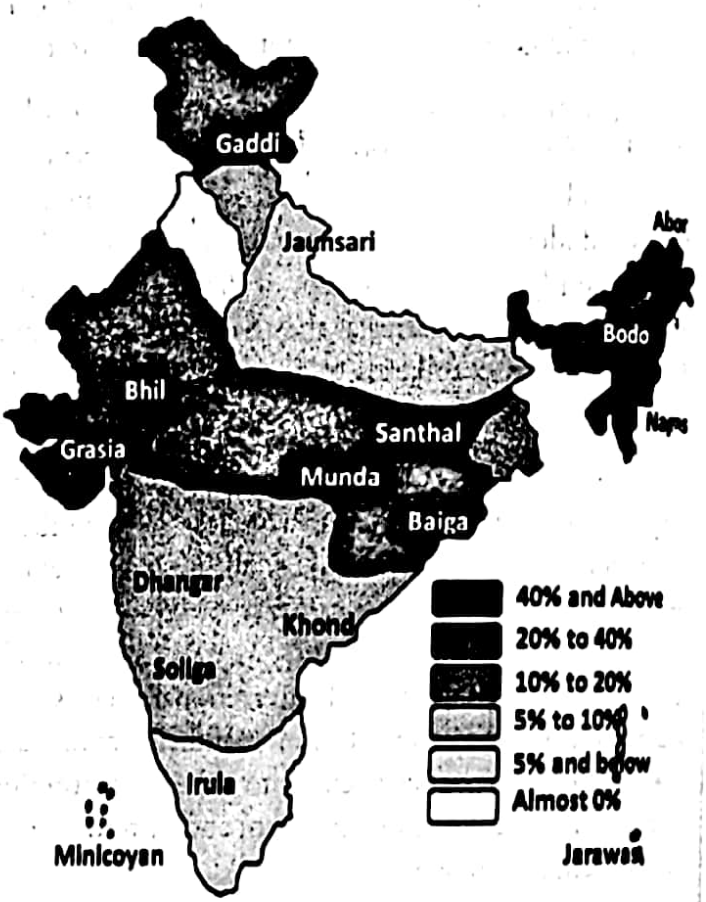

Fig. 15.2 Geographical Distribution of Tribes in India

V. *Southern Zone* – It includes Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and the two Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. Tribes in these areas include *Chenchu*, *Toda*, *Minicoyans*, *Jarawas*, *Irula* and *Kadar* and they have a mix of Negrito, Caucasoid and Proto-Australoid stocks.

If we look at the share of tribals in the state population, then the North Eastern states have the highest concentrations, with all states, except Assam, having concentration of more than 30 per cent, and some like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have more, between 60 per cent and 95 per cent tribal population. Among the large states, according to 2011 Census, Chhattisgarh has the highest tribal population concentration of around 32 per cent. In terms of absolute numbers also, tribal concentration across India varies significantly. Some tribal communities like Great Nicobarese have their population left in just double digits while others like *Gonds* have in millions. In Southern states of India, tribal diversity is less as compared to that in the Northeast of India.

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Capturing the geographical spread is important because it helps in better targeting of developmental programs. Recently, the government of India has mooted to develop a kind of tribal map with the help of Geographical Information System (GIS) technology.

Colonial Policies and Tribes

Before the colonial rule, Indian tribes had been living in forest and hilly area as a part and parcel of Indian population and they enjoyed a free life of their own without interference of the state. The British in India had economic exploitation of her riches as one of the prime reasons of colonising India, and it affected their relations with the Indian tribes as well. The British policy towards the tribals had two major elements. Firstly, it favoured isolation of the tribal areas from the mainstream. Their political interests also prevented integration of tribes with mainstream as they saw their union with larger population as a threat to their empire. Secondly, at the level of reforms, the British administration was interested in *civilising* these people. Colonial rulers followed a similar policy of exploitation and alienation with tribes that they followed in the rest of India. To maximise their earnings, various attempts were made to bring tribes into the fold of revenue administration. At the same time, forests and tribal lands were subjected to exploitation at an unprecedented level.

Initial attempts of the British to interfere with the tribal areas led to a large number of tribal revolts like Chaur Uprising of 1832, Kol and Ho Uprising of 1832 in Chota Nagpur, Satara Revolt of 1840 and Santhal Rebellion of 1856. Due to this, during the late 19th Century, a policy of administrative segregation emerged.

During the 19th Century, the British policy towards tribes is seen in terms of three aspects –

I. ***Administrative segregation*** – This policy aimed at isolating tribals from the mainstream. Government of India Act of 1870 provided some protection and *Scheduled Districts Act* of 1874 led to the creation of certain scheduled tracts. 1919 Act created *Excluded* and *Modified Excluded* areas with a different administrative structure than the mainstream which was later slightly modified in 1935 Act as *Excluded* and *Partially Excluded* areas. Even Elwin, who worked a lot for tribals in India, talked of creating some sorts of tribal *National Parks* and he termed the then contemporary attempts of tribal development as overhasty.

II. ***A proactive forest policy*** – Forests have been the traditional lifeline of tribes as they were a source of their livelihood apart from having a cultural significance. However, a proactive forest policy, aimed at maximising economic gain at the cost of tribal welfare and alienated tribes from forests. In forests, they saw valuable resources and they passed exclusionary laws like Forest Act of 1865, which took away traditional forest rights. Forest Act of 1878 further tightened the grip of the rulers on forests and it radically changed the nature of common property and made it a state property, thus, declining the tribals, their traditional rights on the forests. It also classified forests as Reserved, Protected and Village Forests without giving consideration to the rights of tribals and this mistake remained uncorrected for almost 125 years, until Forest Rights Act, 2006 was enacted. Even activities like grazing of cattle and collection of fuel wood were declared illegal and tribals had to pay taxes for these activities, where permissible. Forest laws were so exhaustive and complex that according to Elwin, every tribal violated many of them in a single

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day. According to Vidyarthi, alienation from forests was not only economic, but also emotional and cultural. Trees, rivers and mountains carried symbolic and religious meanings for tribals. As a result, tribals became antagonistic towards colonial rule and incidences of confrontations only increased. Commercial exploitation of forests and pushing of tribals into subsistence agriculture also led to introduction of middlemen and moneylenders in tribal areas and their indebtedness became another problem.

III. *A reformist approach* – British also assumed redemptory role wherever they went. Some British Christian missionaries sincerely believe that the onus is on them to uplift the fallen and the laggards. It manifested in the form of various propositions like *The White Man's Burden*. British policy to allow Christian missionaries to proselytise tribals also led to a gulf between mainstream Hindus and tribes, thus, creating further social divide in an already divided society. Its terminal manifestation in recent years is seen in the form of various secessionist movements. However, some sociologists also contend that Christian missionaries were instrumental in taking tribes out of darkness of ages and made them aware of their rightful place in society.

British rule led to an increase in sufferings of the tribals as the whole economic base of the tribals was eroded due to aggressive forest and revenue policies of the British. Tribals were forced to give up their traditional occupations. They were pushed into poverty and often into bonded labour. Many tea and coffee plantations had predominantly bonded tribal labour. Over-exploitation led to many uprisings as well. According to Buddhadeb, in his book – *Tribal Transformation in India, 1992*, expansion of railways broke down their historical isolation and initiated a process of unchecked and indiscriminate assimilation leading to *detribalisation* of tribes. M S A Rao writes that mining and construction activities during the colonial rule reduced tribal people to casual low paid labour. According to Guha and Gadgil, colonial rule also lead to *ecological imperialism* and tribals were invariably forced to move into commercial agriculture from hunting-gathering nomadic activities. Some tribals were even termed as criminal tribes by the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871.

On the whole, tribals were detached from their traditional occupations, were forced into sedentary subsistence agriculture or into bonded labour in estates, were pushed into poverty and indebtedness, leading to tribal unrest.

Issues of Tribal Integration and Autonomy

Issues of tribal development, integration and autonomy had been highly convoluted right since the inception of British rule in India. As a result, the British rulers changed their stance towards tribals from time to time. Complexity of Indian tribal population made the task of integration and autonomy even difficult. Ethnic tribal sub-nationalism was another issue that Independent India had to address. After independence, the Government of India had to deliberate a lot on these issues before coming up with a policy for tribal development. This policy was fine-tuned over the years, and is still evolving to suit to best of their interests.

The theoretical basis of the developmental debate in context of Indian tribals is the issue of balance between autonomy and integration. Autonomy is desired so that developmental policies are organically evolved to suit to the tribal culture and lifestyle. On the other hand, there is also an argument that

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leaving the tribals in their own state will deepen the developmental divide between the mainstream and the tribals even further and hence, there should be proactive measures to integrate them so that they can come out of the state of backwardness and isolation.

Verrier Elwin said – '*We don't want to preserve tribesman as museum specimen, but at the same time want the development clock to show the right time*'. Issue of tribal autonomy and integration was identified by the national leadership even before independence. Taking both autonomy and integration along is a difficult balancing act as they are somewhat conflicting paradigms in the tribal development context. Too much of focus on autonomy sometimes leads to isolationary tendencies and may also lead to development of a narrow ethnocentric view. Integration, on the other hand, may pose a threat to their cultural identities, which they have preserved for thousands of years.

There was a famous isolation versus integration debate of the 1940s which was built upon a standard picture of tribal societies as isolated wholes. The isolationist side argued that tribals needed protection from traders, moneylenders, Hindu and Christian missionaries, as all of them were bent on reducing tribals to detribalised landless labour. Hutton supported the isolation view, but Elwin modified it in favour of *no change and revivalism.* The integrationists called for the integration of tribals into the mainstream society for a variety of reasons. For example, one section of the integration protagonists argued that tribals were merely backward Hindus, and their problems had to be addressed within the same framework as the one used for other backward classes. Another integrationist argument was that tribals have been left behind in the developmental race for a variety of reasons and now is the time to take them along. Many renowned Indian anthropologists supported similar assimilation views. This issue also echoed in the Constituent Assembly debates, which were finally settled along the lines of a compromise which advocated welfare schemes that would enable controlled integration.

After independence, the basic issue is that the integration is largely directed from above and not from below. Integration of tribes has neglected their own needs and desires. Integration has been on the terms of the mainstream society and it is also accused of benefitting the mainstream society only. In fact, the instances of land alienation, displacements, etc. have not come down significantly and their forests have been forcefully taken away and their communities shattered in the name of development.

The issue of tribal integration with larger society has been studied from two broad perspectives –

I. *Cultural integration* – Cultural integration theory is a byproduct of tribe-caste continuum proposition that was forwarded by early anthropologists. S C Roy articulated this thought through his idea of co-existence of *Jana*' and '*Jati*' Ghurye called tribes as Backward Hindus and M N Srinivas, too, asserted that lower rungs of caste hierarchy are open to tribes and hence, provided a transition point along tribe-caste continuum. Such arguments led Andre Beteille to conclude that tribe and caste are similar as there are little racial and language differences.

II. *Political and economic integration* – Others like Surajit Sinha understands integration in terms of economic necessity of peasants to have cheap labour and he, instead, gave the concept of *Tribe-Peasant* continuum. Thus, cultural integration had an economic basis according to him.

The above views also present the issue of tribal integration from the mainstream perspective and not from tribals' perspective. As mainstream population intruded further into tribal areas and exploited tribals as well as their traditional resources, question of tribal autonomy became even more important. Mainstream development agenda also posed threat to tribal autonomy. According to Walter Fernandes,

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in his *Power and Powerlessness: Development Projects and Displacement of Tribals, 1991*, around three crore people have been displaced by developmental activities in the past 50 years and 42 per cent of them were tribals. Number of tribal labourers has also increased substantially during the same period. Poverty among tribals is around 50 per cent more than the country average. They also fare poorly on other socio-economic indicators. There are higher incidents of maternal mortality, anaemia and child mortality among tribes.

According to Xaxa, tribal integration in the post-independence period has been a constitutional prescription only and not an empirical reality. Despite lofty plans like those suggested by Elwin and others that there should be special blocks in the first Five Year Plan (FYP) for tribal development, consequent adoption of *Tribal Sub Plan* from the fifth FYP and *Diversified Approach* from the ninth FYP have all proved inadequate. Instead, inconsiderate developmental process has posed a threat to their identity and it has not been *for* the tribes, but *at the cost of* tribes, and they have been reduced to second class citizens. While linguistic factions have been successful in carving out their own states, tribals are still struggling for meaningful autonomy.

However, some significant initiatives were taken in form of the Fifth Schedule and the Sixth Schedule for tribals in the Constitution and later, other initiatives like, Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas), 1996 known as PESA and Forest Rights Act, 2006 to give more autonomy to tribes. Recent initiative like award of Darjeeling Hill Council in 2012 is among some fresh signs of the state doing its extra bit towards tribal autonomy.

TRIBAL PANCHSHEEL OF NEHRU

I. Tribal development should be based on old genius of tribals.

II. Tribes should be trained to participate in mainstream economic and political activities.

III. No developmental projects should be initiated that may alienate them.

IV. Every tribal development policy should be receiving inputs from the needs of locals.

V. Success of tribal development program should be evaluated not only in terms of amount of money spent.

Post-independence, Indian welfare state formed comprehensive policies for tribal development. Policy of tribal welfare was largely based on *Tribal Panchsheel* of Nehru which foresaw a balanced integration without violating autonomy of tribals. The constitution has also committed the nation to two courses of action in respect of scheduled tribes, viz giving protection to their distinctive way of life; protecting them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation and discrimination, and bringing them at par with the rest of the nation so that they may be integrated with the national life. However, some policies, at least in hindsight, also promoted both isolation and assimilation at times in the long run.

The independence of India in 1947 should have made life easier for tribals but this was not the case –

I. Firstly, the government monopoly over forests continued. If anything, the exploitation of forests accelerated as most of the mineral resources fall in forest and tribal areas.

II. Secondly, the policy of capital-intensive industrialisation adopted by the Indian government required mineral resources and power-generation capacities which were concentrated in *Adivasi* areas. Tribal lands were rapidly acquired for new mining and dam projects. In the process, millions of tribals were displaced without any appropriate compensation or rehabilitation.

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Justified in the name of *national development* and *economic growth*, these policies were even dubbed as a form of internal colonialism, subjugating tribals and depredation of resources, upon which, they depended. Projects such as the Sardar Sarovar dam on the river Narmada in Western India and the Polavaram dam on the river Godavari in Andhra Pradesh displaced hundreds of thousands of tribals, driving them to greater destitution.

III. The advent of the concept of private property in land has also adversely affected tribals, whose community-based forms of collective ownership were placed at a disadvantage in the new system. *Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dweller's (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006* popularly known as Forest Rights Act, 2006 tried to assuage this situation, but its implementation is not up to the mark.

IV. Many tribal concentration regions and states have also been experiencing the problem of heavy *in-migration* of non-tribals in response to the pressures of development. The industrial areas of Jharkhand, for example, have suffered a dilution of the tribal share of population. But the most dramatic cases are probably in the North-East. A state like Tripura had the tribal share of its population halved within a single decade, reducing them to a minority.

These processes continue to prevail and have become even more powerful since the 1990s, when economic liberalisation policies were officially adopted by the Indian government. In the 21st Century also, news of tribal alienation from their lands and forests keep pouring from different parts of the country. Huge agitations in 2015, in the state of Maharashtra in protest of the upcoming Jaitapur nuclear power plant, tribal protests against mining giant Vedanta in Niyamgiri in Odisha, taking a form of a global movement in 2016 etc. are some recent examples of reactionary movements against policy induced alienation and exploitation of tribals.

On a positive note, it is of some solace that Indian states have also shown responsiveness to the tribal issues and has come up with plans and policies from time to time. *Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dweller's (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006* is a recent major step to assuage their condition and address the long standing demand of forest rights. National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) is an apex organisation, set up exclusively for economic development of Scheduled Tribes. Other initiatives include Tribal Sub Plan since 1974, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, TRIFED for tribal goods marketing, reservation of seats for STs in Lok Sabha and Assemblies, Articles 164, 330 and 332 in the Constitution, appointment of Minister-in-charge of Tribal welfare and Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 popularly known as PESA. These are some steps which aim to address the problems of integration, development and autonomy in a multi-dimensional manner.

Question Bank

1. What is a tribe? How is it different from other communal units like caste and clan?
2. Tribes in India are a heterogeneous entity which cannot be clubbed under a single definition. Elaborate this statement with examples.
3. Definitional problems related to tribes remain unsolved. Discuss.

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4. Why is it necessary to address the definitional issue in the context of development of Indian tribal communities?
5. Geographical spread of tribals in India is highly uneven. What are the causal factors which explain this phenomenon?
6. Compare and contrast the tribes of Central India and North-East India.
7. Write an analytical note on unity and diversity of Indian tribal population.
8. What are the various social problems that tribals of India face? What is their condition on various human development indicators?
9. Colonial rulers promoted extreme policies for tribals; of assimilation and isolation. Comment in the light of the implications and imperfections of such policies.
10. Tribal revolts were the result of skewed tribal policies made by the colonial Government. Comment.
11. Government of India has taken many policy measures to ameliorate the condition of tribals. Take any two such measures and discuss their objectives.
12. Examine the manner in which geographical and economic mobility have affected the tribal culture and social structure.
13. Tribals are the worst affected by the various developmental related displacements. In this context, examine the objectives of PESA and Forest Right Act, 2006.
14. Forests are an integral part of existence of the various tribals of India. Comment.
15. Discuss the various viewpoints on tribal autonomy and integration. In what context did Elwin talk of creating separate spaces for tribals?
16. Discuss the various problems that tribals face. Also assess the effectiveness of various government policies and programs for tribal development.
17. Describe the Tribal Panchsheel of Nehru. What model should be used for integration of tribes into the developmental process?
18. Make an outline of the current policy of the Government of India towards the tribals. What improvements do you suggest in this policy?
19. Tribal displacement is one of the invariable outcomes of the large infrastructural projects like mining and power generation. How can this problem be dealt more effectively?

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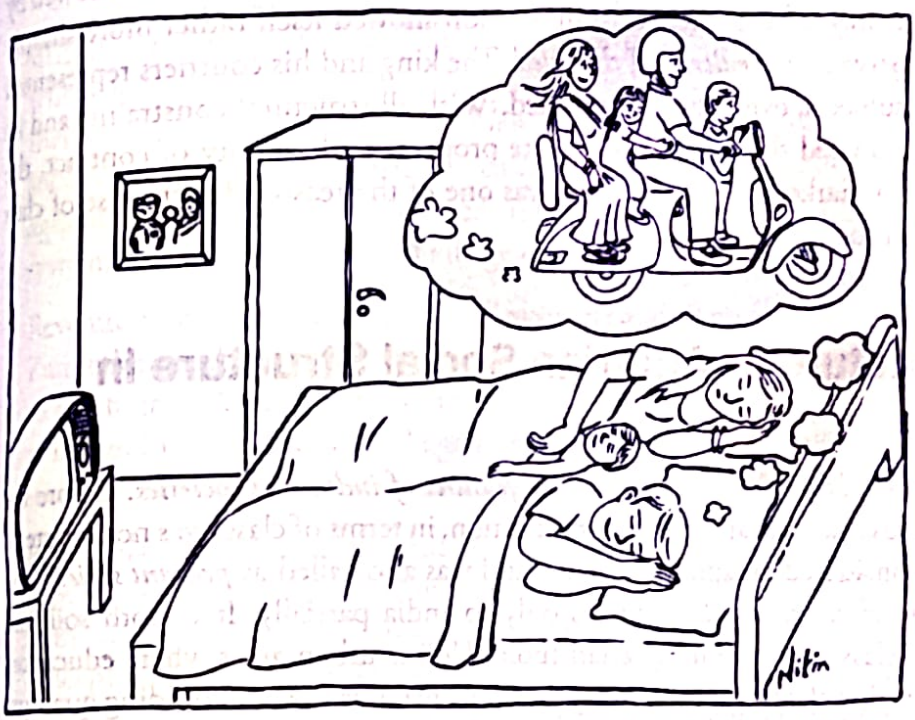
Social Classes in India

16



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about origin of class in Indian social system
2. Explain the various types of class structures in India
3. Understand the paradigm of change in class structure of India and emergence of middle class

A small family on a scooter conjures up an image of a quintessential middle class family. Social classes in India, as a form of stratification, exist in parallel to other forms of stratifications like caste. Some sociologists claim that *class* division in India is relatively a new phenomenon as cultural elements dominated the Indian society for a long time. It was only after the arrival of a foreign rule and introduction of dominant economic factors that the *cultural* was replaced by the *socio-economic* factors in status identification. Another reason was that, due to lower occupational diversification, too many social strata were not there. There was either the ruling class or the ruled class only. In recent times, Indian middle class has hogged much lime light due to its emergent nature and potential to make significant social impact.

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Class societies are characterised by horizontal division of society into strata. In Marxist terms, classes are defined by their differential access to the means of production, however, in reality; it may vary from place to place.

The rise and growth of Indian social classes was organically linked to the basic structure of colonialism and even today, it has the imprints of that association. This is not to say that the class phenomenon was absent in the pre-British Indian society. The class dimension of Indian society was less pronounced than it was during the British period. Even when there was a marked class dimension; it was overshadowed by the caste component. In fact, the only sphere where class dimension showed itself rather more sharply was in the nature of interaction between *the rulers* and *the ruled*. The king and his courtiers represented a class, quite different from the subjects, over whom they ruled. With all structural constraints and its limitations, colonialism also guaranteed the security of private property and sanctity of contract, the basic legal elements required for a market-led growth. This was one of the reasons for the rise of class dimension in a traditional Indian society.

Agrarian Class Structure or Agrarian Social Structure in India

According to Bottomore – *'Social classes are the characteristic features of industrial societies'*. Before the British rule, there was little surplus available and hence, stratification, in terms of class, was non-existent. Hence, the whole society was considered an agrarian society and was also called as *peasant society*. The adage – '*Soil grows caste and machine grows class*' applies only to India partially. It is both soil/land and machine that give birth to class structure in agrarian India. Unlike urban areas where education, industry and employment determine class structure, today, in rural area, it is the land holding quantum as well as attainment of education, skills, etc. which defines social structure.

Agrarian social structure will include caste, class, land ownership and *Jajmani* system while agrarian class structure will include only classes. Land is the central element to the agrarian social structure in India and caste, class and land ownership are closely linked. Dominant landowning groups are usually middle or high ranked castes, most of the marginal farmers and landless belong to the lower caste groups.

Agrarian Classes in Pre-British India

In the pre-British period, due to little surplus availability, there was a little differentiation among the village population in class terms. Little differentiation existed among village population at material level, so, class dimension was overshadowed by caste dimension in the economic setup and Jajmani system was its manifestation. Traditional Indian *rural communities* and the agrarian social structures were organised within the framework of *Jajmani* system and caste. The *Kameens* provided different kinds of services to the *Jajmans*. While the *Kameens* were obliged to work for the *Jajmans*, the latter were required to pay a share from the farm produce to their *Kameens* in cash or kind. The relationship was based on a system of reciprocal exchange. However, participation in this system of reciprocal exchange was not on an equal footing.

The whole society was an *agrarian society*, centred on agriculture. Agrarian classes were largely understood in terms of *the ruler* (king and courtiers and administrators) and *the ruled* only. Factors that limited the

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emergence of class were absence of private property and ownership rights over land, an underdeveloped market economy, communal production, etc.

Towards the fag end of the Mughal rule, some form of money economy was already in place and market mechanism also developed. New classes like merchants, traders and bankers developed but in terms of numerical representation, they were overshadowed by largely an agrarian structure that existed earlier.

Agrarian Classes in British India

British conquest introduced the concept of private property and a well-entrenched money economy which led to transformation of society from *peasant* society to *agrarian class* society. Panchayats lost their jural and economic power. New methods of fixing land revenues created hierarchies in the rural society and revenue was paid in cash. It promoted commercialisation of agriculture. Earlier, village agriculture and industry co-existed and served as basic pillars for self-sufficiency of village, now revenue system, market forces defined village dynamics.

Revenue rates were high in both *Zamindari* and *Ryotwari* areas and land, now came in the hands of Zamindars and businessmen. Those who couldn't pay revenue were stripped of land, which was sold to the highest bidders who were often not the actual farmers. Moneylenders and Zamindars evolved as integral new strata of rural agrarian social structure. Creation of new classes of Zamindars provided social support to British who could have found it difficult to manage India alone.

In colonial times, agrarian structure was marked by two distinctive features. According to A R Desai, state acted as *Supra Landlord* and appointed landlords. A vicious mechanism of lease and sub-lease gave birth to leisure class and absentee landlords, and an exploitative agrarian class structure. A R Desai conceptualised agrarian class structure as a three-tier system during colonial times. Upper class mainly included *absentee landlords* and middle class included *sub-landlords* and at the bottom were marginalised farmers, peasants and sharecroppers. Similarly, Breman sees rural class in terms of size of land holdings.

To understand the dynamic nature of agrarian class structure in India during the colonial rule, several considerations need to be kept in mind like nature and form of control over land; kind of technology used in cultivation and regional variations in land holding patterns. Since land tenure system was not uniform across India, classes also developed differently across India.

Agrarian Classes in Post-Independence India

We can identify two important changes in the agrarian economy that came with industrialisation and development. First, significance of agriculture declined and it became only a marginal sector of the economy. For example, in most countries of the West today, agriculture employs only a small proportion of the total working population and its contribution to the total national income of these countries is also not very high. In India also, for example, though a large proportion of population is still employed in agricultural sector, its contribution to the total national income has come down substantially from nearly sixty per cent at the time of independence to less than 15 per cent during the second decade of 21st Century.

The second important change that has been experienced in the agrarian sector is in its internal social organisation. The social framework of agricultural production has experienced a sea change in different

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parts of the world during the last century or so. The earlier modes of social organisations, such as, *feudalism* and *peasant societies* have disintegrated giving way to more differentiated social structures.

Factors leading to changing class or social structure in agrarian economy can be summed up as –

I. *Technological changes and modernisation of agriculture* – The modem industry has provided a large variety of machines and equipment for carrying out farm operations, such as, ploughing and threshing. This mechanisation of agricultural production has made it possible for the landowners to cultivate much larger areas of land in lesser time. Introduction of machinery led to the displacement of the service caste groups who used to carry out these agriculture-related activities.

II. *Commercialisation of agriculture* – It altered the relation between land owners and traditional service castes. *Jajmani* system declined. A shift from payment in kind (grain) to payment in cash has happened, but payments are often low. The purchasing power of marginal sections of rural economy declined and inequalities increased.

III. *Land reforms* – Land reforms altered the relations between landowners, tenants and labour. Many tenants were dislodged from the land fearing claims of occupancy rights by the tenants.

IV. *Green revolution* – It made agriculture profitable in Green Revolution areas. Landowners began to take back land from their tenants and cultivate it directly because cultivation was becoming more profitable. This made the rich farmers better off, and worsened the condition of the landless and marginal landholders.

V. *Migration* – With the breakdown of traditional ties and tenancy relations, use of agricultural labours has also increased and it has stoked inter-regional migration. Well off states like Haryana and Punjab witnessed a lot of seasonal immigration of labour from states like Bihar and eastern UP. Further, labourers also migrate due to the increasing inequalities in rural areas from the mid-1990s, which has forced many households to engage in multiple occupations to sustain themselves. This has led to rise of a class of *free* wage labourers which Jan Breman calls as *footloose labour*.

VI. *Marketisation of land* – As a result of land coming into the market, a lot of intermediate classes have also emerged. This and other events like Green Revolution and land reforms have led to differentiation of class/social structure in rural areas.

VII. *State interventions* – New policies of subsidies, cooperatives and agriculture extension have benefited different sections of agrarian society differently and hence, have impacted the agrarian social structure as well.

VIII. *Politicisation and democratisation* – Apart from economic factors, rural social structure was also affected by political participation of various sections. Arrival of Panchayati system has also affected power dynamics. Attempts of lower castes to become assertive were met with violent retaliation in many cases.

IX. *Education and employment* – Due to modern education, employment opportunities outside agriculture have also increased. Due to political empowerment and educational empowerment, new types of rural elite emerged.

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X. *Processes of industrialisation* – Establishment of new industries in vicinity of rural areas also led to rural-urban migrations. This reduced attachment to land and also diluted centrality of land in agrarian social structure.

XI. *Urbanisation* – As a result of urbanisation, rural elites also started to invest in urban areas in new businesses. According to Mario Rutten, in his *Farms and Factories, 1995*, they emerged as new entrepreneurs and provided dynamism in the rural elite structure.

XII. *Communication and transportation* – Rural areas are now well connected to the urban areas and to the wider society as well. It has led to better exploration of employment and educational opportunities and hence, provided opportunities to break free from rural social structure.

XIII. *Globalisation and liberalisation* – With globalisation, Indian farmers are now integrated with the global economy and hence, to the global competitors. They are now forced to use expensive inputs to compete with the competition which sometimes leads to economic hardships leading to suicides. Farmers are also exposed to new agricultural practices like *contract farming* and GM crops. According to Vasavi – '*Such distress is compounded by the changing consumer culture in rural areas where expenditures have increased on marriages, dowry, education and healthcare among others*'. These have unforeseen consequences on rural social structure.

However, these changes have affected rural structures in different parts of country differently. In regions like Punjab, Haryana and western UP, landed groups have transformed themselves into a dynamic entrepreneurial, rural-urban dominant class. On the other hand, in other regions such as eastern UP and Bihar, the lack of effective land reforms, political mobilisation, and redistributive measures ensured that there were not too many changes in the agrarian structure and hence, in the living conditions of most of the people. Further, in contrast, states such as Kerala have undergone a different process of development, in which, political mobilisation, redistributive measures, and linkages to an external economy; primarily the Gulf countries have brought about a substantial transformation of the rural social structure.

In the wake of these changes, many classificatory frameworks based on different parameters are given by various sociologists about the agrarian social/class structure. Daniel Thorner gave a threefold classification, based upon his studies in Uttar Pradesh villages, in his *The Agrarian Prospects of India, 1956*, as *Malik, Kisan* and *Mazdoor* on the basis of the rights over land. He also maintained that these three classes also reflect social structure too as most of *Maliks* belonged to upper castes, *Mazdoors* belonged to lower castes and *Kisan* belonged to Artisan class. *Maliks* are those whose incomes are derived primarily from property rights in the soil and whose common interest is to keep the level of rents up while keeping the wage-level down. They collect rent from tenants, sub-tenants and sharecroppers. *Kisans* are working peasants, who own small plots of land and work mostly with their own labour and that of their family members. They own much lesser lands than the *Maliks*. *Mazdoors* don't own any land. Development of capitalist relations in agrarian sector of the economy has also changed the older class structure. For example, in most regions of India, the *Maliks* have turned into enterprising farmers. Similarly, most of the tenants and sharecroppers among the landless *Mazdoors* have begun to work as wage labourers.

The above classification is based merely on land holding size and ignores other factors like supplementary and other sources of income, rural service classes and emergence of new occupations. Therefore, Andre

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AGRARIAN CLASSES: LENIN'S FRAMEWORK

As per this popular framework, agrarian classes can be divided into five broad groups:

I. Big Landlords – At the top are the big landlords who still exist in some parts of the country. They own very large holdings, but unlike the old landlords, they do not always give away their lands to tenants and sharecroppers. Some of them organise their farms like modern industry, employing a manager and wage labourers and producing for the market.

II. Big Farmers – The size of their land holdings varies from 15 acres to 50 acres or in some regions even more. They generally supervise their farms personally and work with wage labour. They invariably belong to the local dominant castes and command a considerable degree of influence over the local power structure, both at the village level as well as at the state level. While the big landlords command more influence in the backward regions, the power of the big farmers is more visible in the agriculturally developed regions of the country.

III. Medium Farmers – They own relatively smaller holdings between 5 acres to 10 or 15 acres. Socially, like the big farmers, they too mostly come from the local dominant caste groups. However, unlike the big farmers, they carry out most of the work on farms with their own labour and the labour of their families. Proportionately, they constitute the largest segment among the cultivators.

IV. Small Farmers – Their holding size is small; less than five acres and in some cases, even less than one acre. They carry out almost all the farm operations with their own labour and rarely employ others to work on their farms. In order to add to their meager earnings from cultivation, some of them work as farm labourers with other cultivators.

V. Landless Labourers – A large majority of them belong to the ex-untouchable or the Dalit caste groups. Most of them own no cultivable land of their own. Their proportion in the total agricultural population varies from state to state. While in the states like Punjab and Haryana, they constitute 20 to 30 per cent of the rural workforce, in some states, like Andhra Pradesh, their number is as high as 50 per cent. They are among the poorest of the poor in rural India.

Beteille, in his *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, 1974*, indicates that classes should be understood from cultural point of view as well. Agrarian class should be understood not only from ownership criteria, but also from land use criteria. This leads to a variety of sub-categories in class structure like owner controller, only controller, owners but not controller, compulsive landlords, traditional landlords, entrepreneur landlords and absentee landlords. Similarly, lower classes can also be sub-divided.

In 1970s-80s, Marxist scholars like Bardhan and Rudra, Kathleen Gough and Utsa Patnaik provided another perspective on agrarian class structure. Utsa Patnaik used Leninist classification; *Kulak*, *Strednik* and *Bednik*; in Indian context in her study of post-Green Revolution Punjab and adjacent areas. She concludes that large land holders and rich farmers are now controlling the mode of production and have used dividends from agriculture to diversify their activities and hence, further supplementing their agrarian incomes, thus, further consolidating their position in agrarian class structure. Kathleen Gough, too, reaches similar conclusions in her study of a Tamil Nadu village.

Lindsberg goes a step further and analysed the nexus between agrarian and urban class structure. According to him, landed elite and urban merchant class exploits situation of distress sales by usurious lending. Contemporary scholars like K L Sharma offer a diffusive view about agrarian class structure and he divides agrarian classes into two broad groups with further sub classes.

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Sociologists like Vina Mazumdar view agrarian class structure from feminist perspective and she argues that with economic growth, gender based exploitation gets institutionalised and agrarian social structure should also be studied with a gender perspective. According to her, in agrarian structure, women assume role of home maker and men assume role of bread winner and this curtails economic freedom of women.

The agrarian social structure is marked by wide diversities. As pointed out by Dhanagare in his *Peasant Movements in India, 1983* – '*The relations among classes and social composition of groups that occupy specific class position in relation to land-control and land-use in India are so diverse and complex that it is difficult to incorporate them all in a general schema.*'

According to Joan Mencher, in different regions, agrarian classes are termed differently by different scholars. For example, in Bengal they are named as *Zamindars*, *Jotedars*, *Bargadars* and *Khet Mazdoors*. In Bihar, they are known as *Ahraf*, *Bakal*, *Pawania* and *Jotiya*. In Tamil Nadu, they are known as *Mirsadas*, *Payakari* and *Padiyals*. So, agrarian class structure also shows regional variations. Both Beteille and Mencher conclude that given the complexity, agrarian classes needed to be studied as particular types based on spatial and interest criteria.

According to T K Oommen, most of the classifications are defective as they describe only the local realities and are often based upon faulty data. Constant change in the class structure also makes these classifications unworkable. For example, in Kerala, there are no longer any traditional landlords (*Jenmie*) and these are largely replaced by the capitalist farmers. Similarly, the tenants (*Kanakkaran*) and the sharecroppers (*Vethakkaran*) have been replaced by the owner cultivators.

Vibha Arora, in her article *Globalisation and Depeasantisation*, puts agrarian class structure under the light of globalisation. Transnational corporations are promoting use of land for cash crops in partnership with large farmers and are also acquiring agricultural land. As a result, subsistence farmers are further marginalised or *depeasantised*.

Trend in agrarian class structure has been summarised by P C Joshi as –

I. There is a decline of feudalistic and traditional tenancy, but it is replaced by a more exploitative and uncertain lease arrangement.

II. Decline of feudal landlords and rise of commercial landlords.

III. Proletariansation of the peasant class.

As NSSO data shows, even after land reforms upper minority agrarian class dominates more than 60 per cent of land in rural areas. However, redistribution of land has also benefitted landless labourers who now have small lands.

According to P Sainath, the growing divide between agrarian classes is a sign that Independent India's government has not rectified colonial blunders by not paying due attention to land reforms. According to Jan Breman, in his *Patronage and Exploitation, 1974*, changes in the social structure of agrarian economy have also adversely impacted the agricultural workers who witnessed a shift from *patronage to exploitation*. Changing social structure has provided more choices to the workers from the lower castes, but this has necessarily not resulted into lower hardships.

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Industrial Class Structure

Industrialisation refers to the process that leads to replacement of manpower by the in-animate source of power, and to setting up of plants and machines which lead to mass production and commoditisation of labour. Industrial class refers to stratum that forms due to division of work in industrial complexes. Growth of industrial classes is linked with growth of colonialism and industrialisation in India. Before the British rule, there was little surplus available and hence, stratification in terms of class was non-existent. Hence, the whole society was considered peasant society.

Max Weber makes a distinction between various classes within industrial class. Various functions performed by various groups award them with different industrial class identities. He spoke of as much as eight classes in the industrial class structure, which are capitalist class, top level executive, skilled workers, administrative heads, junior managers, supervisory staff, semi-skilled and un-skilled workers. Duncan and Blau argue that the basis of class formation in modern society, which has heterogeneous occupations, is essentially income and status. Similar income and status professionals from diverse occupation form one class.

Though factories existed earlier also, they assumed the shape of modern industries as un-animated forms of power began to be used. Initial industries in India were iron, jute and cotton industries. Impoverished peasantry oppressed by land lords gradually moved sporadically among industries and it led to further rise of a new entity called *working class*. This was an outcome of factory system. Working class was often localised, concentrated around ports in the early days. During the British rule, working class was often exploited due to lack of legislation and unwillingness on part of British rulers. Social structure of the working class mainly composed of unskilled poor workers who were mostly from the lower castes with poor representation of women. Capitalist class was also marked by representation of certain castes. Certain groups of Parsis, Marwaris, the Khojas, the Bhatias and Gujarati traders benefited from their collaboration with the European companies and pumped their resources into the manufacturing sector. Parallelly, Indian *capitalist class* also grew and also diversified to some extent and acquired important position by the 1940s.

Industrial class structure in India has a different historical context than its western counterparts, where Industrial growth and hence, growth of Industrial class was voluntary. According to A R Desai - '*British dumped their surplus factory produced goods in India and stifled growth of indigenous entrepreneurs on one hand and destroyed domestic handloom industry on the other*'. Thus, instead of industrial class, a *merchant class* developed first as a result of colonial mercantilism.

Post-Independence industrial class structure was initially governed by state driven socialist economy. But Sharat Bhowmick differs and holds that the rise of public sector gave birth to multiple classes, but they carried a distinct status of *government employees* and not of *industrial employees* in strict capitalistic sense. Further, at the top of the hierarchy of these state run enterprises were political appointees cum administrators and not elite capitalists. At the same time, due to emergence of organised sector through these public undertakings and other industries, a distinction between organised and unorganised sector emerged representing a structural divide between the two.

Government's policy of import substitution and quantitative controls on the other hand, led to the growth of capitalist class also. As industrialisation gained pace, differentiation in industrial class structure

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also accompanied. With the growth of working class, their social spread also diversified leading to introduction of various cleavages in terms of caste, gender, age, etc. Each of these sections had its own problems that posed a challenge in their mobilisation.

Post-liberalisation saw another shift in Industrial class structure which was marked by informalisation of labour on one hand and swell of middle management on the other. Burdhan and Rudra claim that globalisation and liberalisation have grossly inflated the assets of capitalist class at the expense of working class. Occupational diversification has led to sub-classes in the previously tightly defined industrial class structure.

In a nutshell, the contemporary industrial class structure in India can be visualised having strata like the capitalist/owner, top management, middle level managers, skilled workers and manual workers. Middle management has swelled post liberalisation and workers have also gained in the form of improved social security schemes, new laws, etc., but they also had to face new hardship in overcrowded and expensive cities. Diversification of industrial occupation and infinite division of labour has created a continuous hierarchy of industrial classes in India. Growth of service industry and knowledge economy has also contributed to the diversification of industrial class.

Middle Class in India

Middle Class, as a conceptual stratum in urban strata of class structure, emerged only after industrialisation when the concept of class itself emerged in its current sense and it is placed in between the dichotomous property owning and working class. Thus, structurally, it is placed in the middle and has characteristics of both upper and lower classes. Weber talked about middle class for the first time as a positive outcome of capitalism and a sign of reduction of poverty. His assertion was also confirmed by a multi-national study *Social Mobility in Industrial Society, 1959* by Bendix and Lipset, who after the study of eight industrial societies, reached similar conclusions. Similarly, Goldthorpe and Lockwood talk of rise of *Affluent Worker* in British industrial society. Middle class makes a living by way of selling mental and physical labour in the market. Unlike working class, it is not homogenous and is highly heterogeneous with no fixed boundaries. Different scholars have different views about middle class.

I. Dahrendorf views middle class occupations as structurally differentiated from the erstwhile ruling class occupations and put forwards many views. In one view, he views the middle class as an extension of the capitalist class. In the second view, middle class is seen as an extension of working class. A third position is that there is no such thing as the middle class but instead, there are two different groupings with opposing interests, bureaucrats with ruling class authority and white collar workers with a proletarian class situation. Finally, according to the likes of Lockwood, there is a position where it is maintained that the middle class is in a *structurally ambivalent situation.*

II. In *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx goes on to argue that as capitalism develops, there is an expansion of the middle class. This happens because there is a rising surplus and middle class rises to consume that surplus. Growth of middle class is a roadblock for proletariat revolution according to Marx. Eric Wright also echoes similar views and he contends that middle class is

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a deliberate creation of upper class, and it shares surplus with upper class and hence, justifies existence of upper class.

III. Recent increase in numbers of members of middle class and the increasing diversity among them runs counter to Marxian thoughts which predicted dilution of middle class into proletariats.

IV. Anthony Giddens identifies middle class as one of the social classes in his three-fold classification of advanced capitalist society. An upper class based on the 'ownership of property in the means of production', a middle class based on the 'possession of educational and technical qualifications' and a lower or working class based on the 'possession of manual labour power'. These classes, in Giddens' opinion, are distinguished by their differing relationships to the forces of production and by their particular strategies for obtaining economic reward in a capitalist economy.

V. Functionalists view middle class in terms of differential occupational rewards.

Current estimates of middle class size in India vary from under 100 million to over 250 million people and it is defined as a class that structurally lies between the upper and lower class. There is no single criterion for defining the middle class, and various criteria like consumption patterns and income are used to define it. According to the *Rapid-Growth Markets Forecast* explored by Ernst & Young, the Indian middle class is likely to swell to 475 million people by 2030. B B Mishra, in his seminal work on Indian middle class *The Indian Middle Class – Their Growth in Modern Times, 1978* attributes the emergence of middle class to the British rule and not to industrialisation per se, as some sort of industries and trade such as guilds and textile industry existed before as well. Further, in the traditional society, people remained divided into water tight strata on basis of caste and there was little scope for new class formation.

Major characteristics of the Indian middle class can be summed up as –

I. The British rule resulted in the emergence of a class of intermediaries serving as a link between people and the new rulers. They mostly included traders and translators.

II. Early members of the middle class belonged to castes which were traditionally educationally forward, but they exhibited their caste identities to a lesser degree. In fact, they were the pioneers of social reforms and donned a liberal and secular outlook. Thus, though, Indian middle caste had caste origins, but it was not hesitant to shake its roots for a liberal outlook.

III. The members of the educated class such as government servants, lawyers, college teachers and doctors constituted the bulk of the Indian middle class.

IV. While the European middle class was independent, the Indian middle class was under foreign rule. Initially, the middle class helped in the establishment of British power and promotion of European commerce and enterprise in India.

V. During the British period, middle class was mainly urban oriented.

VI. Expansion of middle caste in post-independence period is due to diversification of occupation, economic liberalisation and expansion of educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.

VII. Middle class today is not urban centric only, it is a phenomenon of rural areas also due to expansion of administrative machinery, market economy, Green Revolution, farm mechanisation, transport, cooperative movement, etc.

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VIII. Today, burgeoning middle class also symbolises decrease in poverty and deprivation.

OLD AND NEW MIDDLE CLASS

Old middle class is the one that emerged during the rule of the British as a result of colonial mercantilism and flourished till independence. It largely had membership from upper castes which came forward to reap the early benefits of colonialism. Further, it was largely urban oriented.

New Middle Class is of recent origins in post independent India. Rise in white collar jobs, emerging public sector, rise in IT and Service industry gave rise to this new middle class.

Conceptualisation of middle class in India is complex because of caste, and hierarchies of caste and economic status do not necessarily coincide, and there can be challenges in determining the status.

Scholars also differentiated between rural and urban middle class. Some thinkers like Yogendra Singh assert that both are similar at one ideological level, but antagonistic at another, as they have different interests. For example, rural middle class has its interests in agriculture which has seen a decline post the Green Revolution and many farmers have witnessed downward mobility, while urban middle class is growing. Similarly, Ananda Kumar argues that '*while urban middle class is market bound, rural middle class is power bound.*'

Andre Beteille contends that the idea of middle class is often highly romanticised as an outcome of liberal democracy, a vibrant capitalist economy and individual freedom; but middle class in itself has sub-classes which fight for scarce resources in a country like India and this struggle can be unhealthy at times.

Another characteristic of the 21st Century Indian middle class is its strong identification with consumerism. Acts of consumption are taken as critical indicators of a modern status by this emerging middle class in the post-liberalisation era.

According to T K Oommen – '*Indian middle class is a harbinger of silent revolution as it has, through NGOs, PILs and Social Movements, etc., raised the muted voice of the poor*'. Today, it is successfully acting as a watchdog of functioning of democracy. According to Amartya Sen, in his *Argumentative Indian, 2006*, middle class scrutinises public policy, leads public debates and discourses and also acts as a public think tank. Gurucharan Das, in his *India Unbound, 2002*, indicates that in post-liberalisation India, there has been massive growth in middle class which is outgoing, risk taking and innovative and has the potential to transform socio-economic landscape of India.

Urban Class Structure

Contemporary urban class structure in India developed during the British rule. The urban areas and occupations that exist today are creations of the colonial rulers. India was predominantly a rural agrarian economy before the arrival of the British. Creation of new administrative structure, growth of new industry, demand of new service providers like lawyers, teachers and doctors were the factors that led to the creation of differentiated class structures in urban areas. Another big factor was introduction of money as a medium of exchange and as a parameter of status of individuals. Traditional reciprocatory system gave way to the impersonal market relations for the first time in urban areas.

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Due to infinite division of labour at workplace, there cannot be an all-encompassing framework to express class structure in India. As in case of agrarian class structure, sociologists have attempted many classification of urban class structure which can be generalised in following manner –

I. *Capitalists or commercial and industrial class.* – Origin of the Indian capitalist class can be traced back to merchant traders who were there before the arrival of the British rule. When industrialisation started, they were the first to reap gains out of it. Today, in the age of IT and Technology, innovation and entrepreneurship has shown concepts of *overnight billionaires* the light of day. So, this class has a much diverse social background today.

II. *Corporate sector* – Indian corporate sector is substantially large and highly diversified. Top most management is still controlled by the business owners, but middle management is occupied by the members of upwardly mobile middle class. Education is the prime medium which is making it possible.

III. *Professional classes* – Bureaucrats, management executives, technocrats, doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists, etc. belong to this class.

IV. *Petty traders and shopkeepers* – They are the ones who have little capital and little skills. They are local small time entrepreneurs and traders. They are a result of growth of new cities and urban centres.

V. *Working class* – Origin of the working class could be traced back to the British rule. It was this modern working class which was a direct result of modern industries, railways, and plantations established in India during the British period. This class grew in proportion as plantations, factories, mining, industry, transport, railways and other industrial sectors developed and expanded in India. It was formed predominantly out of the pauperised peasants and ruined artisans. Post-Independence industrialisation further led to swelling of this class and more so after Industrial Policy Resolution of 1991. It has a diverse base including casual labour, industrial workers, domestic help and wage-labour.

Question Bank

1. Trace the evolution of agrarian class structure in India.
2. What are the factors that determine the contemporary agrarian class structure in Indian villages?
3. Apart from land, what are the various other factors which determine the agrarian social structure?
4. What is the impact of education and media on the agrarian class structure?
5. Land is losing its centrality in determining the agrarian class structure. Do you agree with this statement? Substantiate your argument with the help of examples.
6. Write a critical note on class and caste dynamics in rural India.

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7. Write a short note on the composition and character of rural elite. Trace its evolution and change in its composition in the past couple of decades.
8. What changes did British land tenure systems induce in agrarian social structure of India? Critically evaluate this statement especially with reference to landlessness and poverty.
9. Use any of the conceptual frameworks to describe the broad industrial class structure that exists in India.
10. What are the changes that industrial class structure in India is facing as India moves away from conventional industrial economy to a service based economy?
11. Assess the impact of globalisation and liberalisation on the industrial class structure.
12. Analyse the industrial class structure from a feminine perspective.
13. Write a short commentary on the composition and nature of contemporary middle class. Also discuss the concepts of upper and lower middle classes.
14. Middle class is a curious mix of change and status quoism. Comment.
15. Differentiate between the old and new middle class in India. In what aspects the new middle class is new?
16. Discuss the ways in which the middle class has contributed towards the national development.
17. What are the factors which are affecting the composition of urban class structure in India?
18. Write a note on the rural and urban elite in India.

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System of Kinship in India

17



After reading this chapt you will be able to:

1. Know about system of kinship in Indian society
2. Understand the concept of family an marriage in India
3. Explain the perspective of variou thinkers on family
4. Study about the system of Patriarchy and Sexual Division Labour
5. Know about the regional kinship variation in India

Kinship in India has high emotional connotations attached to it. Family is an indispensable unit in most parts of the country, though its forms vary. Family is so pervasive that even in religion and mythology, almost every deity in Hinduism is depicted with a family. Another peculiar feature of Indian society is the ubiquitous recognition of kins as a wider part of family. As a result, there is also a slight disagreement on what a family constitutes. For example, Pauline Kolenda has identified as many as eleven forms of households. Further, in a country of diversity, kinship structures also vary from region to region. Due to cultural impact from outside and due to the influence of modernity, character of kinship bonds is changing in India.

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The kinship system refers to a system of persons who are recognised as relatives, either, by virtue of a blood relationship, technically called consanguinity, or by virtue of a marriage relationship or affinity, or by adoption. Kinship system also has various other attributes of it which perform various functions as well in our day to day lives. Such attributes differ from society to society and are governed by various principles like lineage, descent, marriage, division of labour, inheritance, residence and authority.

Lineage and Descent in India

Social structure of India is greatly defined by cultural principles propagated by social institutions like lineage and kinship. Definitional aspects and functional aspects of lineage and descent have been already been discussed in the first part of the book. Significance of lineage and descent in India has been studied by scholars like Coomarswamy and Ghurye and they used concepts like *Kula* and *Gotra*/clan to refer to descent and lineage in India. *Gotra* is a unique lineage related concept used in India and is approximated to the concept of *clan*. Generally, the *Gotra* forms an exogamous unit and the marriage within the same *Gotra* is prohibited by custom. Often, the members of same *Gotra* are deemed to have been descended from a same, real or mythical, ancestor and, hence, members within same generation are deemed to be fictitious siblings. For example, all members of *Sangwan Gotra* are considered to be the descendents of a man named *Saangu*. In India, after family, kinship and lineage play a very important role in the daily life, ritual performance and social ceremony. *Vansha* (lineage) and *Gotra* (clan) are the other important kinship groups after the close kin groups (involving maternal uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. or paternal uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.). *Vansha* is a consanguineous unilateral descent group whose members trace themselves from a known and real common ancestor.

MARUMAKKATHAYAM OR THARAWAD FAMILY

Marumakkathayam or *Tharawad* was a system of matrilineal inheritance prevalent in Malabar area of Kerala. Descent and the inheritance of property in this system was traced through females. It was followed by all *Nair* castes including royal families. In this system, the oldest living male acts as the manager of the *Tharawad* and it is his duty to look after its property. Another feature of this system in past was polyandry. Often, the women used to be married off early and her husbands used to be visiting husbands.

Like in most parts of the world, in India also, patrilineage is the dominant form for deciding lineage though other forms of lineage also exist. One of the most well-known of these other forms is the matrilineal *Tharawad* system of Kerala. In context of lineage, a peculiar practice of maintaining genealogical registers also exists in some parts of the country in which Haridwar is one such place where *Pandas* keep genealogical records which can trace the lineage as far as twenty generations.

System of lineage in India has been studied by various scholars who have given following core ideas about it –

I. According to Ghurye, cutting across the caste lines, *Gotra* is universal in India. *Gotra* is a source of unification and division as well. *Kula* refers to the lineage where people identify their source of origin, worship a common ancestor.

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II. According to Coomarswamy, rules of marriage are greatly determined by doctrine of *Kula* and *Gotra*. One is not supposed to marry five generation on mother side and seven generation on father's side confirming principles of *Sapinda* exogamy and caste endogamy. Thus, lineage and kinship define identity of an individual in India.

III. T N Madan, in his study of Kashmiri Pundits *Family and Kinship: A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir, 1965*, indicates that the entire community gets related to each other on the basis of primary, secondary, tertiary kinship.

IV. Feminist scholars like Uma Chakravorty on the other hand, see lineage and descent as perpetuating unpaid labour and patriarchy in Indian society. It deprives women of inheritance rights, and reproductive role is attached to women and productive to men.

V. Lineage and descent also play a role in other fields. For example, according to Paul Brass, while caste is an important component of Indian politics, kinship also plays an important role.

Over the years, lineage and descent systems have undergone many changes. For example, earlier, the members of a lineage lived under the same roof in forms of large joint families, or in the neighbouring houses as in case of brothers living in the same village, held property together and even ate together under a single roof. Today, lineage and descent are adapting to the changes. Extended kinships have also diluted to some extent as a result. There are many other factors that are leading to change in lineage and descent systems. Inter-caste and inter-religion marriages, gay marriages and religious conversions are some of such factors.

Types of Kinship Systems

As mentioned earlier, kinship system refers to a set of persons who are recognised as relatives, either, by virtue of a blood relationship technically called consanguinity, or by virtue of a marriage relationship or affinity. They are broadly two types; *affinal* kin and *consanguinal* kin, i.e., kin based on marriage and kin based on blood relations. S C Dube also talks of *fictive kin* or the *chosen kin* who are formed as a result of presumptive bonds. Kinship is not only a concept related to individuals in terms of social relationships alone, but it is also used as a principle of succession, inheritance of property, bifurcation and division. It can be a complex system which Malinowski has referred to as *Kinship Algebra*.

Kinship systems are also classified on the basis of descent method. When a descent criterion is restricted to males only, such kin are called *agnatic* or matrilineal kin. When descent is traced through females, such kin are known as *uterine* or matrilineal kin. Both of these are unilineal kinship groups. Kinship groups which include both male and females are called bilateral groups. Indological accounts also differentiate kin groups on the basis of various cultural notions. *Sapinda* group, *Sarika* group, *Kula* and *Gotra* are some of the kinship systems.

Murdock mentions two types of kinship terms to explain kinship behaviour and analyse kinship interrelations terms *of address* and *terms of reference*. *Terms of address* refers to the culturally patterned relationships among individuals. *Terms of reference,* on the other hand, indicate the linguistic symbols involved in the relationships. There can be a gap between the two due to application of a single classificatory term to a variety of different relatives. For example, *uncle* is used to refer a host of relations like maternal uncle, paternal uncle; including *Taau* and *Chacha*, *Phoofa* and *Mausa*.

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Kins are also classified on the basis of the degree of kinship –

I. *Primary kin* – Some relatives are very close, direct and near. For example, father, son, sister-brother, and spouse. They are called primary kin. According to S C Dubey, there eight such primary kins.

II. *Secondary kin* – They are primary kin of primary kin. According to Murdock, there are 33 secondary kins of a person.

III. *Tertiary kin* – They are secondary kin of our primary kin and primary kin of our secondary kin. They can be of 151 types, according to Murdock.

Kinship groups are also seen in functional terms. They play a role in inheritance, authority structure, succession, group membership, marriage, etc. They are also responsible for performance of various roles jural, economic and ritual. Kinship groups are also responsible for production of certain good and services and it is specifically true for agrarian societies.

A comprehensive study of Kinship groups on cultural basis was done by Irawati Karve in which she divided India into four zones (discussed later in the book).

Family and Marriage in India

Family

Traditionally, family system in India has been understood in terms of a joint family system. In various religious scriptures, family and marriage is considered essential for the fulfilment of *Dharma*. In Hinduism, it is considered as one of the stages of life viz. *Grihastha Ashrama*; where procreation and sexual gratification are considered as essential functions. Indological view of the Hindu family is one of a property holding and *Shraadh* performing unit.

Under the influence of various factors, conception of family in India has changed. Instances of *traditional* joint family are coming down and instead, new forms of jointness are emerging. Despite changes due to industrialisation. urbanisation and modern education, notions of joint family still remain alive, though, in a different form.

Before independence, Indological schools presented a textually informed view of family confined to strict theoretical interpretation in terms of *traditional joint family*. However, post-Independence and recent research has shown that family should be rather studied in terms of degree of jointness in terms of various factors which make it a joint family and not in terms of a strict joint-nuclear dichotomy.

Hence, joint family has been viewed differently by differently scholars. For example, M S Gore, Irawati Karve, Henry Maine, etc. have viewed it in terms of greater generational depth, common residence, common kitchen or eating together (commensality), joint property (coparcenary), authority of Karta, etc.

Various key factors that affect *jointness* are –

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I. Commensality or common kitchen – Most of the studies of joint family use commensality (eating together) as a defining criterion.

II. Common residence – D P Mukharjee and Pauline Kolenda have stressed on this dimension to define a joint family.

III. Coparcenary or joint ownership of property – Researchers, like F G Bailey and T N Madan, have advocated to limit the term joint family to a group of relatives who form a property owning group, the coparcenary family.

IV. Relative strengths of conjugal and affinal bonds – According to M S Gore, emphasis on conjugal ties, (i.e., between husband and wife) is supposed to weaken the stability of the joint family. The father-son relationship (filial relationship) and the relationship between brothers (fraternal relationship) are more crucial for the joint family system than the husband-wife or conjugal relationship

V. Cooperation and sentiment – Scholars like I P Desai and K M Kapadia point out that jointness should be looked at in functional terms. A functionally joint family lays stress on fulfilment of obligations towards kin.

VI. Ritual bonds – The ritual bonds of a joint family are considered to be important components of jointness. For example, *Shraadh* for dead ancestors, and worshiping of common deity.

VII. Kin relations between members – It is almost unanimously agreed that joint family has two or more than two married couples. Pauline Kolenda, in her analysis, has defined 6 types of joint families on the basis of the relatives who are its members.

VIII. Generational depth – Some scholars like I P Desai and T N Madan have defined joint family in terms of generation depth. A joint family is commonly defined as a three generational family.

A M Shah, in his book *The Household Dimension of the Family in India, 1973*, remarked that in post-Independence India, the joint family had steadily increased. The contributing factors were the increasing life expectancy in India and orientation of members. He also attached four meanings to the term *family* in Indian context –

I. Family as a household, i.e., a group of people living in the same dwelling unit.

II. Family as a social group, i.e., consisting of parents and children whether living together or not.

III. Family as a kinship unit, i.e., all those who are closely related by blood or marriage.

IV. Family in terms of common lineage and it gives family an extended meaning.

According to him, while census number of households might have increased, but it doesn't mean that instances of nuclear family have also increased as jointness has to be judged from orientation towards kinship and not from co-residence. According to him, instances of joint family have, in fact, increased when joint family is seen from the perspective of orientation towards kinship. Conclusions of Shah may not be totally valid today, but some of his arguments, especially regarding the jointness and orientation are true and sound reasonable today as well.

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K M Kapadia in his study *Rural Family Patterns, 1956* defines joint family in terms of generational depth, common kitchen, and authority of Karta, etc. Kapadia also found that though most families are nuclear in structure, but they are actually *joint* in operation. Similarly, Gail Omvedt classifies jointness in family as – always joint, occasionally joint and minimal joint. Further, another school also sees joint family in India as a process of fission and fusion.

I P DESAI ON JOINTNESS OF FAMILY

I P Desai in his study of Mahuwa, a small town in Gujarat, titled '*Some Aspects of Family in Mahuwa: A Sociological Study of the Jointness in a Small Town, 1964*' sees jointness in terms of 'degree', 'intensity' and 'orientation' with regard to functions and obligations which people perform for each other despite living separately and not in strict dichotomous nuclear and joint terms. He found five degrees of jointness –

I. Households with zero degree of jointness i.e. totally nuclear.

II. Households with low degree of jointness i.e. joint only by way of mutual fulfillment of obligations.

III. Households with high degree of jointness i.e. by way of common ownership of property.

IV. Households with higher degree of jointness i.e. marginally joint family.

V. Households with the highest degree of jointness i.e. equivalent to traditional joint family.

According to him, only ten per cent families felt highest degree of jointness and 60 per cent felt no jointness at all and rest felt other degrees of jointness.

According to I P Desai, intra-family relationship is the most important criterion of defining a joint family. Co-residence and common kitchen are only the secondary dimensions. When two families are living separately, but are working under the same authority, it is still a joint family and such type of family is called 'functional joint family'. Contrary to this type of family, a family which has three generations living together is called a 'traditional joint family' by him and a family in which only two generations live together is called as 'marginal joint family' by him. He also gives one more classification of joint family called 'substantially joint family' and its basis is common property ownership. K M Kapadia has given a similar classification as given by I P Desai – nuclear with married sons (marginal family of Desai), lineal joint, collateral joint and a joint family with dependents like widow sister. M S Gore gives a threefold classification of a joint family – filial joint family (parents with their married children and their offspring), fraternal joint family (married brothers living together with their children), filial and fraternal combined family.

He also examines the question of jointness in terms of religion, occupational relations, property, education, urbanisation, kinship obligations and household composition. It is also viewed as a process as a part of household cycle – nuclearisation as some members leave and then again becoming a joint one after new members are added. He laid more stress on understanding of structure based on generation and lineage. He attributed decline in jointness to the growth of capitalist economy. I P Desai has seen jointness in terms of 'orientation of action' and when action is oriented towards the husband, wife and children, the family can be categorised as a nuclear unit; and when the action is oriented towards a wider group, it is defined as a joint family. I P Desai calls such a family as '*Integrated Joint Family*' which is structurally nuclear, but functionally joint. He concludes – '*A residential nuclear group in India is in a peculiar social, cultural and other non-social environment which is different from the West. Joint household may be disappearing, joint families stay*'.

In his study of a village in South India titled '*Kinship and Distance in Rural India, 1965*', Ishwaran found that 43.76% nuclear (elementary) families and 56.24% were extended (joint) families. The villagers attach a wealth of meaning to the term 'jointness' and in their opinion one either belongs to

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the joint family or depends upon the extended kin. In fact, the isolated independent elementary family does not exist for them, and indeed its actual existence is largely superficial due to heavy reliance upon the extended kin group. The extended family is the ideal family, and is reinforced by religious, social, economic and other ideological forces.

Various contemporary factors that affect joint family in India are –

I. *Economic factors* – Since Independence, opportunities for and diversification of occupations have increased. Production is not confined to home and land alone.

II. *Legal factors* – Inheritance rights, rule of law and equal status of woman have generated an independent thinking and have also generated awareness among the rights of the members. Legislations regarding employment, education, marriage, and property have affected the family system in many ways.

III. *New forms of families* – New trends like live-in, single parent families, divorce and separations etc. have also affected joint family.

IV. *Educational factors* – English and rational education system have prompted children and the young ones to question the orthodox nature of traditional ideas like child marriage, denial of rights of education to women, property rights of women and ill-treatment of widows. It has also led to increase in age of marriage as well.

V. *Cultural factors and Westernisation* – Young couples emulate the Western model which provides more freedom to the couple in terms of privacy, financial independence and mobility.

VI. *Urbanisation and industrialisation* – The process of urbanisation has also affected the pattern of family life in India. It denotes the movement of people from rural to urban areas and a shift from agricultural to non-agricultural occupations.

VII. *Land reforms* – In rural areas, land reforms also prompted the family heads to transfer the lands to their adult children to escape ceiling. But this had an unforeseen consequence in the form of nuclearisation as children who got financial independence chose to live separately. According to Lakshminarayana, the theoretical partition hastens formal partition, and sows the seeds for separate living.

VIII. *Lack of facilities in rural areas* – Many young couples shift to cities for a better future of their children.

IX. *Individualism* – New values in society promote individual achievement and individuals are detaching themselves from the family to assert their individual identity.

X. *Changing nature of cultural functions* – Dependence on extended family also arises during functions like marriage and child naming ceremony. Due to increasing liberal attitude and influence of western culture the nature of such social function is changing. Now primacy is being given to friends and co-workers rather than extended family members.

XI. Economic migration: Rise of business hubs like Mumbai and Bengaluru have led to migration of educated youth to these cities in search of jobs. Economic migration is leading to nuclearisation of families.

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There are also studies that show that instances of joint family are not affected by these developments and, in fact, joint family has been strengthened by these developments. It is not so that factors of change were always disintegrative of a joint family; members do retain their kinship orientation despite physically not being a part of a joint family.

S C Dude considers that jointness can be emotional, economic and political. So, there is disintegration of joint household, but not of joint family. Pauline Kolenda, in her *Regional Differences in Family Structure in India, 1987*, observed that industrialisation has strengthened joint family as an economic base has been provided. Similarly, Richard Lambert, in his study of factory workers of Poona (Pune) concluded that the average size among factory workers was 5.2 while the size of family among other residents of Poona was 4.5. M N Srinivas, in his study of entrepreneurs of Okha and Milton Singer in his study of industrialists of Madras in his *The Indian Joint Family in Modern Industry, 1968* concluded that joint family has modified itself with demands of industrialisation and modernisation. According to Srinivas – *'Joint family has adapted itself to suit the modern business enterprise'.* As both husband and wife engage in gainful employment, they require more help from their parents and kin. Parents often live with young IT professionals who have erratic work hours to look after the children. Joint family is, thus, not only functionally adaptive to agrarian economy, but is to industrial economy as well.

Modern sociologists like S C Dube, Yogendra Singh and Andre Beteille consider that economic base is not the sole factor causing the changes in joint family, but there are multiple processes of modernity that include education for men and women, quick means of transport, growth of caste free occupation, migration and respect for individualism.

Eugene Litwak claims that nuclear and joint family are two theoretical ideals and in between there exist *Modified Extended Families* in which children marry out or migrate from the parental household upon marriage, but engage in common activities with parents and other kin on a regular basis.

Joint family is also seen in terms of desirability and undesirability. It is viewed as desirable as it provides economic security, provides economic placement, provides social security, helps in upbringing of children, sharing of burden, provides emotional support, provides status to individual in a traditional society, acts as a unit of economic activity and consumption, performs socialisation function and performs religious rites and rituals. However, it is also accused of killing individual's initiative, promoting patriarchy, making members docile and hindering mobility.

Disintegration of joint family has affected different members differently, like –

I. *Change in authority structure* – Once the family splits into several units, new authority centres emerge there, with the respective eldest male member as the head of each nuclear unit.

II. *More liberty to women* – After the split in a joint family, women, who earlier had no say in the family affairs, also emerge as mistresses of the nuclear households

III. *Impact on weaker members of the family* – With the breakdown of the joint family system, the aged, widow, widower and other dependents in the family face severe problems.

Ram Ahuja studied families in rural areas in 1988 and found that incidences of nuclear family are on the rise, but there were no evidences that joint family would disappear any time soon. Factors which are still keeping the family joint are filial affiliation to the parental family, economic compulsions and lack of a state sponsored system for the older people.

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Marriage

Ancient Hindu texts point out three main aims of marriage. These are *Dharma* (duty), *Praja* (progeny) and *Rati* (sensual pleasure). Islam looks upon marriage as *Sunnah* (an obligation) which must be fulfilled by every Muslim. So, even from a religious point of view, marriage is a universal social institution in India. The report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, 1971 indicated that only .5 per cent of women never marry in India.

According to Mandelbaum – 'Marriage is much more than a sexual union in India as '*A marriage mobilises the family's social resources and through marriage, members renew kin ties or establish new bonds of kinship.*'

Among Hindus, marriage is a sacrament and a duty. According to Kapadia, in his *Marriage and Family in India, 1966*, rites like *Homa* or offering to fire, *Panigrahna* or taking the hand of bride and *Saptapadi* or taking seven steps together by bride and groom, etc. give marriage a sacred meaning. As a result, it is also considered as indissoluble among Hindus. It is bound by rules of endogamy and exogamy. Endogamy is generally exercised on the basis of religion and caste and exogamy, on the basis of *Gotra* or clan, village, etc. In Southern India, such rules are not followed strictly where preferential marriage is also there. Even Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 doesn't allow marriage within five generations on father's side and three on mother's side. Among Hindus, polygamy is now prohibited by the same law. Many rituals are also accompanied by the marriage ceremony.

Among Muslims, marriage is still governed by religious factors and unlike Hindus, there is no legal code. It is not a sacrament, but more like a contract and marriage is generally solemnised through a document called *Nikahnama*. Polygamy is still allowed as per law and a male can have up to four wives. Endogamy is another distinguishing feature. Both cross and parallel cousin marriages are allowed and only the elementary family is an exogamous unit. In Muslims, the concept of *purity of blood* seems to be mainly responsible for marriage preferences. Another significant feature of the Muslim marriages is *Mehr*, which is guaranteeing of some security in name of bride.

There are many other peculiar features which are unique to India. In some regions of North and Central India, levirate and sororate are also practiced. Under levirate, a man marries his deceased brother's wife even if he is already married. It is also known as *Nata* or *Nantra* locally. Levirate is a taboo among higher castes in North India. However, sororate is practiced by the upper caste as well. It involves a widower and not a widow. Marriage, as an institution among other communities and tribes has other distinctive features which are not discussed here.

Traditionally, marriage was also guided by various rules as well. According to Kapadia, mate selection is primarily based on three rules; field of selection, party of selection and criteria of selection which are limited by rules like preferential code, prohibitive restrictions, endogamy and exogamy. Special Marriage Act, 1954 has tried to do away with many of these rules, but some overbearing factors like caste still remain a part of Indian marriages. According to Kapadia, *Smaskara* also play a big role in marriages. They have put a high premium on the virginity of girls and this promoted child marriages in past. In Muslims also, Shia and Sunnis practice endogamy and they don't marry among each other.

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Marriage has also undergone several changes –

I. One of the most significant early changes was *widow remarriage* facilitated by social reformers like Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

II. Raising of marriageable age through Sarda Act of 1929 was another major step in this direction which aimed at curbing the menace of *child marriage.*

III. The post-Independence period also saw the enactment of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and Special Marriage Act, 1954 to rationalise the institution of marriage and to get rid of certain social evils. Polygamy has been banned for Hindus. Divorce and widow re-marriage are no longer a social stigma.

IV. Concerns for career and spread of higher education are also leading to rise in the age of marriage.

V. In India also, marriage as an institution is undergoing several changes and stresses. New experiments like live-in, single parent families and same-sex marriages are now gaining more traction as law takes a liberal interpretation of individual liberties.

VI. Manner of mate selection are also changing and love marriages are more common. Even in some conservative hubs, youths flout traditional norms like *Khap* and *Gotra* endogamy rules to choose their mates in a freer manner. Inter-caste marriages are also becoming a norm. Some hybrid forms of mate selections like *arranged-love-marriage* are also emerging.

VII. With greater intrusion of technology and science, it was expected that a secular-scientific outlook would emerge and, consequently, the non-essential rituals and customs will be done away with leading to reduction in wasteful expenditures as well.

VIII. Emergence of matrimonial websites has, on one hand, made marriage a more liberal process as young couples meet online, date and get married. On the other hand, they are also strengthening the traditional form as many caste and community specific matrimony sites have also come up.

Family and marriage have undergone changes due to various factors. Industrialisation and occupational differentiation have led to geographical mobility. Many traditional family occupations are shunned for new avenues leading to nuclearisation of family. Similarly, in the case of India, land reforms and land ceiling requirements had led to demands of separate households. Legal factors also played their role as an individual was empowered and government policies promoted the idea of small family as the source of happiness. Divorce and separation laws were made women friendly. Education also promoted liberal thinking and the docile character was shed by many individuals. Urbanisation also leads to migration, but high costs of living deter shifting of whole family.

Household Dimension of Family

Household is a dwelling unit and is often termed as the *residential unit of the family* or *Ghar*. A household may be a family household, a non-family household, an institutional household like a hostel or dormitory. Similarly, a family may exist without a household. Household is an important dimension of a family because it is considered an important criterion in terms of *common residence* in defining a family as either a joint family or nuclear family. While a family may still remain joint in terms of its

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orientation, it may already be a nuclear family. All the members of a family may not live in the sam household all the time. Some of the members of a given family may occupy geographically distance homes.

Household dimension of family can be understood at different levels. In the wake of globalisation migration, urbanisation, modernisation, etc., family and household are considered to be undergoing process of nuclearisation. This is a classical view given by likes of Tonnies, Louis Wirth, etc., but th view has been found to be only partially correct in the Indian context.

Now it is widely agreed that household as a unit undergoes a process of fusion and fission. Sociologist like A M Shah, Kapadia, Kolenda, Gore and others observe a cyclical change from nuclear to join to nuclear family, within a period of time. According to A M Shah, in his famous *The Household Dimension of the Family in India, 1973* study of the villages of Gujarat – '*A household in itself is neithe joint nor nuclear, but becomes either of these by virtue of its being under progression and regression in developmental process*'. A household may experience progression and/or regression or both on the basi of birth, adoption and in-marriage and out-marriage, and death, divorce and separation of member over a period of time. For example, a married son moving out of his father's house in patrilinea society makes the son's house a simple/nuclear one, or rather a separate one. This act may or may no simultaneously make his father's household a nuclear one. Shah concluded that family should be looked beyond joint-nucleus debate and instead, household dimension should be taken into account to get a true picture of the rural social setup. According to him – '*While the basis of family is kinship relations, the*

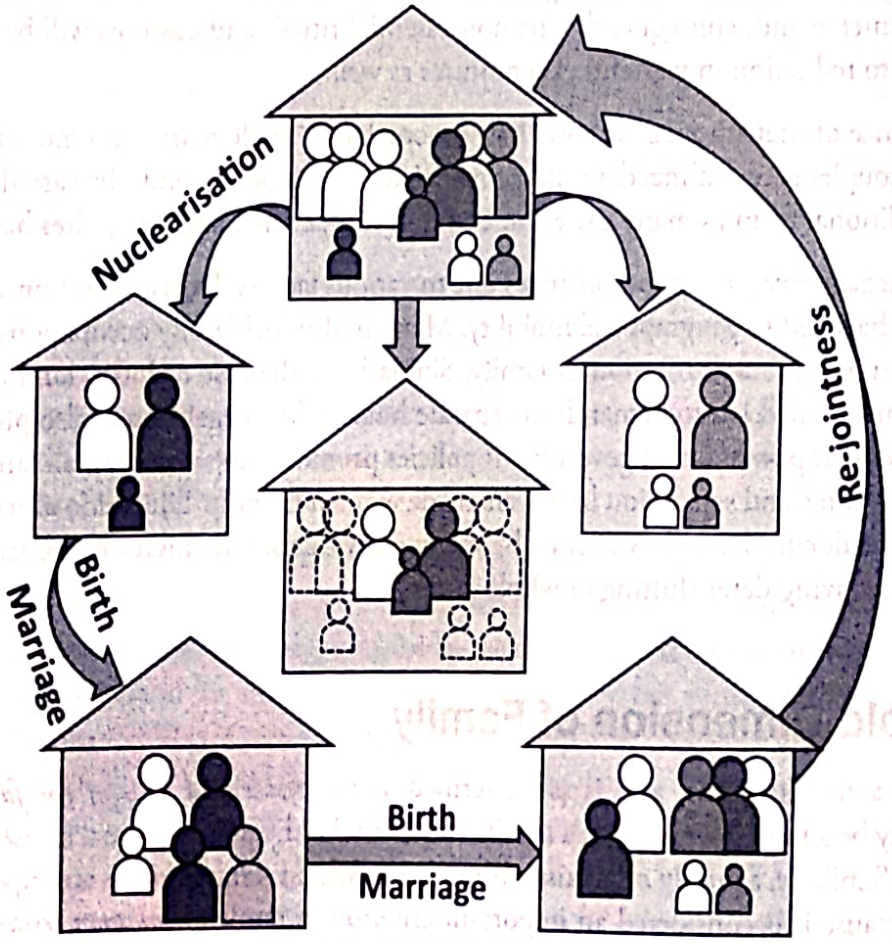

Fig. 17.1 Household Dimension of Family in terms of Fission and Fusion

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basis of a household is residence'. For this reason, Shah uses terms *simple* and *complex* households rather than nuclear or joint households as the term household is used for the residential grouping and family for the group related through kinship, emotional, ritual and legal dimensions. By using this conceptual distinction between family and household, Shah has shown that the proportion of joint families has remained the same if not increased over the past several decades as jointness is actually in terms of orientation and not in terms of residence. Kinship dimension of the household pattern is important to make a meaningful analysis of quantitative data which only shows a rise in number of households.

I P Desai in his study *Some Aspects of Family in Mahuwa: A Sociological Study of the Jointness in a Small Town, 1964* effectively proves that the cyclical pattern of patrilocal–neolocal–patrilocal residence, i.e., joint residence to nuclear and back again to joint residence may continue to exist in any city, village or town and there is no conclusive evidence to prove change in any one direction. He further states that at times joint households may disappear, but joint families stay. Pauline Kolenda has also worked towards clarifying the conceptual issues about family and household. She has proposed a comprehensive scheme in her comparative study of the Indian joint family based on many ethnographic studies and household censuses held after 1949. She looks beyond the joint-nuclear or extended-elementary types of family households through her eleven broad classifications like Nuclear family, Supplemented Nuclear family, Sub nuclear family, Single Person household, Supplemented Sub nuclear family, Collateral Joint family, Supplemented Collateral Joint family, Lineal Joint family, Supplemented Lineal Joint family, Lineal Collateral Joint family and Supplemented Lineal Collateral Joint family.

According to A M Shah, process of development of household is affected by various factors and three major among them are–

I. The first is the demographic factor, which not only includes the phenomena of birth, adulthood and death but also the sex and number of members. While these phenomena are demographic in origin, they are social in operation.

II. The second factor is the series of explicitly stated norms regarding the residence of various relatives in a household.

III. The third is the pattern of interpersonal relations in a household governed by the norms or codes of proper conduct attached to kinship relationships in the household.

Rapoport and Rapoport, in their study of industrial families across the regions, found that organisational characteristics of household are largely influenced by factors like class, ethnicity, life course and particular context. For example, for middle class, household is a nucleated household and for upper class it is usually a joint household. Similarly South Asians predominantly prefer joint household.

Due to factors like divorce, separations, occupational compulsions/mobility and desertion the household dimension of family is also changing. So, today a family may or may not have a single household or even a household at all and household may exist without a family. According to the 2011 Census, the average size of the household has decreased in India and the number of households has increased. This trend of decreasing size of the household reflects many changes through which the Indian society is undergoing. For example, while family is a product of marriage, household can also come into existence due to live-in relationships, single member household, sexual promiscuity, occupational mobility and migration. Factors like decreasing fertility and nuclearisation of family are also affecting the household

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size. So, with the profound changes that the household is undergoing, it is becoming an overarching dimension of family as a unit of demographic and sociological studies.

Patriarchy, Entitlements and Sexual Division of Labour

Patriarchal system in India operates at multiple levels. In the West, position of women is often expressed in economic terms through indicators like employment, decision making on financial matters, ownership rights and economic status. In India, many other dimensions like rituals, kinship, social roles and cultural values also determine patriarchal structures and hence, entitlements associated with the position of the woman. Further, there is also remarkable variation in entitlements and division of labour across various castes, ethnic groups, regions, age groups, religions and classes. The extent of patriarchy is also reflected in nomenclatures like *Kulpati* for Vice Chancellor and *Rashtrapati* for President of India which are male centric. Other acute manifestations of patriarchy are in the form of honour killings, deprivations related to widowhood and stigma on re-marriage.

The position of women in Indian society is often associated with virtues like commitment to family, loyalty to husband, humility and forbearance, to disguise the iniquitous nature of entitlements and the division of labour on gender lines. Even Mahatma Gandhi viewed that woman has infinite capacity for sufferings because she is the mother of man. Such cultural notions are challenged today by feminists. Our constitution guarantees equality to all. Despite constitutional and legal measures, patriarchal institutions and practices continue to remain strong.

Karuna Ahmad explored four characteristics of women's employment in India in her article *Studies of Educated Working Women in India: trends and Issues, 1979* which also reflects the larger sexual division of work in Indian society –

I. *Clustering of women in a few occupations* – Occupations are stereotyped as feminine and masculine. In India, the word *nurse* evokes only a female figure unlike in West, where it can be both male and female

II. *Clustering either in low status occupation or in the lower rungs of the prestigious profession* – Women are predominantly found in low key jobs. They are there due to sheer compulsions at times as incomes of males are too inadequate to run the households. In India, more than three-fourth of the female workforce is employed in the primary sector whereas only half of males work in that sector. Men get opportunities in both secondary and service sectors.

III. *Women receive lower salaries than men* – There is discrimination in wages as well. Female labourers are given, below the minimum, wages. Further, women are also reluctant to take up those promotional opportunities which are likely to relocate them away from the place of their husband or family.

IV. *A high proportion of highly educated and professionally trained unemployed women* – In India, women workers account for one-third of the rural workforce, whereas in urban areas, they are just one-fifth of the workforce. It is common to find that where men are able to earn high incomes, families discourage female members from taking up jobs.

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Employers also discriminate against women. There is a well-recognised phenomenon of an invisible *glass ceiling* present in professions which prevents the women from reaching the top jobs. T S Papola, in his study of Lucknow women in employment, showed that women were discriminated at the time of promotions, and they tended to be crowded into lower status clerical and primary school jobs.

At home also, a similar division of work takes place. Household chores are attributed as feminine, while males take work outside the house. Ritually, only women are obliged to keep *Vrata* or fasts. When women are employed in outside work, their domestic responsibilities still remain with them and they do a double shift of work. It is generally said that women generally suffer from dual stratification of gender and of work, but in India certain sections of women like Dalit women suffer from triple stratification gender, class or work and of caste. Even within a family, first priority is given to the employment of the husband and employment of women is given a low and second priority and is linked with the employment of the husband. Even when they are employed, according to Leela Gulati in her extensive survey of Kerala villages, employment did not improve the women's self-esteem or status in the social hierarchy.

Regional Variations in Kinship in India

Kinship in India is instrumental in not only providing identity, but it also governs various aspects of social life. In India, there is a tremendous variation in kinship patterns across the country. Kinship relations are significantly different from North to South, Tribes to Castes and so on. Due to variation in castes and religions, there are also variations in hierarchies and social relations as well.

Irawati Karve, a student of Ghurye, in her *Kinship Organization in India, 1953* divided India into four cultural kinship zones, broadly coinciding with the language zones, based on many factors like kinship terms, language, descent and inheritance, patterns of marriage and family, and other cultural values. She has taken a historical, evolutionary, comparative approach and she started with a genealogy of the characters of Mahabharata of India. She also used many Sanskritic texts. The kinship patterns follow roughly the linguistic lines, but they don't always go hand in hand. For example, Maharashtra exhibits an influence of both Dravidian and Northern Sanskritic influences. She highlighted various similarities and dissimilarities in marriage patterns, based on certain criteria as –

I. *Rule of marriage* – In North India, the kinship system is characterised by negative rules of marriage. The South Indian kinship system, on the other hand, is characterised by positive rules of marriage.

II. *Endogamy and exogamy rules* – In North India, a marriage alliance links one family with an entirely new family and in fact, one village with another village. Village exogamy is almost universally practiced in the North. In South India, most marriage alliances occur within a small kin group and the emphasis is laid on relationships on both the father's and mother's sides. Further, there is almost no territorial exogamy in South India. This results in co-activity among the affines. In Northern India, co-activity takes place among only the lineage members. One's affines generally live in other villages and do not participate in one's day-to-day affairs.

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III. *Matrilocal and matrilineal patterns* – In some of the south Indian castes like Nairs, there is a tradition of matrilineality. Similarly, among Khasi tribals of Meghalaya, matrilineal and matrifocal kinship is popular.

IV. *Kinship terminology* – Following the composition of kinship groups, the kinship terminology in North India reflects the separation of kin related by blood from those related by marriage. While in South India, the kinship terminology emphasises the symmetry of relationships between the affines.

V. *Preferential marriage* – Marriage alliances in North India follow the principle of hypergamy. This means that the bride-givers are distinctly inferior to the bride-takers. In South India, preferable marriage is with one's matrilateral and sometimes patrilateral, cross-cousin and sometimes intergenerational. This situation makes it difficult to brand the bride-takers as superior to the bride-givers. Dumont terms such marriages as *isogamy*.

VI. *Status of woman* – The differences between the two systems in terms of the status of women. In North India, a girl enters the family of total strangers when she gets married and leaves her natal home. Her behaviour in her father's house is quite different from how she is expected to behave in her father-in-law's house. In South India, from the woman's point of view, there is little difference between her family of birth and the family of marriage. She is not a stranger in her husband's house.

VII. *Clan nomenclature* – In North India, clan names mostly come from the name of *Rishis* or sages. In South India, clan names are attached to gold, silver, snake, trees, etc. In central India, they come from both.

Further, due to heterogeneity in India, Kinship relations also vary according to religious affiliations. In North-East, *Khasi* and *Garo* follow matrilineal inheritance, Gonds practice youth dormitories, in certain tribes of central India, Parent-in-laws can marry children-in-laws. A basic similarity is unilineality of the two kinship systems. In both North and South India, we find the application of only one principle of descent, either matrilineal or patrilineal.

Since, a bride in North is a total stranger, her proximity and closeness to her husband often breed suspicion among the other members of family and she is also often blamed for the breakdown of the joint family system. The distinction between *daughters* and *brides* is very sharply emphasised in this system. A conspicuous symbol is veiling of bride. In brief, the northern zone is universally patrilineal, though, patrilineal systems are also found among different communities in the southern zone, along with a variety of other residence patterns.

Some distinctive features of kinship in North are –

I. In North India, there is a clear distinction between matrilineal and patrilineal kins.

II. Persons belonging to a given generation and sex are addressed by a particular terminology and hence, kin-terms are very specific and non-repetitive. There are also primary terms for three generations and terms of one generation are not exchangeable with those of other generation.

III. *Sapinda* rule is extended to five generations on the mother's side and seven on father's side.

IV. Mother and father village exogamy is also followed.

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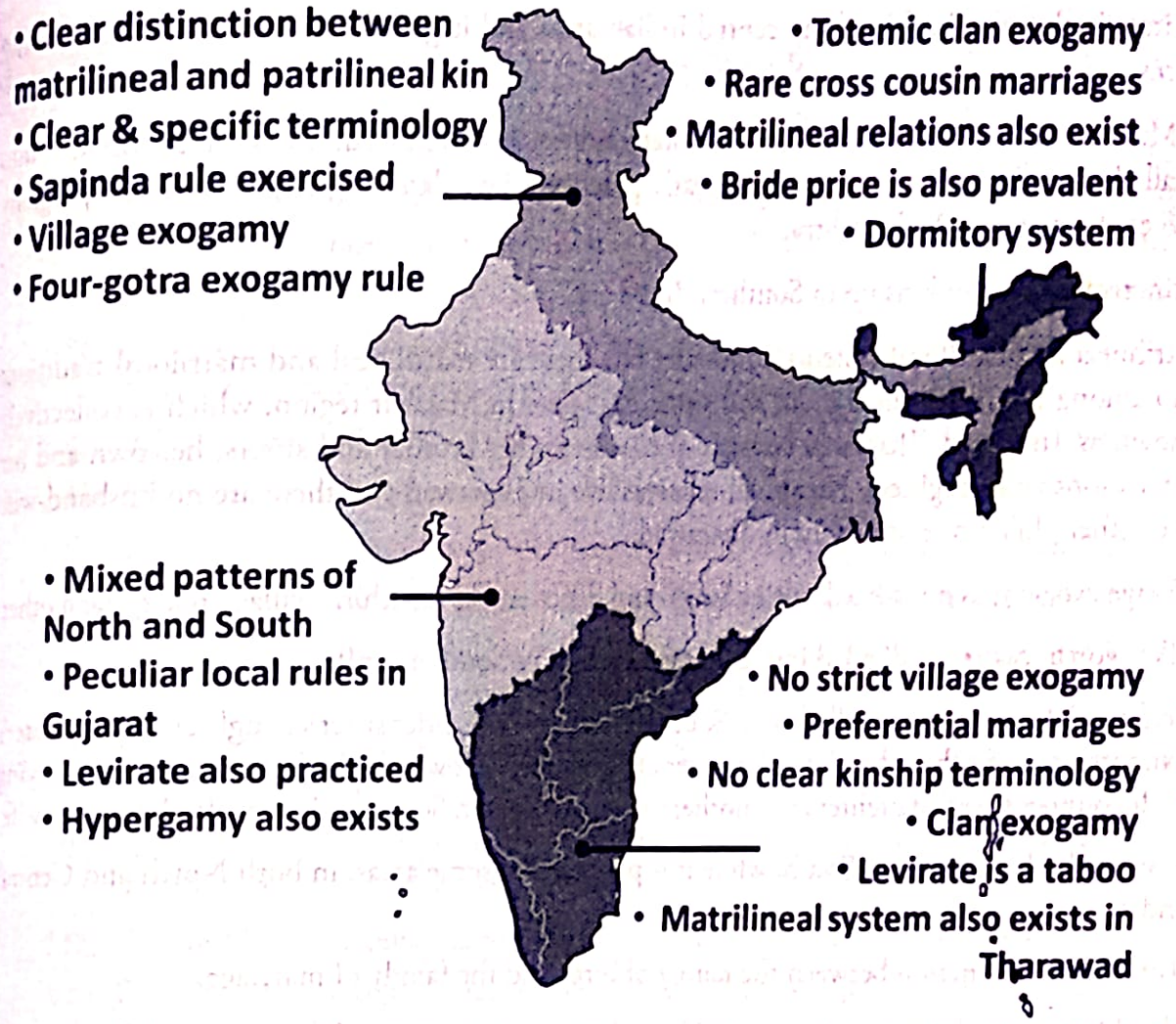

Fig. 17.2 Irawati Karve's Classification of Regional Kinship Variations

V. Definition of incest taboo is wider as there is no concept of preferential marriage in North and marriage with primary kin is not allowed.

VI. Generally, a four-gotra rule is followed in marriage in which four *Gotras* are avoided mother's, self, grandmother's and maternal grandmother's.

ome distinctive features of kinship in Central India are –

I. In certain castes like *Kunbis* and *Kathis* cross cousin marriages are present.

II. As languages in this region are of Sanskritic origin, kinship relations also have a marked northern influence.

III. Marathas and Rajputs do not strictly follow the principle of village exogamy as followed in the North.

IV. In general, there are no uniform patterns in the central zone regarding kinship relations. For example, in Rajasthan *Jats* practice two *Gotra* exogamy, but *Banias* practice four *Gotra* exogamy and *Rajputs* have hypergamous clans.

V. In Kathiawad and Gujarat, many peculiar local rules are followed. Some of the castes in these areas allow marriages only during particular years, say once a year, every four years, etc.

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VI. Levirate is also practiced in many central Indian areas and it goes by name of *Nantra* in many places.

VII. In Maharashtra, both Sanskritic and Dravidian traditions are followed. Marathas are divided into small clans and inter-clan marriage is greatly practiced, i.e., clan exogamy is there. Hypergamy also exists in central Maharashtra.

Some distinctive features of kinship in Southern India are –

I. Patrilineal and Patrilocal systems dominate, but there are matrilineal and matrilocal traditions also among the *Nairs*, the *Tiyans*, and some *Mopalahs* in Malabar region, which is collectively known as Tharawad. Tharawad consists of a woman, her brother and sisters, her own and her sister's sons and daughters. No affinal relatives live in Tharawad and there are no husband-wife and father-children relationship in Tharawad.

II. Village exogamy is not a fixed rule in South and different clans within a village marry each other.

III. Like North, castes are divided into exogamous clans in South as well.

IV. Preferential marriages are followed in South. Marriages with elder sister's daughter, father's sister's daughter, and mother's brother's daughter are preferred. However, there are taboo on marrying with younger sister's daughter and mother's sister's daughter. So, a cousin can also become a wife.

V. Levirate is also a taboo in South, while it is practiced in some areas, in both North and Central India.

VI. There is no distinction between the family of birth and the family of marriage.

VII. Kinship terminology overlaps. Sometimes, there is no clear cut classification of kins on the basis of generation and sometimes same or similar terms are used for different kins. Instead of reflecting the actual relationship, kinship terms also denote age relations and the associated respect thereof.

Some distinctive features of kinship in Eastern India are –

I. Northeastern regions are neither geographically contiguous, nor are they linguistically homogenous.

II. There are a lot of variations in kinship relations. Cross cousin marriage is allowed among *Ho* tribes, but with some pre-conditions like such marriages cannot happen as long as father's sister or mother's brother is alive. It makes cross-cousin marriage a rare phenomenon.

III. Some tribes like Khasis have matrilineal families. However, unlike Nairs of Malabar, in which the husband is only an occasional visitor, in Khasis the young couple lives together separately and property and lineage goes through the youngest daughter or mother if no female relatives are there. Position of a man is same as a Hindu bride.

IV. Dormitory system is also prevalent in some tribes under which young male and females are kept and they even indulge in pre-marital sex and it may or may not lead to marriage.

V. Tribes are often divided into exogamous totemic clans.

VI. In some tribes, money is also given to the father of the bride for procurement of brides; in some other tribes, marriage takes place by way of kidnapping.

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Question Bank

1. What is lineage? What role does it play in Indian socio-economic life?
2. How do the rules of descent affect the inheritance of property in India? What legislative measures have been taken to ensure that women also get their entitled share in inheritance of property?
3. Compare and contrast kinship systems in India and the West from a macro point of view. Also comment on the nature of marital relationships in the two regions.
4. What are the various forms in which endogamy and exogamy are practiced in India?
5. Differentiate between a nuclear and a joint family. Is joint family desirable?
6. How are new forms of occupations and mobility affecting the family in India?
7. Examine the impact of industrialisation on the traditional joint family in India.
8. What are the various challenges that the institution of marriage is facing in India? Are these challenges a result of Westernisation of Indian society?
9. Discuss the concepts of marriage as a sacrament and marriage as a contract. Also discuss the concept of civil marriages.
10. What is patriarchy? How has it affected the welfare of women in India? What are the measures that state has taken to dilute it?
11. Differentiate between household and family and their relevance in sociological studies.
12. Examine the concept of non-family *household* in the context of the rise of alternative forms of dwelling entities like PG accommodations in urban India for the occupationally mobile Indian.
13. Examine the impact of economic factors on the household dimension of family?
14. Patriarchy is a result of socialisation. Comment with the help of day-to-day life incidents.
15. Are women themselves also contributing towards the promotion of patriarchy in India?
16. Patriarchy in India has deprived women of not only their due share, but has distorted the whole socio-economic framework of the society as well. Discuss this statement in the light of the various unequal rights that are available to the two sexes in India.
17. Sexual division of labour is affected by various socio-religious factors. Discuss with the help of illustrations.
18. Discuss the impact of legislation on the institutions of marriage and family.
19. Discuss the regional variations in kinship in North and South India with particular emphasis on rules of marriage.

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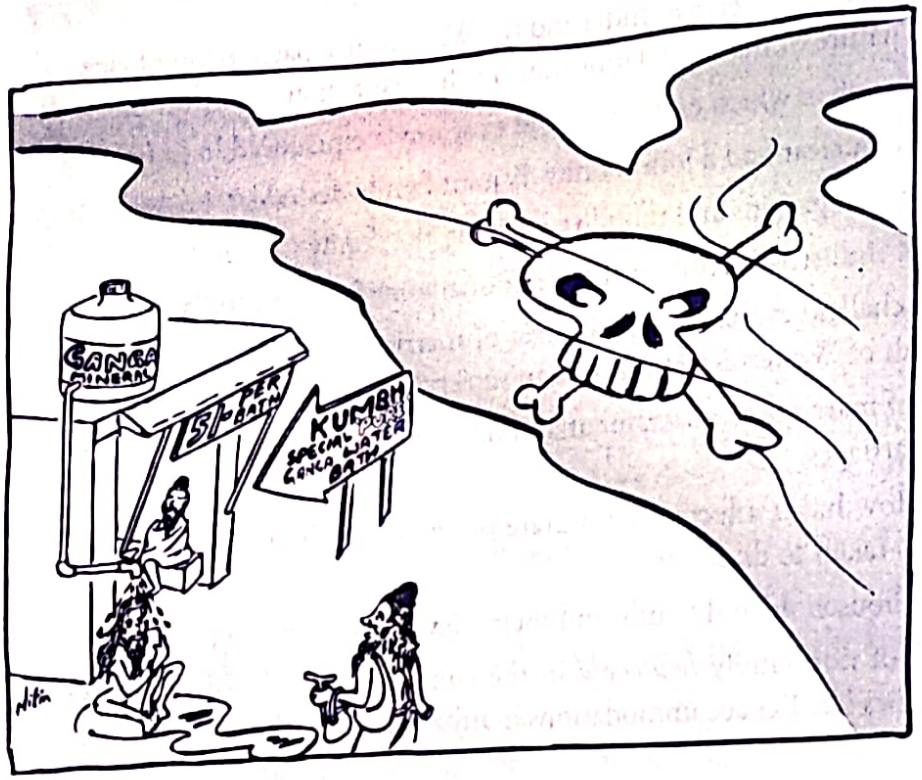
18 Religion and Society



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about various religious communities in India
2. Know about the problems faced by the religious minorities in India
3. Steps taken by the government to address the problems of minorities and other religious communities

India is generally regarded as the spiritual and the religious capital of the world due to presence of diverse faiths and unbroken traditions. Unlike in the West, religion in India is not a completely private affair. Even law permits certain degree of religious freedom to every citizen of India. As a result, religion and public life are not strictly separated. It sometimes creates frictions also as old rules come into conflict with the new rules. To promote religious harmony and to provide all religions an equal space in the democratic framework, India also accords special status to some religions as religious minorities to protect and promote their interests.

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Religious Communities in India

India is home to some of the world's oldest religions like Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism and also to hundreds of new sects and cults. Christianity arrived in India in the First Century itself when Saint Thomas came to India. He was one of the original 12 apostles of the Christ. Islam came to India in around 650 AD. Similarly, Zoroastrians or Parsis came to India when Persia was invaded by the Muslims. While Muslims and Christians swelled in their numbers due to their open outlook, Parsis and Jews remained a closed community and remained limited in numbers.

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Uniform Civil Code is a proposal to replace the various *personal laws* based on the scriptures and customs of each major religious community in India with a common set of laws applicable to every citizen, irrespective of caste, religion and faith. Personal laws are distinguished from public law and cover marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and maintenance. Article 44 of the Directive Principles also sets its implementation as duty of the State. A uniform civil code is a feature of a democratic and secular society and due to its absence; many sections like women face discrimination as well. Currently, Goa is the only state in India which has a uniform civil code. Reasons behind the non-implementation of the law primarily revolve around a lack of consensus among the Muslim community members who have so far, shown reluctance to give up Muslim Personal laws and consequent politicisation of the issue. In a 2015 observation, SC directed the government to chart out a plan for execution of this constitutional directive.

As per 2011 Census, Hindus constitute the largest religious community in India with more than 80 per cent share in population followed by Muslims with 14 per cent share. Other communities are Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Jains, Christians, Jews, etc. Christians are mainly concentrated in North Eastern and Southern states. Buddhists, who were once influential throughout Northern India, are now confined to Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Maharashtra.

Different religious communities in India have different cultures and features. Some of them are also declared as minority groups and government takes active steps to ameliorate their position. Some like Parsis are considered very enterprising and they have significant representation in the industrial sector. Parsis also suffer from certain problems of their own like – dwindling numbers. Similarly, Muslims also have their own problems which were highlighted by *Sachhar Committee* as well. Material well-being of different communities also differs greatly. Minority religions, except Muslims, are generally educationally more forward. According to Yogendra Singh, Great Tradition of Islam is founded on the world view which is non-hierarchical and monotheistic. Unlike Hinduism, Islam is proselytising. It also has elements of egalitarianism and fraternity as it preaches a casteless society and all Muslims are treated as equal. It saw a great decline during the British rule and Muslims in India still suffer from historical inequalities and conservative biases.

Over the years, continuous co-existence has also led to cultural exchanges. Islam is highly influenced by Sikhism and *Bhakti* Movement of Hinduism. Islam impacted Indian culture in a big way and Sufi tradition, Hindustani music and architecture styles are lasting contributions of Islam. Similarly, Hinduism has also evolved into various sects. The Lingayat sect is highly influenced by Christian beliefs.

The diversity of religious communities sometimes also poses a threat to national integration in the form of communalism. India is still a very traditional society and secular nationalism is still to emerge

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stronger over cultural identities rooted in religion. There are also other issues like lack of a consensus over the question of having a uniform civil code, superstition and growth of spurious sects.

Problems of Religious Minorities

India has numerous ethnic and religious groups of various sizes. Constitution of India also makes a distinction between majority and minority groups, but doesn't define them. Minorities are of two types; linguistic and religious minorities. Religious minorities are six; Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Jains. Jains are the latest addition in 2014. A religious community is declared minority not on the basis of its absolute number, but on the basis of other factors like their threat perception, cultural development and development level.

Recognition and protection of minority rights under a legal framework has two objectives; firstly to prevent the state from being oppressive against the minorities, as in a democratic setup, government is run by the majority, secondly, to provide the minority a protective zone, whereby they can preserve their separate identity while contributing to national development and progress.

Many problems of the minorities stem from the fact that in a democratic system, where leaders are elected on the basis of majority vote, they are left politically vulnerable as they become dependent on majority which comes to power.

Problems of the minorities can be classified as their common problems and their specific problems. Some of the common economic and cultural problems are –

I. Despite the notification, the social relationships between the majority and the minority have not changed and as a result suspicion still prevails, relations are still less harmonious and minorities feel a threat to their identity.

II. Their representation in public jobs, armed forces, etc. still remains low.

III. The threat perceptions after a series of riots in the past few decades have led to physical insecurity also.

IV. Due to historical factors, and despite the enactment of suitable laws, psychological insecurity is still there and it often proves detrimental to actual well-being. This was also identified by our early leaders. Nehru said – '*Test of Indian secularism lays not in what majority thought, but how minority feels*'.

V. Indian Education Commission of the 1960s has also highlighted language related problem that minorities face. Many minority institutions like *Madrasas* are still not modernised and their degrees are often not accepted as essential qualifications.

There are certain specific problems also of the various religious minorities –

I. Muslims have lagged behind a great deal in human development parameters. Their representation in public employment is poor and in armed forces is abysmal. Sachhar Committee of 2006 has highlighted that Muslims in India suffer from three-fold problems such as problem of identity, security and equity. It found that Muslims have the highest incidence of stunted children and 25 per cent of children have never been to school. Though Muslims are 14 per cent of the

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population as per 2011 Census, their representation in postgraduate courses is only two per cent. The share of Muslims in armed forces is four per cent and only 27 per cent of Muslims in urban areas are in regular employment. Muslim population has also suffered stereotyping in India and the world due to the spread of Islamic fundamentalism globally. Ghettoisation is another characteristic of Indian Muslim population which is a result of a multiplicity of factors including *two nation theory*, communal conflicts, politics and backwardness.

II. Christian minority groups also face identity problem in many areas. Religious conversions have assumed a very sensitive form in India and missionaries are often alleged of forced conversions and are subjected to attacks. The brutal murder of Christian missionary Grahm Stein by a fanatic is such an example. Reservation provisions are also non-uniformly applied across the religious groups. For example, there is Scheduled Caste reservation for the converted Buddhists and Sikhs, but not for Dalit Christians.

III. Sex ratio among Sikhs is poor despite relatively high affluence of the community. Their relations also became strained with the majority in the wake of events related to *Khalistan* Movement, Operation Bluestar, the consequent assassination of Indira Gandhi and ensuing communal violence.

IV. Parsis or Zoroastrians have their own peculiar problems. They are the most affluent minority community in India, but their numbers are dwindling. The 2011 Census found that the *Parsi population* has declined by 18 per cent to 57,264 in a decade, virtually reducing them to the status of an *urban tribe* while in the same decade total population of India increased by around 17.64 per cent. Socially, they are well off with the literacy rate of 97.9 per cent and a sex ratio of 1050 as per 2011 Census figures. This is a highly inward looking group with a prohibition on entry to the community by way of conversion and no permissions for exogamy. According to Roy and Unisa, childlessness and migration are big contributors to their dwindling numbers. Anthropologists have also found that due to high inbreeding, they are also facing genetic issues.

Ignoring minority problems can have dangerous consequences. An apt example was witnessed in our own neighbourhood when Bangladesh was formed in 1971, as the then Pakistan neglected the problems of its eastern brethren. Brutal violence in Sri-Lanka a few years back is another example. Frustrated youths of minority groups can also turn to other nefarious activities.

Constitution of India uses the term *Minorities* at two places under Articles 29 and 30 and provides them the right to promote and preserve their culture and to set up their educational institutions. Five Year Plans also had special provisions for their welfare. To focus on their developmental needs, 90 minority concentration districts have been identified. For specific problems, government has launched many schemes and campaigns. Multi-sectoral Development Program was launched in 2008 to bridge the development deficits faced by minorities, through creation of socio-economic infrastructure to give them basic amenities. Acting on the reports of Sachhar Committee, the government also planned to setup an *Equal Opportunity Commission* in 2014, but it is still waiting for legislative clearance. To arrest the dwindling population of Parsis, *Jiyo Parsi* was launched in 2013-14. *Nai Roshini* is a scheme for leadership development among the minority women. *Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts Crafts for Development (USTTAD)* was launched in 2015 for promoting traditional skills among the artisans of the minority groups.

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Question Bank

1. India is home to three of the major religions of the world. How has religious diversity helped India in the socio-economic arena?
2. Uniform Civil Code is a constitutional prescription, but the idea doesn't find favour with some communities. Examine the causes.
3. Religion is a part of everyday Indian life. Comment. Is India becoming more religious or more secular?
4. Superstition is a by-product of religion. Do you agree?
5. What role does religion play in functioning of democratic institutions in India?
6. What do you understand by the term *Hinduism is a way of life*?
7. What is the metaphysical and ethical basis of Hindu social organisation?
8. Egalitarianism is the hallmark of Islam. Discuss its core tenets in the light of this statement.
9. Jainism and Buddhism were like social movements in reaction to the orthodoxy of Brahminism. Comment.
10. Buddha is as relevant today as he was two and half millennia back. Comment.
11. What do you understand by religious minorities in India? Are there any other minorities also apart from religious minorities? What are the various constitutional provisions to safeguard the interests of such minorities?
12. What are the problems faced by the minorities in India?
13. Minority development agenda has been politicised in India and a false minority-majority binary has been created. Comment.
14. Compare and contrast the socio-economic condition of Muslim and Parsi minority communities in India.
15. Discuss the salient recommendations of Justice Sachhar Report.
16. Secularisation has affected different religious communities differently. Substantiate with the help of some examples.
17. Can religion form an adequate basis for formation of a cultural national identity in India? What is the global experience in this regard?
18. Explain the reasons behind growth of cults and sects in India.

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Vision of Social Change in India

19



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the dynamics of social change in India
2. Know about the idea of development, planning and mixed economy
3. Establish a relationship between Constitution, law and social change in India
4. Explain the role of education in social change

India carries a baggage of colonial undoing which pushed millions of Indians into poverty and deprivation. It suffers from backwardness that foreign rule inflicted upon her. It also bears the brunt of the home-grown social evils. When India became Independent, it had many models to choose from, but it chose a socialistic democratic pattern; shunning the extremes of capitalistic, socialistic and monarchic forms of governances. As an agrarian economy, great emphasis was laid on agriculture and rural sector. To boost a crippled economy, massive investment was made into public sector. Constitution was made a vehicle of social change and due space was provided for the upliftment of the disadvantaged section. Education was also given considerable attention and IITs were opened on the lines of MIT.

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India is a multicultural country and has a complex society. It is a victim of a foreign colonial rule as well as internal evils like caste system, inequality, poverty and gender discrimination. Indian society had many fault lines, many of which exist even today. Social change was visualised to bring difference into the lives of the depressed, women and other weaker sections, including children. Special attention was paid towards making everyone politically equal. Villages were also given considerable attention to improve their economic as well as social condition. The vision of social change also included integration of India emotionally and politically, and warding off evils of communalism, caste and regionalism.

The vision of social change is reflected in our Constitution and in policies of the government. Insertion of the word *socialist* in our constitution underlined our commitment to social change. The mention of lofty ideals like fraternity, equality, liberty in the preamble defines our vision. Special legislations were brought to realise the high ideals of social change. Special safeguards were provided for SCs, STs and women.

Social change in rural areas was given great attention, as Indian society was predominantly a rural one at the time of independence. This is the reason that the land reforms were given high priority post-independence to bring social change in rural areas. In the same way, changes in the technological organisation of agriculture also have a large and immediate impact on rural society. Green revolution and resulting social upheaval is a case in point.

Great Tradition and Little Tradition

This is a conceptual framework that was first used by Robert Redfield, in his study of Mexican communities, to conceptualise social change. In the Indian context, it was used by Milton Singer and by McKim Marriott in Village India: Studies in the Little Community, 1955. Little Tradition and Great Tradition explain change through the concept of tradition and its social organisation.

The social structure of civilisations operates at two levels; first is that of folks or unlettered peasants which is called *Little Tradition*; second, of elite or *reflexive few* called *Great Tradition*. While the Little Tradition is often localised, the Great Tradition has a tendency to spread out. There is, however, a constant interaction between the two. Studies of festivals in India will show how Sanskritic rites (the Great Tradition) are often added to non-Sanskritic rites (the Little Tradition), without replacing them.

It is based on an evolutionary-dialectic perspective that civilisations or structures of tradition grow in

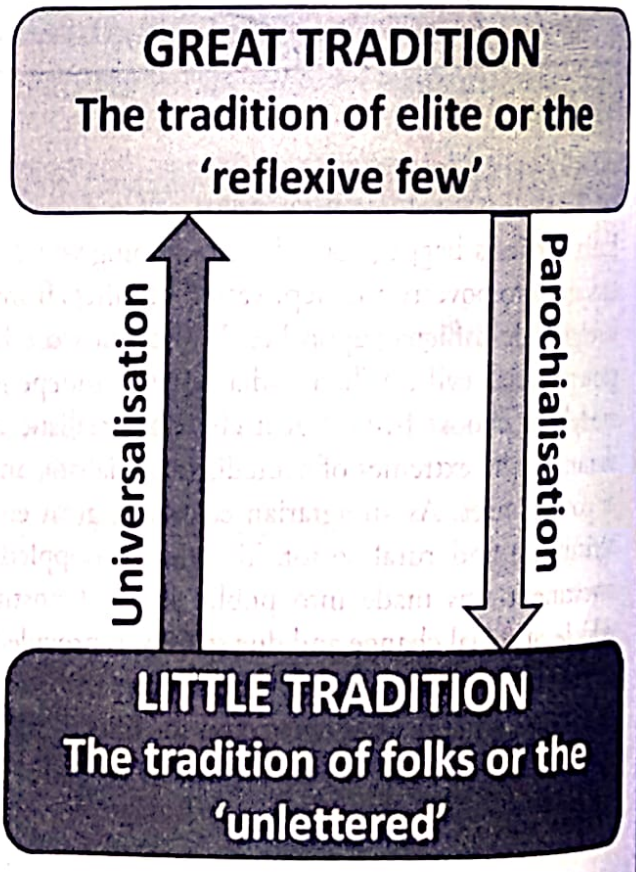

Fig. 19.1 Robert Redfield's Concept of Social Change

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two stages *orthogenetic* or indigenous evolution which is due to internal creative urges and *heterogenetic* evolution or via contact with other civilisation. Generally, *change* starts through an orthogenetic process and the *transformation* occurs due to heterogenetic processes.

However, Milton Singer asserts that due to its deep indigenous culture, there is a continuity between that Little and Great Tradition and there are many shared cultural values. Further, Little and Great traditions in India not only interact, but are also interdependent and modernising forces are not only accepted, but they get absorbed in tradition. Continuity between the two is seen through kinship, caste, values and festivals.

Similarly, McKim Marriott, in his study of Kishangarhi village in North India finds that structure of village culture and its organisation have elements of both Little and Great tradition. Some elements of the Little Tradition are sent upward which he terms as *universalisation* and some elements of the Great Tradition are passed downwards which he terms as *parochialisation*. These two processes help in maintaining the unity of society according to McKim Marriott. Thus, his conception of social change is wider than Srinivas' concept of Sanskritisation as it deals with a reverse process as well, which may be termed as de-Sanskritisation.

However, according to Yogendra Singh, the concept explains only cultural change and not structural change. Yogendra Singh also criticises the approach for using the words like *little* for the folk traditions and hence, attaching a biased notion of inferiority.

According to S C Dube, the dichotomy between a binary of *little* and *great* simply doesn't reflect all the aspects of Indian tradition. He gave a concept of *multiple traditions* instead, and according to him, there is a hierarchy of tradition that exists, and according to him, there are six such traditions; classical tradition, emergent national tradition, regional tradition, local tradition, western tradition and subcultural traditions.

Idea of Development, Planning and Mixed Economy

Planning, in the simplest words, offers a guideline to the State to define how to allocate scarce resources for maximum collective wellbeing. It makes a balancing act between individual aspiration of people and collective goals of a State. It also provides for the welfare of those who are at the receiving end in society. Thus, planning is not only a nation building exercise, but also a welfare exercise.

Development in Indian context didn't mean just economic development, but also meant social and cultural development. Development meant not only growth, but growth with justice to those who had undergone colonial oppression and had also suffered from evil practices like caste, untouchability, bondage, discrimination and patriarchy that were prevalent in India. Our constitution itself laid down the philosophical framework for development that was to be undertaken. It declared India a socialist country and directive principles called for minimisation of inequality. The Article 15 calls for positive discrimination for weaker sections. Thus, the philosophical basis of developmental planning in India has deep welfare roots.

Planning as a process was seen as an imperative for the newly independent country for several reasons. First, we had scarce resources and needed to ensure that they were used in the most efficient way.

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Secondly, poverty alleviation and minimisation of inequality were also paramount objectives and therefore a planned approach to fight these was necessary. Thirdly, India had witnessed the evils of a capitalist economic system and socialist ideology had deeply impacted leaders like Nehru who had already witnessed positive impact of planned development in socialist countries like the USSR. Fourthly, planning was also visualised as a tool of rapid economic growth which was necessary for generation of resources, providing employment, making investments in social schemes and so on. With these in mind, developmental planning was started in the 1950s with a dual focus on agriculture and heavy industry. During the 1950s and 1960s, development policy makers sought to increase productivity and per capita incomes through advances in the manufacturing sector. Its pivot was Nehru-Mahalanobis Model of growth. Agricultural development was important as 80 per cent of the population was engaged in agriculture and condition of the peasantry was not very good. Heavy industry development was necessary as India wanted to have self-sufficiency in critical areas so that foreign dependency could be curtailed, which was also necessary for preserving the sovereignty, both political and economic, of the newly independent nation.

To give the ideas of development and planning a practical shape, India went for a mixed economy model. A mixed economy is the one in which both private and public sectors participate. India adopted this model for various reasons. First of all, Indian state didn't have so many resources that it could undertake all the economic and social activities and hence, limited private participation was seen as desirable. Secondly, India had a huge population which was suffering from poverty and deprivation and hence, had a towering agenda of social reforms as well. The private sector is driven by profit motive and cannot be expected to look after the welfare of such sections. Thirdly, the private sector was also not very well developed and lacked requisite capital, resources and expertise to set up certain critical heavy industries which had long gestation period. Fourthly, India was also wary of a capitalistic system with the evils associate with it in form of greed, inequality, etc. India wanted not just development, but development with equity. For these reasons, it adopted a middle ground in form of a mixed economy.

Development planning under a mixed economy also assumed a redistributive role in minimising the inequalities in society. As a result, in the early phase of developmental planning, key industries, banks and services were nationalised. Government actively promoted agriculture, provided subsidy for poor and introduced special schemes for the development of the poorest of the poor. This was also the reason that the 12th plan document of India called not only for *faster growth* , but also *more inclusive* growth. With the establishment of Niti Aayog, the Planning Commission was disbanded, but planning will always remain an important part of the public policy.

The mixed economy and planning have their critics as well. In the very initial years, *The Committee on Distribution of Income and Levels of Living*, chaired by none other than P C Mahalanobis, reported that the so called planned economy had favoured only the big companies and the small enterprises were marginalised. In the name of mixed and planned economy, elaborate rules and complex institutional architectures were created which stifled the growth of enterprise in India. It led to the growth of semi-monopolies and inefficient markets which benefitted none.

Though there have been shortcomings in development planning, but achievements are no less significant. As compared to 80 per cent poverty during colonial times, today we have 21.9 per cent poverty (2011). Educational standards have shown great improvement with almost 75 per cent people literate (2011 Census). India is self-sufficient in terms of food security. In space, with the launch of spacecrafts to

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Moon and Mars, India is among the few technologically advanced countries. In terms of Purchasing Power Parity, Indian economy is among the top three of the world.

Constitution, Law and Social Change

All hitherto known societies were governed by laws and rules in one form or the other. In ancient societies, such laws were divine laws. For example, all religious texts across the world profess such laws of life. In modern societies, man-made laws define the working of the society. Law and constitution play an important role in social change in a diverse and traditional society like India, which suffers from multiple cleavages like caste, class, gender, regions, ethnicity and religion. In a liberal democracy, law can be a great tool in the hand of every common man with which he can fight all the irrationalities, dogmas, biases and stereotypes, hegemony and dominance. Law attacks old dysfunctional social institutions in both rural and urban areas.

Constitution of India guarantees equality of status irrespective of caste, gender and race in India. Directive principles call for minimisation of inequality and positive discrimination. Values enshrined in preamble and directive principles act as a guiding light for public policy and parliamentary legislations for social change. As a result, numerous schemes, legislations have been launched to address specific needs of various sections.

In India, the importance of law and constitution regarding social change is more pertinent vis-à-vis situation of four groups; Dalits and other depressed sections, women, the poor and the tribals. The Constitution bans untouchability in the Article 17, and Untouchability Offences Act, 1955 was an important legislation in this direction. There is also a provision of positive discrimination in the constitution itself.

To address the basic needs, there are provisions like MNREGS, Right to Education and Right to Information. There are many other progressive legislations as well which aim at improving the quality of life and delivering social change. Similarly, there are laws and provisions for sections with special needs like The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

YOGENDRA SINGH ON LAW AND SOCIAL CHANGE

According to Yogendra Singh, law plays an important role in bringing or preventing social change. Social change as a neutral concept can be viewed in following manners –

I. Law as legitimising social change – After the start of the anti-untouchability movement, law banned it by making constitutional provisions.

II. Law may initiate social change – Recent amendment regarding Right to education can be seen as a harbinger of social change in the direction of providing free universal education to all

III. It may hasten a social change – Law often provides momentum to social change. For example, in case of Marriageable Age, law led to rapid decrease in Child Marriages which was already seeing a decline due to modernising influence of new ideas

IV. It may prevent a negative social change – Several laws prevent the social change in negative direction. For example, Anti Narcotics Laws aim at preventing increasing anomie in society. Another legislation is the PCPNDT Act, which prevents skewed sex ratio.

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Marxists, on the other hand, see law as a part of a larger ideological framework of state working on behest of the dominant groups in society. A law is also as good as its users. To make laws effective, their implementation as well as awareness is also necessary. Will-power of people is another factor. Failure of anti-dowry law is a classic example. A lack of strong political will is another debilitating factor. Upendra Bakshi and Govind Mishra indicate that majority of people in India who don't have an access to justice delivery system and it compromises of law as an effective instrument of social change. Similarly, according to Andre Beteille, while Constitution may define the direction in which government should move, it is the people, who through their actions and ideology, determine the efficacy of that law.

Education and Social Change

Today, education is considered as one of the main sources of building human capital and bringing social change. Education leads to better skills, more productivity, and better analytical power. It inculcates a rational outlook and makes one aware of choices in life.

India has a long tradition of education in the form of *Gurukuls* and *Guru-Shishya Parampara*. Some of the earliest universities of the world were established in India, like those in Nalanda, Vikramshila and Takshila. When India came under the British rule, traditional systems gave way to the modern ones. In 1835, Macaulay laid the foundation of modern English based education. But British system was focused on producing foot soldiers like clerks for its administration and little focus was on universalising aspect of education or promotion of education in the mother language. Some indigenous efforts were made by leaders like Lokmanya Tilak, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Swami Shradhanand and Mahatma Gandhi.

Literacy level is one of the most popularly used criteria to assess the level of educational attainment at national scale. At the time of independence, there was just 18 per cent literacy in India. India had about 55 per cent of its population below the poverty line at that time; and the makers of our constitution had realised that education can play an important role in ameliorating the socio-economic situation in India. Universal education was therefore added as one of the directives to state in directive principles which was later given the shape of a fundamental right when Right to Education was made a reality in 2009. In our society, where social change is inhibited by multiple factors like caste, gender and economic status, a secular tool like education offers a great scope for social change. Education provides for equality of platform and opens avenues of social mobility.

According to Dr Radha Krishnan – '*Education is an agent for social change, what in simple societies was done by the family, the religions, social and political institutions has to be done by the educational institutions today.*' Modern societies stress upon equality of opportunity and equality of status. Education assumes great significance in such a social set-up as it becomes a universal avenue for social change which is open to one and all, irrespective of their caste, creed, gender, ethnicity and status. S C Dube made an empirical survey of various professions like lawyers, engineers and teachers in Gorakhpur in 1967 and found out that most of them had rural backgrounds. He concluded that education provides an avenue of inter-generational mobility in a traditional and developing society like India.

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In the traditional sense, the essence of education lay in realising one's potential and developing it as an integrated aspect of growing up. According to Coomaraswamy, a meaningful educational system pursues the following ideals –

I. Cultivation of a universal philosophical attitude.

II. Recognition of sacredness of all things, which is the antithetical to the Western concept of division of life into the sacred and the profane.

III. Religious tolerance based on the awareness that all dogmas are formulae imposed upon the infinite by limitations of the finite human intellect.

IV. Relationship between teacher and pupil implied by the terms *Guru* and *Shishya*, respectively.

V. Learning as a privilege never to be used merely as a means to economic prosperity.

VI. Altruism and recognition of the unity of all life.

VII. Control, not merely of action, but also of thought.

Thus, the meaning of education in India has been more profound. Traditionally, education in *Gurukuls* had a holistic focus, and apart from formal education, moral education and physical education was also imparted. Thinking on these lines, Gandhi had advocated a system of education better known as *basic education* system or *Nai Taalim* that would have an impact on all three aspects of human personality by affecting head, hand and heart by giving knowledge, skill and morality respectively. He advocated a kind of education that would develop, among children, a sense of self-reliance, commitment to non-violence and awareness about others' and one's own rights, responsibilities, and obligations in society. Mahatma Gandhi's idea of basic education also included an appreciation of human labour. His ideas on education seem relevant as an alternative way of comprehensive development of the body, mind, and soul through self-restraint, self-reliance, self-sacrifice, self-fulfilment, and community participation.

Education doesn't mean just formal teaching in schools; it is a much broader concept. When printing press arrived, books on scriptures were easily available to even lower castes who were earlier denied access to the holy texts. Gender equality, caste inequality and inequality in status cannot be addressed merely through textbooks. Awareness and sensitisation are very much a part of education which is simultaneously imparted in society through informal platforms. The success of social legislations which aim to hit at orthodoxies in society depends much on such informal aspects of education. Legislations like Sati Abolition Act and Child Marriage Act could bring significant social change because of education and awareness of masses. This is also the reason that despite enormous stress on gender equality in formal curriculum, actual situation has still remained worrisome as it has not been accompanied by informal education and mass awareness.

However, education as a tool of empowerment is not uniformly used in India. In 2014, the per capita education expenditure differed considerably across states from as high as Rs 3,440 in Lakshadweep to as low as Rs 386 in Bihar. This leads to differences in educational opportunities and attainments across the states. States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have performed well on multiple parameters of human development because of education. Literacy rates in these states are high. Kerala is a leading state in terms of better sex-ratio, almost universal institutional deliveries, e-governance, political participation and health coverage and one primary factor behind all this is a long tradition of education and awareness.

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Further, the orientation of our educational system also needs to change. Formal education in India is not employment oriented and promotes rote learning. It doesn't promote innovativeness and inquisitiveness. It is also marked by many stark contradictions. The level of unemployment among educated youth is the highest. As per NSSO data, in the year 2000, the rate of unemployment among the youth with education up to secondary level and above was 7.1 per cent whereas the rate of unemployment for the youth with education up to primary level was only 1.2 per cent. The Indian education pyramid is steep, indicating lesser and lesser number of people reaching the higher education level.

Education in India also suffers from various other weaknesses. Issues of holistic personality development, inculcation of nationalist and humanistic values, respecting of the dignity of labour have generally been ignored. Education has also become a profit-centric exercise. Functioning of government schools is a matter of great concern as their standards are falling day by day. Incidents of caste discrimination are still reported from schools and there have also been reports of segregation of children while eating the Mid-Day Meal. Caste associations and religious associations are also running educational institutions, and it is a roadblock in building an egalitarian society.

Despite the fact that education is a strong mechanism for social change, it is not the only factor in ushering social change. Malvika Karlekar indicates that in states like West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh literacy among Muslim women is high, but still their economic participation is poor. Thus, guaranteed education doesn't guarantee gender equality. Similarly, in case of North East, Xaxa points out that tribal youth get educated in hope of gainful employment, but in the wake of lack of opportunities, the disillusioned youth indulge in nefarious activities.

Further, many structural and infrastructural hurdles are also there. According to Jean Dereze, three major factors still mar education in schools – poor infrastructure, irrelevant curriculum and poor quality of teachers. Though we have universal enrolment at primary levels, dropouts are still very high. As per the 2016 report of the Montreal-based UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring, 47 million boys and girls drop out of school before they reach the 10th standard. The cost of education is another barrier in a developing society like ours. Education may not be the panacea that it is claimed to be and needs to be accompanied by removal of other structural barriers also to be an effective instrument of social change.

Question Bank

1. What was the model of development followed by India right after the Independence?
2. What are the factors which have impeded the process of Modernisation in India?
3. What are the characteristics of a mixed economy? Why did India shift from a predominantly state driven economy to a market economy post 1991?
4. Five Year Plans helped India to chart out a path of development of her own. Discuss the success of Five Year Plans in meeting the goals of eliminating poverty and improving health and education.
5. India did away with Planning Commission and came up with Niti Aayog. Assess the development in terms of the subtle shift of Indian state from a socialist to liberal state.

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6. Constitution of India is a living document for social change. Comment with specific references to the relevant provisions of the constitution of India.
7. Directive Principles envisage socio-economic equality in India that Ambedkar envisaged for all Indian citizens. What are the factors which are stopping the Indian State from implementing these principles?
8. Protective discrimination is provided by the constitution of India. Some argue that protective discrimination not only protects, but also discriminates. Comment.
9. Rule of law is a requisite of not only a democracy, but also of an egalitarian society. Comment on the nature of rule of law that prevails in India.
10. Why is education the most potent tool for social change in a country like India?
11. Education disparities in India are leading to a rise in social inequalities. Comment.
12. Education is a tool of not only social change, but of also social justice. Evaluate this statement.
13. Evaluate the impact of mass media and internet on the traditional social structure of Indian society.
14. What are the various obstacles to social change in India?
15. Are social change and Modernisation same? If not, take some examples to highlight the differences.
16. What do you mean by inclusive development? What are the steps that the government has taken in this year's budget to promote inclusive development?
17. Discuss the developmental debate from the perspective of women of India. Have the women of India got their fair share in development?
18. All definitions of development will sound incomplete in a diverse country like India. Discuss this statement in the light of the competing interests for the limited state resources.

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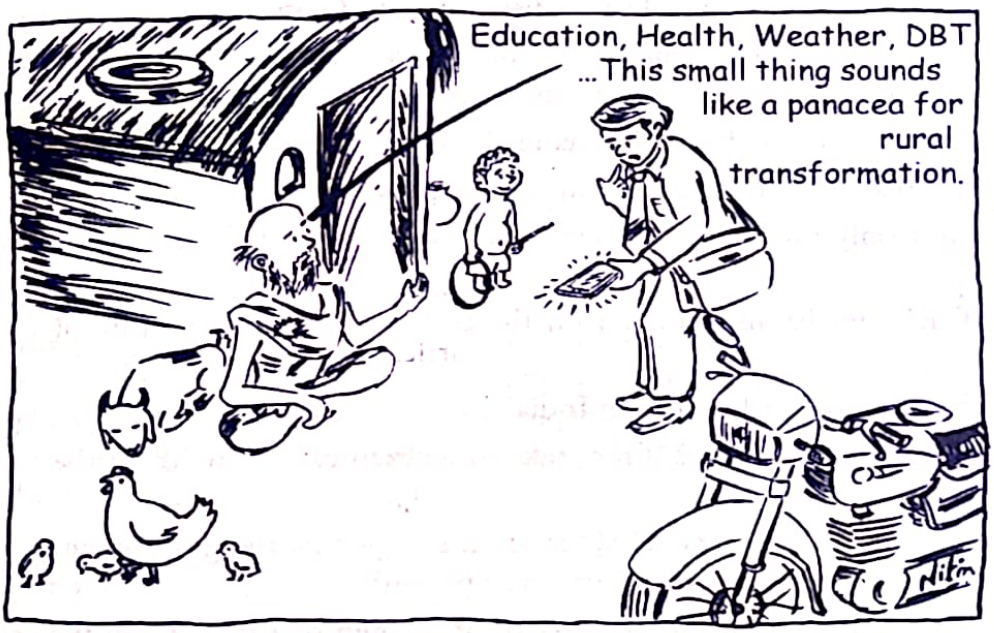
Rural and Agrarian Transformation in India

20



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about the steps taken by Indian government to transform rural sector
2. Study the history of poverty development programs and their impact
3. Understand the Green Revolution and its impact on the agrarian social structure in India
4. Study the changing mode of production in rural India and the problems of rural labour

Rural economy in India still remains the *Achilles Heel* of the Indian economy. The Indian economy is maturing, but the rural areas are not able to keep pace with the overall growth. This was diagnosed and acknowledged very early and many rural focused programs were launched. Land reforms were given great attention. Many rural poverty alleviation schemes were also launched. To overcome the dual issue of food insecurity and poor agrarian incomes, Green Revolution was launched in 1960s. However, all these efforts yielded mixed results and even today, a considerable population remains dependent on agriculture. Sub-optimal use of labour has led to rural distress and migration.

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Rural and agrarian transformation agenda was taken with the planned development process. India was a predominantly agrarian economy and so, attention to rural areas was all, but natural. Rural and agrarian transformation projects included improving the standard of life in rural areas, enhancing agrarian productivity, addressing the problem of rural poverty, improving education and health, redistributing the land, etc. Earlier approaches which were mainly top-down were later modified. In the realm of agricultural production, growth in output during the first two decades after independence was achieved mainly by increasing the area under cultivation, land reforms, scientific intervention supported by expansion in public investment in supporting infrastructure. However, it was soon realised that the gains from these methods reached, to a large extent, to only a small minority; mainly those who were already better off and privileged. This further accentuated inequality in rural areas. By the 1970s, it became clear that there were serious problems in the way the issues and problems of agrarian development were being tackled. Similar fallouts were associated with Green Revolution.

Learning from the experiences of the previous decades and current priorities, following can be summed up as major target areas for rural transformation in India –

I. To improve the living standards by providing food, shelter, clothing, employment and education.

II. To involve people in planning and development through their participation in decision making and through decentralisation of administration.

III. To increase productivity in rural areas and reduce poverty.

IV. To ensure distributive justice and equalisation of opportunities in the society.

V. To reform the agriculture sector by imbibing new agrarian practices, introducing innovation and de-crowding the over-crowded agrarian sector.

VI. To overcome the barriers of caste, class, gender imbalance, etc. to achieve above goals.

Programs of Rural Development

Rural development was one of the topmost agenda of the government of India as most of the population lived in rural areas. Rural development was also important for food security for our huge population and achieving the ideal of socio-economic equality as enshrined in our constitution. Further, rural development was necessary to minimise urban-rural inequality, to check migration and to provide a decent standard of living to those living in rural areas. In recent times also, rural development is a big planning concern as it became clear



Fig. 20.1 Approaches for Rural Development Programmes

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that the earlier strategies adopted remained largely ineffective in alleviating poverty and inequalities in rural areas. Top-down approaches proved futile and now rural development programs seek greater participation of the people.

Broad objectives of rural development include enhancing agricultural productivity, building of basic infrastructure, bringing down inequality, developing rural leadership, reducing burden from cities and checking rural-urban migration, to improve rural ecology and environment, to address issue of unemployment, to promote community participation, to empower woman and depressed class, to ensure distributive justice and equalisation of opportunities in the society and to improve the standard of living.

Rural development programs involve a number of projects, which are aligned to one another so that they influence the various facets of rural economic and social life. Therefore, rural development programs attempt to bring about changes in a wider area impacting a greater number of people. Rural development programs are also difficult to implement than individual projects because of the problem of scale. They require an integrated multi-pronged approach.

Various rural development programs that were launched post-independence can be categorised as –

I. *Community Development Program* – The Community Development Program (CDP) initiated in the 1950s intended to involve popular participation in rural development. It laid emphasis on building of infrastructure in rural areas with the participation of rural communities.

II. *National Extension Services* – It aimed at providing various agricultural extension services to rural areas and thus increasing production and rural incomes.

III. *Cooperative Movement* – Cooperative movement was also started to bring people together for developing synergy in their efforts. Amul emerged as a pioneer and torchbearer of this movement.

IV. *Panchayati Raj Institutions* – They were envisaged as institutions of local self-governance for developing local leadership and for bringing in political transformation. They took concrete shape after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

V. *Green Revolution* – It was the program to ensure food security for the nation and to improve agricultural output and incomes in rural areas. In the hindsight, it was a mixed bag of successes.

VI. *Integrated Rural Development* – The concept of *integrated rural development* came into vogue with the need for a multipronged thrust to rural planning. It stresses that various facets of rural development, which have an impact on rural life, and are interrelated and therefore, cannot be looked at in isolation.

Apart from these broad programs many specific projects, schemes and programs were also launched from time to time like National Literacy Mission, *Swach Bharat Mission* for sanitation, Drought Prone Areas Program for dry areas (DPAP), Integrated Watershed Development Program for watershed management, *Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna* and MNREGS for rural employment, Minimum Support Price to make agriculture viable, *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna* for rural connectivity and Backward Region Grant Fund for development of underdeveloped areas.

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Community Development Program

It was a multi-project program launched in 1952 with the aim of an overall development of rural India. The plan aimed at capitalising upon the proverbial community solidarity of the Indian villages. This program sought intervention in agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, cooperation, public health, education, social education, communication and village industries. There were officials for each activity at the district level to plan, execute and evaluate the program up to the village level. In the words of S C Dube – *'The basic aims of the program include to provide for a substantial increase in the country's agricultural production, and for the improvements in the systems of communication, in rural health and hygiene, and in village education. To initiate and direct a process of integrated cultural change, aimed at transforming social and economic life of the villages.'*

Its main idea was to use local leadership, human resources and physical resources to bring about changes in an agrarian economy so that government resources can be employed in capital formation in industry. It was coupled along with National Extension Scheme which was influenced by American Extension Scheme.

Community Development Program was the first major effort for rural development. It was conceived as a method through which the Five Year Plans would initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages. The emphasis of the program was not only on material prosperity but also on non-material aspects of community life.

Its main objectives were –

I. To increase employment in rural areas.

II. To increase agricultural production through application of scientific methods of agriculture.

III. To establish subsidiary and cottage industries.

IV. To promote self-help and self-reliance at the village level.

V. To extend the principle of cooperation.

VI. To develop local leadership.

VII. To build community assets.

VIII. To improve healthcare.

IX. To provide education for children and adults.

Community Development Program came to be viewed as a social movement with an active involvement of the people, and aimed at all-round development of the countryside. Operationally, this program was based on the assumption that the described change could be ushered into the countryside by providing the necessary infrastructural facilities in the villages. It did succeed in creating some assets and made progress in minor irrigation, education, etc. but was marred by many limitations. The major deficiencies lied in the erroneous assumption that communities have tremendous solidarity and hence, will drive the program. Secondly, the colonial bureaucracy had a superior attitude which acted as a barrier for

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the success as bureaucrats showed little enthusiasm. Overall causes of the failure of the Community Development Program can be listed as following –

I. There was an uneven distribution of the benefits of the program. Influential people garnered benefits of credit, subsidies, etc. and hijacked the agenda of community development.

II. Excessive government hold stifled the program and the program was marred by excessive bureaucratisation, and most of the decision making power was concentrated in block development officers and district collectors. It did not ensure people's participation which was later recommended by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee and to do that, establishment of Panchayati Raj institutions was recommended by it.

III. Taylor argued that Community Development Program failed because the government machinery failed to imbibe the true spirit behind the program.

IV. A R Desai said that the program had erroneous assumptions that the village community has a consensus and common interests will create enthusiasm. The program ignored the irreconcilable differences that existed in the village community.

V. S C Dube said that the program was from top to down.

VI. Oscar Lewis said that there was confusion and conflict regarding the powers and duties of officials and there was also a lack of absence of social service mentality. The program lacked clearly defined priorities. As a result, there were no clear focus areas and in many instances, ad-hocism replaced a concrete action plan.

VII. A divided rural society, based on caste-based land relations and hierarchical social organisation, showed little enthusiasm to work together for collective benefit.

VIII. It failed to evoke popular response. As a result, local leadership that was envisaged couldn't be developed.

IX. Unqualified personnel and lack of appropriate training and skill development mechanisms led to poor implementation of schemes under the program.

X. There was also an element of ritualism in the implementation of the program. Inauguration, opening or foundation stone lying became the be all and end all of the block level activities. There was a lack of functional responsibility and people didn't own up the program in general.

Balwantrai Mehta Committee was quite aware of the shortcomings of this program and it recommended democratic decentralisation as the antidote for the success of this program. One positive outcome of this program was that it eventually paved way for the establishment of institutions of local self-governance which led to the strengthening of the grass-root democracy. It also provided important lessons for the future programs of rural development.

Cooperatives

A cooperative organisation is a voluntary group of people formed on an equal basis with similar interests and activity who leverage their resources for collective as well as individual gains. In Indian

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rural context, the role of cooperatives was envisaged to extricate rural peasant from the grip of moneylenders, provide technical knowhow, promote economies of scale and uplift the standard of living. Intermediaries in production chain are cut and its benefits accrue directly to the farmers, poor and rural community.

COOPERATIVES: CORE PRINCIPLES

I. Voluntary and open membership without any restrictions/discrimination on the basis of gender or social, political or religious affiliations.

II. Democratic control of members with equal voting rights.

III. Autonomy and independence with *self-help* as guiding principle.

IV. Education, training and information for members.

V. Wider community concerns and work for the sustainable development of community.

The phenomenon of cooperatives came into formal existence even before independence. Leaders like Gandhi, Nehru and other socialist forces viewed them as essential for rural development. First cooperative credit society was registered in 1905 in Bombay. With the enactment of the Cooperative Societies Act, 1919, cooperatives became a state subject. J C Kumarappa led an agrarian committee in the 1940s that recommended cooperative farming. Cooperative Planning Commission was constituted in 1946. After Independence, the first Five Year Plan called farmers to join the cooperative movement. *Vaikunth Mehta Committee* suggested that emphasis should be laid on service and consumer cooperatives and re-organisation of rural credit.

Cooperative institutions were set up in the villages, as supportive institutions of Community Development Program and Panchayati Raj. The aim of the cooperative institutions was –

I. To provide essential agricultural inputs and credit to farmers.

II. To ensure adequate return to the farmers for their produce.

III. To ensure supply of essential commodities to villagers at reasonable rates.

IV. To promote harmonious relations and a sense of participation among rural people.

Different types of cooperative societies like credit societies, service cooperatives, producers' cooperatives and labour cooperatives came into existence, as the cooperative movement grew. The dairy cooperatives specially became a big movement, which resulted in what is popularly known as the *White Revolution* in India. Cooperatives became particularly successful in the states of Maharashtra (sugarcane cooperatives) and Gujarat (milk cooperative).

P R Dubhasi considers cooperatives as not an institution, but as a movement because needs of peasant class keep on changing and so, movement also evolves. For example, when the cooperative movement started in India it was for credit needs, but today cooperatives are there in almost every field.

A R Desai observed that the effort towards the establishment of cooperatives can help to overcome the debacle of agrarian social order caused by colonial rule. Cooperatives as institutions can complement land reforms in the changing picture of the agrarian social structure.

According to B S Baviskar, power conflict is one of the factors that have marred the growth of cooperatives. Political neutrality and people's active role was envisaged as the spirit of the cooperatives; however, the opposite has happened. A new breed of politics; *Cooperative Politics* emerged as a result.

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Similarly, Daniel Thorner indicated that cooperatives were hijacked by the richer sections and became agencies serving their interests. Further, they functioned on the basis of *caste economics* of village. In his study, he found that, many cooperatives were dominated by single families in the villages of Gujarat. Membership of big farmers to cooperatives is itself against the very philosophy of cooperatives.

According to Chaturvedi, though the cooperative societies increased in number through the decades, the movement has been only a partial success. It has, no doubt, provided infrastructural facilities, credit and essential agricultural inputs to the large and middle farmers, but the landless and poorer people have not benefitted by this scheme.

There were other hosts of associated problems like over-bureaucratisation, lack of professional management, non-repayment of credits, poor participation, elite capture and poor technological support. The laws framed by the government were restrictive and in certain cases, contrary to the principles of cooperation. There were also regional imbalances and it was highly restricted in many states like the North-East, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The movement did not develop wherever the government equity was more, but it went well where the government control was minimal. For example, in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, where the governments did not have any stake in the equity of cooperatives, the movement took off pretty well. As a result, despite the perception that the cooperative movement has failed, there have been significant achievements, especially in Maharashtra Sugar Cooperatives and Gujarat Milk Cooperatives.

The share of cooperatives in rural credit disbursement amounted to around 25 per cent during the year 2012-2013. Similarly, through cooperatives, fertilizer distribution was 36.0 per cent, sugar production 59.0 per cent and branded oil marketing was 50 per cent. Their achievement was their reach, which has, as of 2010, a coverage of more than 80 per cent of villages, while their failure was their poor effectiveness. Many steps have been taken to reform these cooperatives. With the passage of the reform Act, i.e., the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 and the enactment of parallel Acts in respective states, an attempt has been made to cut red-tapism in cooperatives. Acknowledging their significance, government has even passed the 97th Amendment to the Constitution in 2012, inserting the Article 43B, apart from adding the word *cooperative societies* in Part III of the Constitution, making cooperative formation as a virtual right of every citizen of India. The objective of the amendment is to encourage economic activities of cooperatives, which in turn, will ultimately help in the progress of rural India. The amendment is expected to not only ensure democratic and independent functioning of cooperatives, but to also improve the accountability in the management of cooperatives.

Poverty Alleviation Schemes

Poverty stood at around 55 per cent at the time of independence and was at the level of 37 per cent in 2005 as per Tendulkar Committee Report which was later accepted by the government. All hitherto existing definitions of poverty in India focused on basic minimum needs in terms of nutrition, expenditure and so on. Some like Amartya Sen define poverty in a broader manner as '*Lack of what one needs to live in society; not only to survive, but also for contribution and participation in society.*' He redefines poverty not only in terms of economic status, but also in terms of capability, and hence, connects it to the empowerment of individual.

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Government has adopted multiple approaches towards fighting poverty over the years. They include –

I. *Phase-1, Trickle Down Approach* – Initially, government adopted the *trickle down approach.* Assuming that overall development will slowly percolate to the poor ultimately. Poverty alleviation programs were used as supplementary mechanisms.

II. *Phase-2, Focused Schemes* – Finding the assumption of *Trickle Down Effect* not working, the government launched specific poverty alleviation schemes from the Third Plan. Many schemes like *Million Wells Schemes, Food for Work* and *Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Yojna* were launched. The Fourth Plan called for *Garibi Hatao* and the Fifth Plan saw focused attention on poverty alleviation.

III. *Phase-3, Integrated All Round Approach* – Poverty is looked at as a multidimensional phenomenon and along with employment guarantee schemes like MNREGS, other schemes like Self Help Group Scheme, National Rural Livelihood Mission, National Skill Development Mission, Public Distribution System, Integrated Child Development Scheme and Midday Meal Scheme are also launched as a part of a multipronged strategy. Apart from these schemes, social spending has been increased significantly. In 2017 Annual Budget, around Rs 1,50,000 crore were allocated to the social sector which was a 13 per cent increase over the previous year's budget. One can trace this approach from the Fifth Five Year Plan. Developmental schemes like *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Grameen Awas Yojana* are also attempts in the same direction. Human Development is also taken as a priority and linked with poverty. With Right to Education Act, primary education has been made a fundamental right. National Health Mission is an effort to uplift health care in both urban areas and villages. Similarly, the *National Food Security Act, 2013* aims at eradicating hunger.

Some critics accuse Indian Government of taking a paternalistic stance towards the poor. This has led to creation of a dependency culture in India as the poor have failed to develop capabilities. As a result, decline in poverty figures has been abysmal. Another accusation against the successive governments is that they deliberately want the people to remain poor for vote-bank politics. Inefficient bureaucracy and corruption are also considered as major hurdles in poverty alleviation. This state of affairs was lamented upon by none other than the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi himself, who said that '*for every rupee spent by the government for the welfare of the common man,* only seventeen paise reached *the poor.*'

To overcome these limitations, government also recalibrates its strategy from time to time and new components in poverty alleviation programs are added. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is one such recent idea which aims at eliminating the systemic inefficiencies and leakages. Skill based programs like *Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna* (PMKVY) have been launched in recent past to develop capabilities and wean off the citizens from state doles. Focus of employment generation schemes like MNREGS has also been changed from mere employment generation to creation of durable community assets. So, current poverty alleviation schemes aim at not only for providing food for hungry stomachs, but also for addressing the larger issue of human development and building sustainable assets for community.

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Green Revolution and Social Change

Land reforms were institutional reforms which determined the distributional aspect of the land, Green Revolution, on the other hand, aimed at improving productivity for food security and incomes of farmers. Land reforms had only a limited impact on rural society and the agrarian structure in most of the regions. In contrast, the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s brought about significant changes in the areas where it took place.

The term *Green Revolution* was given by Dr William Gaud and the Green Revolution strategy was driven by the use of High Yield Variety (HYV) seeds, fertilizers, irrigation and mechanised farming. It was supported by strengthening of credit facility, electrification, infrastructure, etc. It was inspired by the success of cropping experiments in the Latin American countries like Mexico and Asian countries like Philippines. It was introduced in India in the 1960s only in those areas that had assured irrigation, because sufficient water was necessary for the new seeds and methods of cultivation. It was also targeted mainly at the wheat and rice-growing areas. As a result, only certain regions such as Punjab, Haryana, western UP, coastal Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Tamil Nadu received the benefits of the first wave of the Green Revolution package.

Consequences of Green Revolution were both economic and social. It transformed the traditional ritual based agriculture into a modern, secular and profitable activity. Increased production led to self-sufficiency and food security. It led to rural affluence in many areas and also led to industrial growth and self-reliance in terms of agricultural equipment manufacturing. The productivity of wheat and rice almost doubled. For example, in case of wheat, it increased from 850 kg/hectare in 1950s to 2500 kg/hectare in 2010s. Similarly, it also led to an increase in productivity of rice as well from around two tons per hectare in the 1960s, to six tons per hectare in 1970s. In the long term, from being a net importer, India became a net exporter of rice, and in 2006, it exported around 4.5 million tons of rice. It also infused scientific temper into Indian agriculture.

Other consequences of Green Revolution were –

I. *Unequal benefits to farmers* – In most of the Green Revolution areas, primarily the medium and large farmers were able to benefit from the new technology as it was costly. Only those farmers, who were able to produce a surplus for the market, were able to reap most of the benefits from the Green Revolution and from the commercialisation of agriculture that followed. Peasants failed to reap benefits as they could produce just enough to meet their own ends. Thus, in the first phase of the Green Revolution, in the 1960s and 1970s, the introduction of new technology led to increasing inequalities in rural society.

II. *Displacement of tenant cultivators and rise in agricultural labourers* – In many cases, it led to the displacement of tenant-cultivators. Landowners began to take back land from their tenants and cultivate it directly because cultivation was becoming more profitable. This made the rich farmers better off, and worsened the condition of the landless and marginal holders, who at that time, sold their lands and became labourers. Many small land owners of non-Green Revolution areas also moved into Green Revolution areas as labourers as wages were high in prosperous regions.

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III. *Migration* – It led to increased demographic pressure in cities and demographic distortions in rural areas. As, often, only male labourers migrated, sex ratios got skewed and women and children of labourers were forced into grinding work back at their homes.

IV. *Green Revolution, caste and breakdown of traditional economic structure* – In addition, the introduction of machinery such as tillers, tractors, threshers, and harvesters (in areas such as Punjab and parts of Madhya Pradesh) led to the displacement of the service caste groups who used to carry out these agriculture-related activities. Thus, organic linkages of *Jajmani* system broke down. It also contributed to agrarian unrests. Many agrarian Dominant Castes also emerged.

V. *The rise of new classes and interest groups* – It led to development of notions of class interests as the agriculture produce came to the market in a big way. Agriculture no longer remained a reciprocatory activity of the village economy. Peasants' and farmers' associations were formed and they demanded free electricity, water, MSP, etc. by acting as class interest groups. Paul Brass also linked increasing participation of affluent farmer's class to the success of Green Revolution. Today, farmers group of North India are acting as a powerful lobby. According to Satya Dev, seed corporations in Haryana are completely hijacked by dominant farmers.

VI. *Change in cropping and agricultural patterns* – In the Green Revolution areas, there has been a significant shift from dry to wet (irrigated) cultivation, along with changes in the cropping pattern and type of crops grown. Increasing commercialisation and dependence on the market in these areas (for instance, where cotton cultivation has been promoted) has increased rather than reduced livelihood insecurity, as farmers, who once grew food for consumption, now depend on the market for incomes. In most of the Green Revolution areas, farmers have switched from a multi-crop system, which allowed them to spread risks, to a mono-crop regime, which means that there is nothing to fall back on in case of crop failure.

VII. *Regional inequalities* – Another negative outcome of the Green Revolution strategy was the worsening of regional inequalities. Only some selected areas of a few crops were benefitted and only those areas with assured irrigation benefitted. This further deepened the divide between dry areas and wet areas. Further, as supply increased, prices dropped and it hit farmers of dry areas harder.

VIII. *Conflicts and agrarian unrest* – Improper implementation of land reforms was coupled with unequal benefits of Green Revolution. Farmers became more assertive and restive. According to some social analysts, the agrarian movements of 1970s and 1980s were fallouts of the anomalies associated with the Green Revolution.

IX. *Loss of traditional knowledge* – Indian farmers have been cultivating land for centuries, much before the advent of the Green Revolution and have developed great indigenous knowledge about agriculture. Much of this traditional knowledge, like the many traditional varieties of seeds that were developed over the centuries by farmers, is being lost as hybrid, high-yielding, and genetically modified varieties of seeds are being promoted as more productive and scientific.

X. *Gender imbalance* – According to Ashish Bose, preference for a male child in Green Revolution belt has increased due to increased attachment with the land as its value goes up. Similarly,

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Nivedita Menon finds out that Green Revolution has given way to the feminisation of poverty and intensification of patriarchy and widening of demographic divide.

XI. *Change in mode of production of Indian agriculture* – It is also said to have introduced capitalist orientation in Indian agriculture. But unlike in the West, agriculture in India has become an expensive business as all inputs are now bought from the market, but the uncertainty in the sector still remains very high. This has made the agriculture in India a risky phenomenon for farmers.

XII. *Ecological impact* – Excessive ground water use and excessive use of fertilizers contaminated ground water. Water logging and salinity were other problems. Use of pesticides led to the loss of many endemic varieties of farm friendly insects and birds. In 2009, under a Greenpeace Research Laboratories investigation, Dr Reyes Tirado conducted the study in 50 villages in Muktsar, Bathinda and Ludhiana districts of Punjab and it revealed that chemical, radiation and biological toxicity is rampant in Punjab. Many cities of Punjab have emerged as cancer capitals of India.

The ultimate outcome of the Green Revolution was a process of *differentiation*, in which, the rich grew richer and many of the poor stagnated grew poorer. It should be noted that employment and wages for agricultural workers did increase in many areas, because the demand for labour increased. Moreover, rising prices and a shift in the mode of payment of agricultural workers from payment in kind (grain) to cash, actually worsened the economic condition of most rural workers. Vandana Shiva, in her 2013 article *Seeds of Suicide* in The Asian Age, also rued the fact that the first Green Revolution initiated a process of second Green Revolution which was driven by multinational and private interests. It made agriculture a costly and unsustainable affair in a poor country like India.

However, as Hanumantha Rao and World Bank reports show, there has been an improvement in the food security of the nation and it has also led to development of around 5-10 million additional direct or indirect employment. It also promoted rural-rural migration, thus reducing the burden on already overburdened cities. It reduced the dependency of India on foreign programs like PL-480 of the USA, which were highly suffocating in nature and had even tried to force compromise on the sovereignty of India. Most importantly, the Green Revolution has also been successful in curbing the menace of famines which were so frequent in the decades prior to the Green Revolution.

To address the shortcomings of the First Green Revolution, government launched other programs like White Revolution for milk, Pink Revolution for meat based products to make agriculture development more inclusive. Government also launched *Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI)* in 2010-11 to address the constraints limiting the productivity of rice based cropping systems in Eastern India. With depleting water resources, dry land farming is the next focus area for an alternative Green Revolution. Many institutions like International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad are working to develop hardy crops for such areas. New techniques like System of Rice Intensification, marker-assisted selection, agroecology are now used to increase the agricultural productivity in every nook and corner of India as a true tribute to the Green Revolution.

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Changing Mode of Production in Indian Agriculture

Indian agriculture continued to have a traditional mode of production which was shaped by a peasant society, *Jajmani* system and caste in a semi-feudal setup before the arrival of the British in India. British rule heralded a new mode of production, under which, land as well as agricultural produce came to the market. Over the years, agriculture lost its earlier significance and became only a marginal sector of the economy. In developing countries like India, while manpower engagement is still high in the agriculture sector, its contribution to economy is declining. Agriculture sector represents a state of dilemma due to high dependence on agriculture in terms of manpower engagement and livelihood on one hand and its declining economic significance due to shrinking share in GDP on the other. This dichotomous situation was also part of the *changing mode of production* debate which raged in the 1970s. The prime focus of the change in mode of production debate was the qualitative changes that agriculture as a rural activity was undergoing.

Another important change that has been experienced in the agrarian sector is in its internal social organisation. The earlier modes of social organisation, such as *feudalism* and *peasant societies* have disintegrated, giving way to more differentiated social structures. It is largely attributed to scientific inventions, mechanisation of agriculture, capital investment, integration in broader market economy and change in labour relations. It has also, in turn, transformed the social relations of production, leading to the development of capitalist relations in the agrarian sector.

The attitude of the peasants towards their occupation also underwent a change. Earlier, they produced only for their own consumption, now they have begun to look at agriculture as an enterprise. They work on their farms with modern machines and produce cash crops that are sold in the market. Their primary concern becomes earning profits from cultivation. Thus, the peasants are transformed into enterprising *farmers*. Farmers, unlike the homogenous peasantry are a differentiated lot and they are divided into different categories or classes.

Transformations in the character of the rural agrarian society after independence can be summed up as following –

I. Large scale mechanisation and capital investment in agriculture in the last couple of decades.

II. A shift from payment in kind (grain, etc.) to payment in cash as wages.

III. An increase in the use of agricultural labour as cultivation becomes more intensive.

IV. A loosening of traditional bonds or hereditary relationships between farmers or landowners and agricultural workers and the rise of a class of *free wage labourers*.

V. A shift from *production for consumption* to *production for market* and cultivation becomes more commercialised.

VI. Rural areas become more integrated with the wider international economy.

Other social changes also influenced the change in agrarian structure in rural areas. The spread of higher education, especially in the form of private professional colleges in rural and semi-urban areas, penetration of transportation and communication, agricultural extension services and cooperativisation of milk production also affected the mode of production in rural areas.

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P C Joshi looked at Indian agrarian system from a feudalistic perspective. According to him, agriculture, during the British rule, was in a *feudal* mode of production. While the British introduced reforms in many areas, agriculture remained untouched in terms of technological interventions and ownership reforms. Further, linkages between land and caste were also very strong. A R Desai also had similar views and according to him, feudal mode of production, during colonial times, was imposed from above by colonisers as it was not present earlier and hence, was qualitatively different from the feudalism present in Europe.

Concurrent claims over Indian mode of production as a feudal mode of production are rejected by Daniel Thorner and others. According to an empirical study conducted by him in 250 villages over 10 years indicated that after the implementation of land reforms and participation in government jobs; rural agriculturists, entrepreneurs and government employees are now using modern means of production and are making investments in agriculture and land. This is leading to the growth of *capitalist* mode of production in Indian agriculture. Rudolph and Rudolph term such agriculturist capitalists as *Bullock Capitalists* in their *In Pursuit of Lakshmi, 1987.*

However, capitalisation of agriculture is not uniform and according to Utsa Patnaik, it largely depends upon factors like size of land holding, the intensity of use of hired labour, net production from land and profitability. Similarly, Kathleen Gough, in her study of Kumbapetti in Tamil Nadu, found that there is a simultaneous existence of big bourgeoisie rich farmers, petty bourgeoisie farmers, semi proletarian and pure proletarian famers. Hence, the capitalist mode of production in India has not fully developed.

Gail Omvedt considers that in case of India, *multiple modes of production* are present and there is apparently, capitalist mode of production in Punjab, Maharastra, Haryana and Western UP, it is semi-capitalist in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, semi-feudal in case of Orissa, West Bengal and almost feudal in case of Bihar.

The change in the nature of the relationship between landlords, who usually belonged to the dominant castes, and agricultural workers, who usually belonged to lower castes, was described by the sociologist Jan Breman as a shift from *patronage to exploitation*. Wealthy farmers often prefer to employ migrant workers for harvesting and other such intensive operations, rather than the local working class, because migrants are more easily exploited and can be paid lower wages. Such changes took place in many areas where agriculture was becoming more commercialised, that is, where crops were being grown primarily for sale in the market. This transformation in labour relations is regarded by some scholars as indicative of a transition to capitalist agriculture as the capitalist mode of production is based on the separation of the workers from the means of production (in this case, land), and the use of *free* wage labour, much like the Marxian idea of labour as commodity.

Further, with the Green Revolution and marketisation, profit is becoming central to farm activities and the aim is not just fulfilling needs of family. According to Rutten, in several agriculturally rich regions, such as coastal Andhra Pradesh, western Uttar Pradesh, and central Gujarat, well-to-do farmers belonging to the dominant castes, began to invest their profits from agriculture to other types of business ventures. This process of diversification gave rise to new entrepreneurial groups that moved out of rural areas into the growing towns, giving rise to new regional elites that became economically as well as politically dominant.

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Thus, in areas of rapid agricultural development, there has been a consolidation of the old landed or cultivating groups, who have transformed themselves into a dynamic entrepreneurial, rural-urban dominant class. But, in other regions such as eastern U P and Bihar, the lack of effective land reforms, political mobilization, and redistributive measures has meant that there have been relatively few changes in the agrarian structure and hence, in the living conditions of most of the people. Further, at the macro level too, 57 per cent of Indian population still depends on agriculture with widespread use of subsistence and traditional agricultural practices; and traditional social relations still exist in rural areas. Hence, it will not be fair to say that Indian agriculture has totally transformed from the traditional to the modern mode of production.

Problems of Rural Labour – Including Bondage and Migration

Historically, rural labour belonged to the landless class in Indian society and it worked under the economic system known as *Jajmani* system. In the wake of poor financial and material security, this labour always led a life of want and misery. With the introduction of private property during the colonial rule, problems of the rural labour only exacerbated. New classes emerged and rural labour became a subject of exploitation at the hands of *Zamindars*, dominant castes, British officials (they were often taken as *begaar* or unpaid labour by them) and so on. Rural labour often suffered at the hand of nature also, at that time, in form of famines, draughts, floods, etc. Often their marginal lands were alienated in a situation of non-payment of the land revenue and rents. Many of the non-agricultural skilled labourers during the British period also suffered as a result of ruining of handicraft and handlooms and they failed to find a place in the industrialisation process as well. As a result, there was tremendous swell in rural labour and marginal peasants. Thus, rural labour, during the British period, became a victim of the double burden of caste and class.

Rural labour has different features than urban labour. While urban labour works in a market or money economy, rural labour is still working under traditional structures. Rural labour also doesn't have a regular supply of work as rural economy offers limited scopes for labour work which is mostly seasonal in nature. Rural labour is also affected by seasonality, indebtedness, bondage, *begaar*, poor social security, migration, poor education and health for family and children, poor social security, exploitation and caste system. Jan Breman, in his *Patronage and Exploitation; Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat 1985,* shows that landless workers do not have many rights, for instance, they are usually not paid the minimum wage.

Bonded Labour

Bonded Labour can be termed as modern day slavery. National Commission on Labour defines bonded labour as '*labour which remains in bondage for the debt incurred*'. Thus, it is a relation between a creditor and debtor in highly unequal terms. This form of labour is a product of debt bondage where the dependence and control of labour is through indebtedness. The bonded labour system is created when redemption of any advance in cash or kind, at a usurious rate of interest, makes the debtor undertake a work at nominal or no wages till the time the debt is paid. The debt tends to increase rather than

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diminish and the person in debt and, sometimes his family are bound for life. Reasons for indebtedness are often social. Over expenditure in marriage, death of family bread earners, etc. leads to indebtedness. It is known by different names in different places; *Sagri* system in Rajasthan, *Vetti* system and *Bhaghela* in Andhra, *Bandhua* mazdoori in North India, *Saurkiya, Kamia, Ramasia* and *Janaouri* in Bihar, *Hali* and *Halpati* systems in Gujarat, *Feetha* in Karnataka, *Vet* and *Begar* in Maharashtra *and Jetha* in Madhya Pradesh.

The agreement between landlord and debtor, once entered, lasts for quite some time and the debtor continues to render services for years together or sometimes for generations. The ignorance of the bonded labourers, and their vulnerable position without any alternative available, makes them subjugated to the money-lenders.

The other reasons for which the landless agricultural labourers, including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, are forced to enter into labour agreements are listed below –

I. The caste system, wherein the lower castes worked as bonded labourers in the arrangements of the high castes.

II. Expenditure incurred on account of social and religious customs associated with births, marriages and deaths.

III. Mortgage of land by needy tenant farmers.

IV. Poverty of the rural masses who are forced to become indebted even to subsist.

Pledging of children is the most prevalent and the worst form of bonded labour. The system implies the infringement of the basic human rights and destruction of the dignity of human labour. Due to its dehumanising nature and violation of multiple human rights, it is also termed as *modern slavery*. Historically, it became intense with the spread of *Zamindari* system and due to rural distress. The degree of bondage varies and Burdhan and Rudra have classified them as *Extremely Attached* and *Partially Attached*. Extremely attached are those who are in total bondage.

The Article 23 prohibits bonded labour as Constitution guarantees us right against exploitation, Bonded Labour System Abolition Act was also passed in 1976. NHRC also takes suo motu action in cases of bonded labour. SC Judgment in Swami Agnivesh led *Bandhua Mukti Morcha* Case has also called for affirmative action against bonded labour. Many schemes are also there for their rehabilitation. For example, *Indira Awas Yojna* provides for free housing for them. Many non-governmental organisations, like *Bachpan Bachao Aandolan*, led by Dr Satyarthi, who also won Nobel Prize for Peace in 2014, have also done significant work towards the emancipation of the bonded labour.

Migration of Rural Labour

Migration of rural labour force into other well off areas is a hallmark of the developing and the underdeveloped agrarian economies as rural areas are often left behind in developmental race. Distressed rural labour often resorts to migration to urban areas for better pastures ending up in low key jobs. Migration of labour has demographic and social consequences. It may also lead to creation of slums in urban areas. It also leads to skewed sex ratios as often, male population resorts to migration. Women,

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children and old parents of migrated workers face their own problems in village. For instance, in poor areas, where male family members spend much of the year working outside their villages, cultivation has become primarily a female task. Women are also emerging as the main source of agricultural labour, leading to the *feminisation of agricultural labour force.* The insecurity of women is greater because they earn lower wages than men for similar work. Migration also brings new challenges to workers themselves, who at times, face hostile environment and are prone to multiple vulnerabilities. Housing and sanitation are the biggest issues that they face on a day to day basis. Further, migrated workers also fail to get social security benefits due to lack of local identity.

Green Revolution and other regional disparities promoted rural to rural migration in a big way. These migrant workers have been termed *footloose labour* by Jan Breman, but this does not imply freedom. Labour from backward regions like Bihar, eastern UP, Bengal, etc. migrates to prosperous regions like Haryana and Punjab. Wealthy farmers also often prefer to employ migrant workers because migrants are easy to exploit and can be paid lower wages. Migrant labours also have to face multiple deprivations as there is no housing and hence, no physical security. Often, they lack bank accounts and their hard earned money is prone to be stolen. Migrant labourers also face linguistic and cultural problems. In wealthy states like Punjab and Haryana, they are also stereotyped as *Biharis*, *Purvaiyas*, etc. and are also subjected to verbal abuses. They face multiple discriminations including discrimination in access to public services. In Haryana, there have been instances when they were not given seats in state transport buses or were treated rudely. They have to adjust their food habits also according to the alien culture. Due to migratory nature of their works, education of their children also suffers greatly and as a result, more often than not, their children are also drawn into casual labour workforce due to poor education. Migrants are also deprived of family support as they often migrate alone due to issues like high cost of living in the regions where they migrate.

Currently, there is little protection that government offers to such migrant labourers. No social security scheme is there which covers migrant labourers and in fact, due to lack of local proofs, they are even excluded from some of the existing social security schemes like PDS system and MNREGS. The ambitious unique identification program *Aadhar,* which aims to provide such benefits to migrants at any place in India, is one initiative that can address many of the problems of migrant labour.

Government has launched many schemes and programs to ameliorate the condition of rural labour. During land reforms, many landless labourers were given land as a part of redistribution process. Many anti-poverty programs such as the NREP, JRY and TRYSM were launched in the past. Currently, MNREGS and National Rural Livelihood Mission address their problems. National Food Security Act, 2013 and other schemes like *Antyodya Anna Yojna* aim at addressing the issue of food and nutrition. *Right to Education Act, 2009* ensures the education of their children. Rural labourers are now also covered under insurance schemes like *Aam Aadmi Bima Yojna* and *Janshreee Bima Yojna*. Problem of housing is addressed by schemes like *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna*. Rural labour is also covered under Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Also, there is Unorganised Workers Social Security Act that provides various social security provisions to workers engaged in the unorganised sector. However, many of these provisions are not effectively implemented on the ground and there are large variations. In states like Kerala, they are delivering good results, but in other states like Bihar and UP, the condition of rural labour is similar to feudal labourers.

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Question Bank

1. Why rural development was taken as a priority area for developmental agenda after independence?
2. What are the major features of the rural development strategy of the Government of India?
3. Discuss the concept of *rurban development* of late President of India Dr A P J Abdul Kalam. Why it is necessary to provide urban amenities in rural areas?
4. Community Development Program didn't gain much traction because it failed to involve larger community. Comment.
5. Elaborate on the need of a cooperative culture in rural areas. Also discuss a success story in cooperative field.
6. Cooperatives are a mixed bag of success. What is the reason for their apparent failure? How is the 97th Constitutional Amendment a shot in arm of the cooperative movement?
7. India has witnessed numerous poverty alleviation schemes, but poverty remains sticky. Examine the reasons.
8. MNREGS addresses the issue of unemployment, but not of skill development. What are the various steps that government has taken to address this issue?
9. Apart from unemployment, poor education, health and lack of social security are also major contributing factors towards poverty. Discuss.
10. Green Revolution changed the agrarian economy of India, but in a skewed manner. Comment.
11. India needs another Green Revolution. This time, an inclusive one. Comment.
12. Green Revolution created an unequal agrarian structure and also led to increased regional inequalities. Comment.
13. Why did the eastern part of India remain almost untouched by the Green Revolution despite a fertile soil, abundant water and a surplus labour force?
14. Bonded labour is the modern form of slavery. Comment.
15. What are the factors which give rise to the practice of bonded labour? What are the measures that Indian government has taken to abolish this evil?
16. Analyse the patterns of migration within India. What are the factors that contribute towards the rural-urban migration?
17. How is patrilocal form of family contributing towards migration patterns in India? Also examine the changes in marriage related migration patterns as a result of the changing forms of marriage and family.
18. What are the various problems that migrant labour faces in India? What are the various social security measures which should be taken to address some of those problems?

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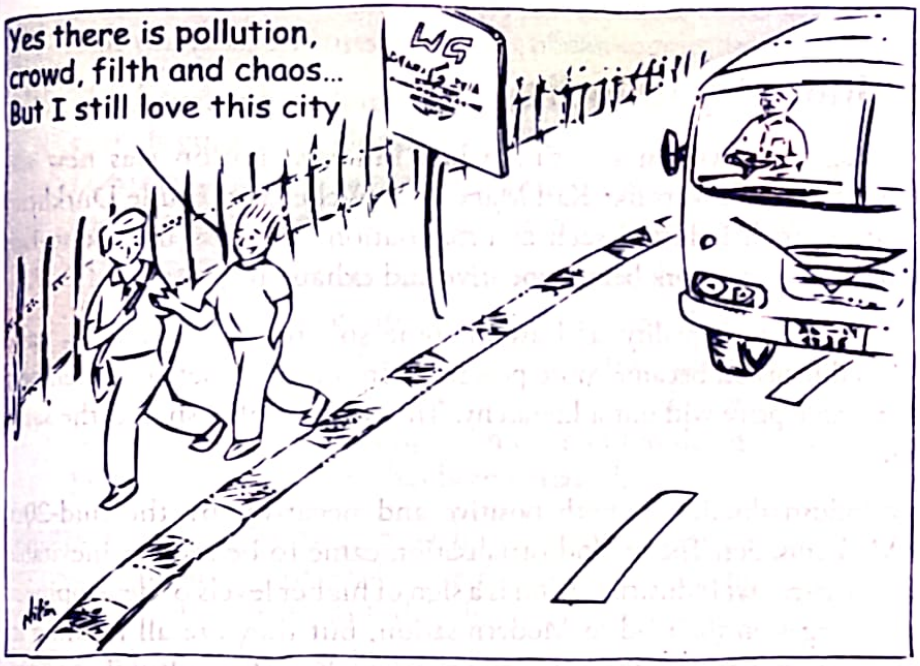
Industrialisation and Urbanisation in India

21



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about genesis of modern industries in India
2. Explain the impact of globalisation on Indian society
3. Study about growth of urban settlements in India
4. Understand the forms and features of urban settlements

Industry, in modern sense, arrived in India only after the arrival of Europeans in India as old enterprises were based on traditional know-how and technology. Its onset was slow as the colonial rural had a policy of flooding the domestic market with the home-made goods and as a result, the growth of the domestic enterprise was stifled. Further, the deliberate attempt to suppress the domestic industry left India poorly industrialised at the time of Independence. India suffered on the front of urbanisation also. Older urban centres, which were once global centres of economy, declined during the British rule and India witnessed a process of reverse migration to rural areas as handicrafts and domestic industry declined due to colonial policy. Apart from these historical challenges, new India also has to address the emerging issues like slums, pollution and labour exploitation in her quest for an egalitarian modern industrialised economy.

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Industrialisation and urbanisation are often linked with each other. Urban areas act as ready markets as well as supplier of skilled manpower. Industrialisation marks a transition from the agrarian economy to industrial economy. In India, though urban settlements existed earlier also, their nature was different from modern urban centres which evolved after the arrival of colonial powers. New urban centres were developed to suit colonial needs and the older ones were ignored. Industrialisation, which first started in Britain, came to India also during the British rule. While Industrialisation and urbanisation opened new avenues, they also posed new challenges.

Evolution of Modern Industry in India

Many of the great works of Sociology were written at a time when Industrialisation was new and machinery was assuming great importance. Thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim associated a number of social features with industry, such as urbanisation, the loss of face-to-face relationships, a detailed division of labour, and work being repetitive and exhausting.

Alternatively, Industrialisation led to greater equality, at least in some spheres. For example, caste distinctions failed to matter as class dimension became more powerful. In a factory setting, members of all the castes worked together at same place without a hierarchy. The workers also shared the same space in trains, buses and in cafes.

While the early sociologists saw Industrialisation as both positive and negative, by the mid-20th Century, under the influence of Modernisation Theory, Industrialisation came to be seen as inevitable and positive. Modernisation Theory argues that Industrialisation is a sign of higher levels of development and all the societies are at different stages on the road to Modernisation, but they are all heading in the same direction. Industrialisation brings not only the economic changes, but also cultural changes. According to Louis Wirth, Industrialisation and Urbanisation imply not just changes in production systems, technological innovations, density of settlements but also a change in *a way of life.*

Industries were present in India earlier also, but the post 19th Century Industrialisation was fundamentally different as it used inanimate power and production was mass production.

I. It started in India with cotton and jute industries and its first phase lasted from 1850-1890. This phase was also accompanied by the exploitation of Indian labour class. There were horrible working conditions in factories and wages were abysmally low with no safeguards in case of causality. Workers had little organisational ability and their voice was almost unheard. Traditional handloom also declined during this period and the new Industrialisation rose on the grave of the domestic industries. Produce of these industries was either exported or the surplus obtained from it was drained out of the country. Thus, early Industrialisation during colonial period heralded misery of Indians; opposite to Britain, where it led to prosperity, rise in incomes and economic growth.

II. In the second phase, 1890-1915, heavy industries like cement, iron and steel were setup and they were geographically more diverse in location as many of them were located near the source. This period also saw setting up of industries by the Indian entrepreneurs during the Swadeshi Movement. Economic drain by early Industrialisation was already exposed by this time and some

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spirited Indians like P C Ray and Tatas started indigenous factories. Working class movement was in the formative stage and was slowly gaining momentum. Industrial class, along with working class, witnessed tremendous expansion as new industries came up.

III. The third phase lasted from 1915 to 1947, when two wars provided stimulus as well as brought hardship. Indigenisation of industries was promoted and consumer goods industries were established. Capitalist class gained a firm footing and along with this development, trade union movement also gained further momentum as ILO was also established in 1919. In this phase, some of the labour laws were also enacted and some of the demands of labour were also conceded. This phase also witnessed impact of communist movement on trade union movement.

IV. The fourth phase lasted from 1947 to 1991, which saw state sponsored heavy industry led growth guided by ideology of self-reliance and import substitution. This period also witnessed *license raj* and state control over production. Self-reliance was achieved in many sectors by 1970s and telecom gave much needed technological edge during the 1980s.

V. The last phase includes the post liberalisation period. It led to a structural change with arrival of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG). On one hand, inefficiency of public sector were dealt with, on the other hand, private sector and foreign competition was given a wider role. Consumer goods industry saw tremendous expansion, multi-national companies flooded India. It had a mixed impact in the past few decades. Labour policies have been liberalised and power of trade unions has been curtailed.

Industrialisation in India gave birth to numerous opportunities on one hand and gave birth to many contradictions on the other. Unlike Britain, where the impact of Industrialisation led to more people moving into urban areas, in India, the initial impact of the similar Industrialisation led to more people moving into agriculture as factory system was not employment intensive and surplus labour from the closing down of the traditional cottage industries moved to rural areas. The Census of India Report shows this clearly. It led to overcrowding of the agriculture and impoverishment of peasantry.

In developed countries, the majority is formally employed, but in India, more than 93 per cent of labour is in the informal sector. Even big companies like Maruti-Suzuki have predominant workforce as contract workers with low job security and harsher working terms. Labour strikes and the ensuing strife at the Manesar plant of Maruti-Suzuki in 2011, and the resulting violent conflict between management and workers is an example of changing employer-employee terms.

Industrialisation in India has also not led to decline in employment in agriculture and instead, service sector employment has increased. This is an un-natural trajectory of the industrial growth as employment intensive manufacturing phase was skipped in India. Due to this, manufacturing sector couldn't provide many opportunities to the people employed in agricultural sector and agriculture remained over-crowded.

One distinctive feature of the current form of Industrialisation is its deep linkages with the market economy. Though markets existed earlier also, but they were not extensive. They were highly localised, limited and had a low impact on local economic life. Virtual absence of cash-economy hampered free exchange. There were little urban-rural linkages. As discussed earlier, market economy in India was introduced by the British and it had a lot of negative consequences as it linked rural economy to the

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wider world in a highly subservient and exploitative manner. More area was brought under cash crops and the control went into the hands of *Zamindars* and colonial government. On one hand, it led to impoverishment of the peasantry and on the other, it led to the food security issues.

It was only after independence that skewed market system was put straight to some extent. Following were the consequences of the market economy –

I. Nature of production changed as surplus was now for the market and not for self-consumption.

II. It led to change in cropping patterns. Areas like Punjab and Haryana also started to grow more lucrative, but ecologically less beneficial, crops like rice.

III. It affected economic relations in rural areas also. *Jajmani* system became extinct as money-economy arrived. It also led to worsening of the condition of landless labourers. Organic bonding between the two classes broke down and class polarisation increased. Employee-employer relations are now contract based.

IV. Rural to urban migration increased due to search of new jobs on one hand and due to skewed development on the other.

V. Marketisation also led to modernising influence on agriculture which introduced scientific temperament in Indian agriculture.

VI. It also promoted consumerism in rural and urban areas. Consumption of items became a status symbol.

VII. It led to high division of labour. It also broke the caste boundaries and opened up more avenues of social mobility.

VIII. Other social institutions like family and kinship were also affected. Family no longer plays the function of economic placement. Similarly, role of kinship has also weakened in economic matters.

IX. Growth in communication and transportation, as a result of marketisation, has also facilitated economic integration of economy.

X. Market forces also lead to high aspirations among the individuals and it is leading to higher instances of anomie.

XI. Market economy has also exposed society to imperfections associated with the market economy. Market failures lead to great social stresses at times as was in the case of the global financial crisis of 2008.

There are some other emerging trends also. As a result of long working hours and flexible-time work culture, in places like Bengaluru (erstwhile Bangalore), Hyderabad and Gurugram (erstwhile Gurgaon), where many IT firms or call centres are located, shops and restaurants have also changed their opening hours, and remain open till late. If both husband and wife work, then children have to be put in crèches. The joint family, which was supposed to have disappeared with industrialisation, seems to have re-emerged, as grandparents are roped in to help with children.

Globalisation is another typical feature of the contemporary Industrialisation. *Human Development Report of South Asia, 2001* defines globalisation as '*the free movement of goods, services, people and*

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information across national boundaries, in an integrated economy, which influences economic and social relations within and across the countries'.

One of the first implications of globalisation was globalisation of markets. Global products are finding markets in India now. They are giving stiff competition to Indian products. For example, when Coca-cola re-entered India in 1990s, it bought Parle-Drinks brands like Thumbs-up. It also led to decline of consumption of many traditional drinks. Many other multinationals have also eclipsed smaller firms and have used aggressive tactics on the basis of their money-muscle power to monopolise markets in India.

Further, a mad frenzy to cut costs and *outsourcing of everything* is the new dimension of globalisation. More and more companies are reducing the number of permanent employees and outsourcing their work to smaller companies or even to homes. For multinational companies, this outsourcing is done across the globe and developing countries like India are providing cheap labour. As small companies have to compete for orders from the big companies, they keep wages low, and working conditions are also often poor to cut costs. For trade unions also, it is difficult to organise themselves in such smaller firms. Almost all companies, even government ones, now practice some form of outsourcing and contracting.

Globalisation is promoting a consumer culture at a break neck speed. Due to globalisation, the industries which are re-located are the ones which produce consumer goods and not the strategic or heavy industries. So, the apparent motive of globalisation is only profit seeking and not spread of development per-se. Technology transfer happens at painfully slow paces with many strings attached. Funding from IMF and World Bank are given on conditional basis and as a result, many developing countries are now exposed to the vagaries of markets and the greed of the capitalists.

At the same time, as permanent employment in large industries is declining, governments often indulge in land acquisition for industry. These industries do not necessarily provide employment to the people of the surrounding areas, but they cause major pollution. Many farmers, especially *Adivasis*, who constitute approximately 40 per cent of those displaced, are protesting against the low rates of compensation and the fact that they will be forced to become casual labour living and working on the footpaths of India's big cities.

Critics also say that globalisation and policies of IMF and World Bank have ruined many countries and have only brought about the globalisation of poverty. Liberalisation and privatisation worldwide also appear to be associated with rising income inequality.

Growth of Urban Settlements in India

In simple words, the process of *urbanisation* denotes population growth of the cities and towns. Sociologically, it also denotes the spread of urban way of life to the country-side. Urbanisation implies a cultural and social psychological process whereby people acquire material and non-material culture, including behavioural patterns, forms of organisation, and ideas that originated in, or are distinctive of the city. Thus, the process of urbanisation has demographic as well as social dimensions.

Louis Wirth's formulation of *urbanism as a way of life* argues that the city affects area wider than the city itself. Urbanism, as a way of life, is not peculiar to city-dwellers alone as the influences of the city (i.e.,

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impact of urbanisation) stretch far beyond its administrative boundaries. The Economic Survey, 2016-17 quoted the famous demographer Jane Jacobs '*cities, not nation-states, are the main players in macroeconomics*'.

URBAN AREA: CRITERIA

The 2011 Census of India defined some criteria for an urban area. These are:

I. Population is more than 5000

II. The density is over 400 persons per sq. km

III. 75 per cent of the male population engages in non-agricultural occupations.

Cities are urban areas with population more than one lakh.

Urban settlements in India were there for long and Harappan relics are a testimony to it. Many urban centres in India during the medieval period were of global repute as centres of trade. Many rulers including the Chola, Mughals, etc. also promoted many urban areas with the establishment of new capital cities and trade centres. Present urban settlements are a result of impact of colonial rule and their trade practices. Modern urban centres in the world emerged as a result of Industrialisation and, for the first time in history, mega-cities emerged. In India too, it happened during and after the colonial rule. Urbanisation in the colonial period saw the decline of some earlier urban centres and the emergence of new colonial cities. Calcutta (now Kolkata) was one of the first of such port cities apart from Madras (now Chennai) and Bombay (now Mumbai). Many urban hill stations were also developed. Just as manufacturing boomed in Britain, traditional exports of cotton and silk manufactures from India declined in the face of competition from mills of Manchester. This period also saw the further decline of cities such as Surat and Masulipatnam while Bombay and Madras grew.

Over the years, there has been a steady increase in the urban population in India from 17.29 per cent in 1951 to around 31 per cent in 2011 census. Globally, urban population surpassed rural population in 2007. As per the first *World Cities Report 2016 – Urbanization and Development: Emerging Futures* report by UN Habitat, India will add another 300 million to urban population by 2050 and as a result, urban population will become 55 per cent of the total population by that time. However, the growth of urban centres in India has been uneven. Even today, more than 2/3rd of the urban population lives in large urban agglomerates with population over ten lakh. It implies that India has simultaneously witnessed both *under-urbanisation* as majority of the population still lives in rural areas and *over-urbanisation* as cities are over-crowded and suffer from all maladies which are typical of over-urbanised

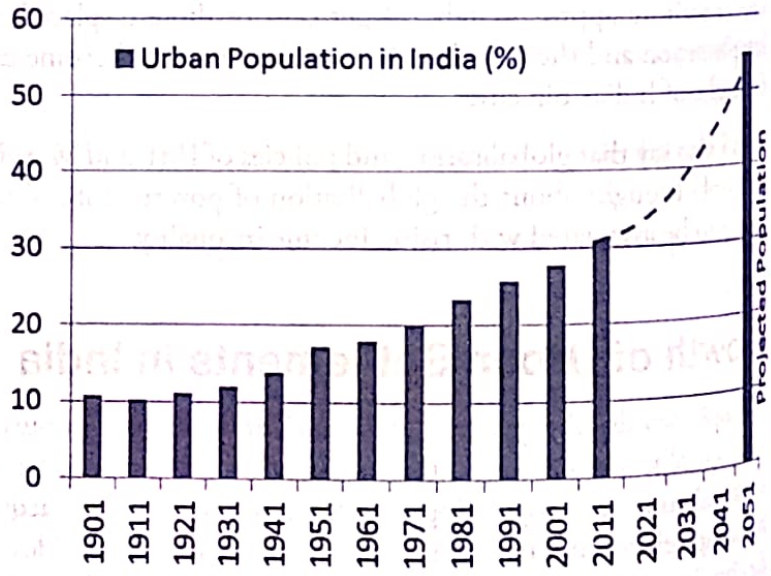

Fig. 21.1 Growth of Urban Population in India

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habitats. In 2011 Census, for the first time, absolute increase in urban population was more than rural population.

Robert Redfield and Milton Singer describe city as a centre of cultural innovation, diffusion and progress and have classified the process of urbanisation into two categories –

I. *Primary urbanisation* – It helps in spreading the values of Great Tradition.

II. *Secondary urbanisation* – It leads to overshadowing of values of the Little Tradition and hence, is also disintegrative.

Urban social structure is also different from rural social structure in many ways. In rural areas, caste dimension is overwhelming and communal bonds are very strong. Kinships are extended kinships and notions of fraternity are attached to all inhabitants of the same village. Religion plays a dominant role in the lives of people. In contrast, urban social structure has the following characteristics –

I. Formality and impersonality of human relationships.

II. Higher degree of rationality in organisation of social and private lives.

III. Increased specialisation and division of labour.

IV. Decline in the functions of family and other traditional social institutions.

Urbanisation has led to social and economic transformation of societies. It has many positive impacts like rationalisation of society, decline of orthodoxies, liberation of women and promotion of democratic ideals. It also has negative fallout in the form of rising crimes, poor social bonding, pollution, over-crowding, slums and insanitation and anomie. Some of visible impacts of urbanisation are –

I. Urbanisation has its bearing on social relationships in community living. The relationships of community living tend to become impersonal, formal, goal oriented, contractual and transitory.

II. With urbanisation, transformation of economic activities from the agricultural sector to the non-agricultural sector takes place, and the proportion of population engaged in secondary and tertiary sectors of activities increases with division of labour and specialisation of work.

III. Further, the process of urbanisation also leads to breakdown of the functioning of traditional institutions and patterns of behavior and of social control.

IV. It leads to a situation of continuity and change in the sense that the traditional forms often continue to persist, but their functions undergo major re-adaptations in the face of urbanisation.

V. It is generally held that caste is a rural phenomenon whereas class is urban. However, such distinctions in reality do not exist. In fact, caste has organised itself differently in urban settings. According to Pauline Kolenda, a noticeable change today is the fusion of sub-castes and castes. Democratic politics, inter-caste marriages and love marriages, etc. fuel this fusion process. Though caste Panchayats are very weak in cities, there exists a dichotomy between workplace and domestic situation and both caste and class situations co-exist.

VI. Urbanisation also impacts rural life. Migration, diffusion of culture, etc. are resultant of urbanisation. Srinivas outlined the general impact of both industrialisation and urbanisation on villages. He pointed out that emigration in South India had a caste component also as it were

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the *Brahmins* who first left their villages for towns and took advantage of western education and modern professions.

VII. Urbanisation has affected the status of women also. Women on one hand have set themselves free from orthodox rural patriarchy and are gaining more rights in urban settings; on the other hand, according to Gore and Kapoor, the personally and socially enlightened woman is forced to perform the dual roles; the social and the professional roles in urban settings.

VIII. Urbanisation impacts family and kinship also. It has been felt in terms of nuclearisation of family as costs of living in urban areas are high and people from meagre incomes fail to support their families. Kinship bonds also become fragile as wider rural kin-groups are left behind in the village. Due to migration of male members in urban areas, often older members, females and children are left who have to face multiple hardships and challenges.

IX. There are economic impacts of urbanisation also. It is seen in terms of rising informal labour force, increasing division of labour and increasing job opportunities.

Many of the above impacts and characteristics have not been found true in the Indian context. When we observe the household dimension of family in urban India, the studies by K M Kapadia and A M Shah indicate that there is no correlation between urbanisation and separate nuclear households. This assumption, that the Indian urbanites live in nuclear households and that urbanisation leads to breaking up of joint families, cannot be sustained. Some studies show that not only kinship is an important principle of social organisation in cities but also that there is structural congruity between joint family on one hand and requirements of industrial and urban life on the other, as shown in studies by Milton Singer, Srinivas, etc. Studies by Ghurye, Gore and Rao indicate that caste is also very much alive in urban areas. Harold Gould's study of the rickshawallas of Lucknow Lucknow Rickshawallas: The Social Organization of an Occupational Category, 1974 shows that, as far as their occupation is concerned, they follow secular rules but when it comes to personal, family matters, such as marriage, the caste identities are all important. Caste seems to have also become a basis for organising trade union like associations. These trade unions are nothing but interest groups which protect the rights and interests of its caste members, such as the, *Gujarat Bania Sabha*, the *Kshatriya Mahasabha* (Gujarat) and *Jatava Mahasabha* of Agra (UP). According to M S A Rao, in his *Urban Sociology in India, 1974*, 'the breakdown hypothesis' is a Western concept, which views transformation of social institutions in a linear manner. In case of India, there has been a *traditional urbanisation* in which institutions of caste, joint family and religion have not faded away in favour of class, nuclear family and secularisation respectively. R K Mukharjee on the other hand, discards a strict dichotomy between rural and urban. According to him, *degree of urbanisation* is a more suitable concept in understanding the rural-urban relations.



Fig. 21.2 Facets of Urban Areas

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Urban areas are termed as centres of cultural innovation by some thinkers, but they also have their own set of socio-economic problems. These problems are partly a result of unorganised growth of urban areas, and partly a result of human factors. Political deficit and feeble urban local bodies also add to the problems of the urban centres of India. Due to the lack of responsibility and authority vested in a city municipal governing body, there are governance fragmentation, deficits in funding and infrastructure and low expenditure per capita.

Some of these problems are –

I. *Over-urbanisation* – Over-urbanisation in one sense implies excessive urbanisation in relation to employment growth. It also means that the urban population has grown to such a large size that the cities fail to ensure a decent way of life to the urban dwellers on account of excessive population pressure on civic amenities, housing, etc. In the Indian context, the idea of over-urbanisation has been advanced on the grounds that there is an imbalance between the levels of industrialisation and urbanisation in India and the process of urbanisation takes away a lion's share of resources and, thus, impinges upon the rate of economic growth of society. The availability of civic amenities and facilities is so poor that these have now reached a point of break-down and have become almost incapable of bearing further growth of urban population. India is witnessing a peculiar mix of under-urbanisation and over-urbanisation as in terms of percentage figures, urban population in India is still much lower than the global averages, but in terms of management of cities, it is already over-urbanised. According to the 2011 Census, 65.5 million Indians lived in urban slums and according to erstwhile Planning Commission, 13.7 per cent of the urban population lived below the poverty line.

HIDDEN URBANISATION

In India, there is a difference in the actual figure and the reported figures of urbanisation due to the fact that many people live in urban like areas which are actually not classified as urban areas. According to the Agglomeration Index, a globally applicable alternative measure of urban concentration, the share of India's population living in areas with urban-like features in 2011 was around 55 per cent. This, when compared to the official urban population figure, as per 2011 Census, of just over 31 per cent, suggests the existence of considerable hidden urbanisation.

II. *Pollution and environmental decay* – According to Murray Bookchin, in his *The Modern Crisis, 1986*, modern cities are sprawling, environmentally damaging monsters that devour energy and generate waste at an unsustainable rate. Pollution levels are abysmal in most of the big Indian cities. The 2015 *livability index* of the Economist Intelligence Unit of *the Economist* ranked New Delhi 110 out of 140 cities and Mumbai was ranked 115. Solid waste management has emerged as one of the biggest challenges in urban areas of India. As per some estimates, in 2015, urban areas in India generated more than 100,000 metric tons of solid waste per day and in a reaction, government has also floated Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Rules, 2015 which call for segregation of waste at source.

III. *Socio-economic challenges* – Inadequate housing and slums are two of the biggest socio-economic challenges. It is estimated that nearly 70 per cent of population in big cities lives in sub-standard houses, which they call their homes. Atul Thakur, in his 2008 article in The Times of India,

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wrote that 33 per cent of Indians live in less space than what US prisoners get. Similarly, there are lakhs of such people who are living in cities as pavement-dwellers, without any kind of shelter at all. Slums are another big challenge. Inefficient and inadequate transport adds to the housing woes. Informalisation of workforce is on the rise as immigrants fail to find place in the formal economy of the cities. Unsafe and insufficient water supply, sanitation and inadequate health are the other challenges. According to 2011 Census, nearly 30 per cent of the urban population in India is deprived of safe drinking water facility.

IV. *Social consequences* – The white-collar crimes, which are committed largely by violating the rules and regulations of trade, business or profession during the conduct of these activities also become widespread, especially in cities which are the victims of rapid urbanisation. Inequalities in urban areas are more pronounced than in rural areas. Situation in ghettos and slums is in stark contrast to the situation in high rise skyscrapers. With the rise of urbanisation, a city-dweller, while living amidst a sea of fellow city-dwellers, is detached from them socially. Older people, the migrants who are still strangers in the city, people who are unable to get along with others, socially rejected persons and persons who do not find people of their liking often feel acute isolation even amidst thousands of the urban-dwellers. The heterogeneity of population, especially in matters of social status, caste, class, religion, income, occupation, etc., creates partial isolation, under which, as K Dais says, integrity of particular groups is reinforced by maintaining social distance and avoidance toward other groups. Residential segregation is one of the manifestations of partial isolation in cities. As the process of urbanisation accelerates, the city life tends to be rapidly characterised by cultural diversities, socioeconomic inequalities, competition, conflict and several other manifestations of complexities of social reality. The problem of maladjustment becomes all the more acute in the case of those city-dwellers, who are relatively recent migrants. They, in fact, present cases of *marginal man;* a concept developed by Robert E Park.

V. *Rural-urban divide* – As skilled population move to cities, villages are often left with no leadership. Government focus also shifts from rural to urban areas as more population crowd cities and they become unmanageable and highly strained.

Apart from these adverse consequences of urbanisation, it is also found that various forms of social disorganisations are associated with the rapid growth of cities. These forms of social disorganisation are reflected through the disruption of mutually expected roles and obligations in the wake of unequal rates of social change in different aspects of city-life. In the case of family, the increasing rates of divorce and breakdown of jointness in the traditional joint-family are indicative of dissociative implications of urbanisation. The withering away of kinship obligations provides similar examples. The enormous expansion of the city area and the increasing pressure of its heterogeneous population also raise several problems like city riots and urban unrest.

These challenges call for a managed growth of urbanisation in India. New trends in urbanisation are now witnessed in the form of growth of sub-urban areas, satellite cities, mega cities, decay of inner cities, urban renewal and gentrification drives. To tackle with the emerging issues of urbanisation, several policy and legislative initiatives have been taken. They include Rent Control Act, Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act, 1976, Rajiv Awas Yojna, Property Rights to Slum Dwellers Act, 2011, JNNURM, AMRUT and Smart City Mission. Strengthening of Urban Local Bodies is one of the major priority areas that many of the states are giving a serious thought now.

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Working Class in India – Structure, Growth and Mobilisation

M Holmstrom, defines working class as '*a group which shares similar economic situation which distinguishes itself from others like property owners, managers and employers. It, thus, refers to industrial workers and sometimes other wage earners and petty self-employed.*'

Workers mobilisation means organisation of workers for their welfare and upliftment. It refers to their rising participation in society and in workplace to address their common issues by overcoming the barriers that hinder their growth. Trade Union and workers' mobilisation can be seen in terms of their problems which are of two types; internal problems related to workplace, and external problems. Internal problems relate to issues of wages, pension, provident fund, etc. External problems are related to social security, schooling and education of their children and dependents, entertainment, health, post-retirement social safety, etc. Further, their problems also have temporal and spatial dimensions. Problem of workers at the start of industrialisation were different from today's problems. Problems of workers in different sectors are also different. For example, problems of workers in the IT sector are different from the problems of workers in the manufacturing sector.

Trade unions are like workers' interest groups which pressurise, coordinate and communicate with factory owners and governments for workers' welfare. Trade unions were late to emerge in India, partly because of late Industrialisation, fragmented industry, discouragement by foreign rule and lack of enabling legislations.

The modern working class came into being with the rise of capitalistic mode of production. In other words, rise of factory system of production and rise of working class happened simultaneously. Conversely, without a factory, there can be no working class but only working people. In India, till the middle of the 19th Century, there were working people but not the working class and people were engaged in handicrafts and agriculture. Plantations and railways were the initial enterprises to herald the era of colonial capitalism in the Indian subcontinent. However, labour was not free in these enterprises contrary to ideology of capitalism. Trade with British ruined traditional Indian handloom and handicraft industry, and sporadic establishment of modern industries sowed the seeds of *working class* on ruins of traditional economic structure.

Growth of working class can be traced in following broad phases –

I. *Formative phase* – In the early formative phase, the forced intrusion of British capital in India devastated the old economy, but did not transplant it by forces of modern capital economy. According to A R Desai, '*the millions of ruined artisans and craftsmen, spinners, weavers, potters, smelters and smiths from the town and the village alike, had no alternative but to crowd into agriculture, leading to deadly pressure on the land*'. Subsequently, with the introduction of railways and sporadic growth of some industries, a section of these very people entered the modern industries as workers. The first generation of factory workers, it appears, came from this distressed and dispossessed sections of the people of the village. In the words of Buchanan '*the factory working group surely comes from the hungry half of the agricultural population*'. The Factory Commission of 1890 reported that most of the factory workers in jute, cotton, bone and paper mills, sugar works, gun and shell factories belonged to the lower castes like *Bagdi*, *Teli*, *Mochi*, *Kaibarta*, *Bairagi* and *Sankara*. In mines, mostly tribes were employed. The First Phase is marked by self-mobilisation. Although the plantations and mines contained a large number of workers

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who were heavily exploited, their conditions did not attract much attention of the mainstream population in the initial period because they were far from the urban areas, away from the notice of early social reformers, journalists and public activists. Some activity was witnessed in jute and cotton factories with some philanthropic support; and textile workers made sporadic strikes in Bombay and Nagpur.

II. *Working class emergence* – It happened due to its concentration and migration around areas where factories were located. During its early years, working class mobilisation was highly localised, sporadic and spontaneous. As there were no trade unions in early plantations, jute and cotton mills, etc., there was almost negligible organisation. Workers activities were still guided by philanthropic organisations only. This phase is also known as voluntaristic phase and early strikes and mobilisations of workers happened. But by the 1890s, the strikes became so frequent that the authorities spoke about a strike mania among the workers. The partition of Bengal in the year 1905 aroused public indignation and gave rise to mass national upsurge. Workers were now attracted by national leaders into the freedom struggle movement. This political development worked as a favourable condition for the Indian working class too and it moved ahead with its economic struggles and raised its pitch. On the eve of the First World War, the capitalist development in India got accelerated. Though the war time led to general exploitation, new industrial opportunities were thrown to capitalist class with a large market for country made goods inside and outside the country, war contracts, lower real wages and higher prices of manufactured goods. But for the working class, it was a tough time. This was because the soaring prices reduced the living standards of the working class. Even before the war started, many nationalists had started forming nascent workers' organisations. Shashipad Banarjee started activities in Bengal, N M Lokhande in Bombay formed *Bombay Mills Hand Association*, Brahmo Samaj formed *Working Men's Mission* and *Working Men's Institution* in Bengal, Tilak formed *Bombay Mills Hand Defense Association* in 1908. First true trade union was formed in Madras by B P Wadia, who was also a member of Theosophical Society in 1918.

WORKING CLASS GROWTH: INDIA VS EUROPE

Like India, in Europe also, the artisans and craftsmen were dispossessed of their profession, but they were not forced out of the towns to crowd the village economy. Unlike European artisans, in India only a small portion of artisans could become part of the emerging working class. In India, the gap between destruction of traditional cottage industry and its partial replacement by modern industries was huge, at about two to three generations. As a result, the dispossessed artisans and craftsmen lost their age-old technical skills and when they entered the modern industries, they did so without any initial skills. Unlike European working class, the Indian working class, while pursuing modern economic work ethos, still maintained traditional and orthodox outlook in private life. Caste and superstition still remained with them.

III. *Consolidation of working class and beginning of trade union movement* – The October Socialist Revolution of 1917, formation of ILO in 1919 and subsequent sweeping mass and working class struggles formed the background under which the first pan Indian organisation of the Indian working class called *All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)* was born in 1920. Gandhi, in Ahmadabad, formed the *Textile Labour Association* in the same year. In 1920, there were

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more than 13 lakh workers in big factories. Establishment of organised trade unions gave a new direction to the workers' mobilisation. By end of 1920s, more than 125 trade unions were formed. The AITUC received a lot of support from the Indian National Congress. There were about 107 unions which were affiliated or sympathetic to the AITUC. The years 1926-29 constituted an eventful phase of the working class struggle in India. During this phase, the Indian communist movement stood on a firm foundation poised for advancement and it had a strong influence on the working class movement. *Indian Trade Union Act, 1926* was also passed for stable functioning of the trade unions. The world economic crisis of 1929-36 was the most profound and disruptive of all economic crises capitalism has ever known. The plight of the peasantry was beyond all imagination, their purchasing power came down to an all-time low. In all industries, there was mass retrenchment and wages were slashed. In other words, workers of all categories were hit and there was great unrest and despair among the workers which set the stage for the next phase of workers' mobilisation in India.

IV. *Post-World War II phase* – The defeat of fascism and end of the World War II saw the emergence of the Indian working class as a highly organised, class conscious and uncompromising force against colonialism. In the post-Independence period, the state became the sole arbitrator in the relationships between the industry and the working class. During this period, the main concern of government was to achieve growth, industrial peace, and proper management of the conflict between the workers and the management. In order to achieve these goals, the state passed laws like the Industrial Dispute Act, 1947 and introduced the Labour Relations Bill and Trade Unions Bills in 1949. After Independence, many more trade unions were formed and most of the political parties also extended their support to these. As a result, the unions like *Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh* and *Bhartiya Kamgaar Sena* came into being. With Independence, a new political dynamics was ushered in and imperialists were replaced by landlords and capitalist and goals of struggle were also shifted. India also witnessed wars with Pakistan and China and in the post-war period, industrial activity was boosted and wages were liberally paid. For some time, the atmosphere prevailed that class struggle will lose its relevance. However, downturn of world economy during 1960-70s led to degradation of standard of living of workers and also led to retrenchments. Large scale retrenchments were made on excuses of reducing costs. Permanent employment was curbed and casual labour increased. Women workers increased as they were better suited for part time and low paid jobs. As a result, in 1970s, there was a general feeling against the rigid politics and politically affiliated trade unions. Frustration was also building up due to non-fulfilment of the post-Independence expectations. It led to the birth of apolitical leadership. Most significant among these included Datta Samant, A K Roy and Shankar Guha Niyogy and Ela Bhatt. Working Women's Forum (Chennai), Self Employed Women's Association (Gujarat), etc. were some of the organisations which came up during this period. They were more independent in terms of not being affiliated to any party directly or indirectly and were also less hierarchical and bureaucratic, but they were not a substitute for the trade unions. The strikes of the workers in the textile industry and railways during 1970s and 1980s are considered to be the most significant developments in the history of the working class movement in the post-Independence period. In 1974, the railway workers affiliated to the main trade unions, except the Congress affiliated INTUC, organised a nation-wide strike. The rail operations came to a halt during the strike. In 1982-83 the textile workers of Bombay were

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mobilised into a strike which was considered to have *few parallels* in the history of the working class movement in the country.

With liberalisation of economy, trade unions and worker's mobilisation was seen as a threat to investment and industrial climate and active steps were taken by the government in reducing the incidences of strikes of workers.

The contemporary working class movement in India is constrained by several factors. Rudolph and Rudolph argue that the organised working class forms a very small section of the working population in India. Therefore, there is no class politics in the country. Instead Indian politics is a centrist politics. Rise of identity politics based on caste, language, religion, tribe, regions, etc., especially since the last two decades of the twentieth century posed serious challenges to the working class unity. The tacit support given by the government to the market economy has further relegated the issues of working classes to the background. Rise of technology and capital based market has also reduced labour to a commodity in India.

The Second National Commission on Labour 2002, under Arjun Sengupta, has made the following observations about the industrial relations scenario in India –

I. It is increasingly noticed that trade unions do not normally give a call for strike because they are afraid that a strike may lead to the closure of the unit.

II. Service sector workers feel they have become outsiders and are becoming increasingly disinterested in trade union activities.

III. There is a trend to resolve the major disputes through negotiations at bipartite level.

IV. The nature of disputes or demands is changing. Instead of demanding higher wages, allowances or facilities, trade unions now demand job security and some are even willing to accept wage cuts or wage freezes in return for job protection.

The Government of India has taken multiple steps to ameliorate the condition of workers in industries. The Constitution provides equal Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles call for enhanced workers participation in management. Various legislations have also been enacted including Factories Act, Industrial Dispute Act and Minimum Wages Act. For females, separate legislations have also been enacted like Maternity Benefit Act and Equal Remuneration Act. Children are now prohibited from working in factories. Separate provisions are there for workers in different sectors. A number of social welfare programs have also been launched from time to time related to insurance, housing and social security. There are also schemes of skill development and micro-financing. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector has also been established as a watchdog and advisory body for the informal sector. NGOs also work towards welfare of workers by acting as facilitators as well as service providers.

Informal Sector

Informal sector is that part of economy which is not covered by formal regulations, statutes and rules. Here, employer and employee are not bound by a formal contract, but they work on mutually agreed

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terms. Informal sector is sometimes also referred to as unorganised sector and it includes casual labour in various fields. Such labour also includes labour based on kinship or personal relations. In fact, In India, the term *informal sector* has not been used in the official statistics or in the National Accounts Statistics (NAS). The terms used in the Indian NAS are *organised* and *unorganisd* sectors only. Informal labour may include both skilled and unskilled labour. On one hand, stress on better working conditions and greater rights at workplace, etc. has led to an increase in welfare of workers in organised sector; on the other hand, increasing focus on liberalisation, global competition and a race to bottom for production of goods at lowest cost has led to casualisation of workforce. In 1972, 23 per centof workforce was in casual labour and in 2000, the figure stood at 32 per cent. As of 2016, over 93 per centof the workforce, whether it is in agriculture, industry or services, is informally employed.

Problems of informal sector workers are both internal, i.e., work related as well as external, i.e., related to their lives. They suffer from low wages, exploitations, fewer social security measures, poor security of tenure, no maternity benefits, poor working conditions, and poor access to health and insurance. This sometimes results into violent bursts also. Violent clash between the workers and the management at the Maruti Suzuki plant in Manesar in 2012 was a result of the demand by workers to address the issue of gross disparity in the pay of contract workers and regular workers. Further, many of the problems of the workers in the informal sector are not even identified properly as there is a big number of workers that are employed in what is called *home based work*. Children assisting their parents in their work is also another form of invisible informal labour.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL SECTOR: A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Legally, Factories Act defines *an establishment to be covered under the laws as the one in the public sector or that in private sector which employs ten hired workers or more* as *formal sector establishments* and those who work in such establishments as *formal sector workers*. All other enterprises and workers working in those enterprises form the informal sector. Thus, informal sector includes millions of farmers, agricultural labourers, owners of small enterprises and people working in those enterprises as also the self-employed who do not have any hired workers. It also includes all non-farm casual wage labourers who work for more than one employer such as construction workers and headload workers.

Significance of informal sector in the Indian context is huge as a major chunk of population earns its livelihood from this type of economic activity. The contribution of the unorganised sector to the GDP has been over 50 per cent. Informal sector also involves low capital investment and hence, it is highly labour intensive and spreads quickly. In a developing country like India, government cannot take too many steps to improve the condition of workers of this sector as more benefits to them adversely affect production costs and affect the much needed industrial and agricultural growth. Besides, it requires huge infrastructural and institutional arrangements involving financial implications beyond the capacity of the Government. In such a situation, the Government has to play a role of a facilitator and a promoter, so that, the workers employed in the informal sector are able to get the requisite level of protection and security, and have a decent work environment.

Implications for the workers in informal sector are –

I. First, personal relationships determine many aspects of work. If the employer likes a worker, he or she may get a salary raise, and if he or she had a fight with him or her, he or she may

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lose the job. This is different from large formal organisations which have a well-defined rules structure, where recruitment is more transparent and there are mechanisms for complaints and their redressal.

II. Second, very few Indians have an access to secure jobs with benefits. Of those who do, two-thirds work for the government. The rest are forced to depend on their children in their old age.

III. Third, since very few people are members of trade unions, a feature of the organised sector, they do not have the benefit of collectively fighting for proper wages and safe working conditions.

IV. As informal sector workers are not registered as *workers* under any law, they are automatically excluded from several benefits provided under legislations like Maternity Benefit Act and Workman's Compensation Act.

V. The government has laws to monitor conditions in the unorganised sector, but in practice, they are left to the whims and fancies of the employer or contractor.

In response to the various vulnerabilities that workers in informal sector face, government has recently taken many steps to ameliorate their condition. Unorganised Sector Workers' Social Security Act was passed in 2008 and in 2011 a *National Social Security Board* was also setup for unorganised sector which shall recommend schemes for the unorganised sector. *National Social Security Fund* has also been established for the unorganised sector in 2011. *New Pension Scheme* is now open to workers in the informal sector. There are other schemes as well. *Janshree Bima Yojana Yojana* is a group insurance scheme, *Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme* is a social security scheme for the old. Several non-government institutions and agencies are also imparting various kinds of social security benefits to the selected groups of workers. For example, *Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)* has made significant achievement in promoting social security through the formation of cooperatives.

Child Labour

Children are the building blocks of any civilised society. The new National Policy on Children, 2013 reiterates the statement of the 1974 policy that children are supremely important assets of a nation. In this background, child labour appears as a scar on the soul of this nation. Child labour is defined as *any work done by a person who is under the age specified by law*. The word, *work* means full time commercial work to sustain self or to add to the family income. ILO defines child labour as '*child labour includes children permanently leading an adult's lives. Working long hours with low wages under conditions which are detrimental to the physical and mental health, sometimes separated from family*'. Child labour is both an exploitative economic practice as well as a deep rooted social evil. Worst forms of child labour, according to ILO, include bonded labour, mining, child prostitution and drug-trafficking.

There are many factors which contribute towards its existence in India –

I. Small children are pledged to the money-lenders due to grinding poverty and it gives worst form of child labour in form of *bonded child labour*. Poor parents find it difficult to take care of children due to lack of resources and child labour is used as a survival strategy by poorer households.

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II. Child labour also has a gender dimension. Girls are more prone to be forced into child labour. Education of the girl children is also neglected in patriarchal families and it paves way for their early employment as child labour.

III. Large family size leads to depletion of meagre incomes of earning hands and children are pushed into labour.

IV. Vulnerability of children is also a cause as they rarely protest and are even considered as suitable for certain works like carpet weaving and bangle industry.

V. Poor welfare and social security measures taken by the state, poor wages of adult parents, small uneconomic land holdings of the parents also lead to the problem of child labour.

VI. Poor legal framework and lack of preventive measures also lead to instances of child labour.

VII. Child labour is more prevalent in certain areas where vulnerable sections like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have higher concentration.

These causes are compounded by systemic failure of government to provide minimum social security net to parents of children who are forced to put their children into child labour. Administrative and civil society apathy and corruption is to also to be blamed equally. Non-implementation of universal education agenda has forced millions of children into work. Lack of education and empowerment put the children into a vicious circle of illiteracy and poverty.

Child labour is also prevalent in rich and industrialised countries, although to a lesser degree as compared to poor and developing nations. According to the 2011 Census, the total number of child labourers, aged 5–14, in India is 4.35 million. However, estimates by private organisations put this number much higher. 2/3rd of them work in agriculture as per ILO and are not considered as in formal employment, but just helping family thus, making them invisible for policy makers.

Neera Burra, in her *Born to Work: Child Labor in India, 1995*, argues that middle class actively promotes child labour in search of cheap domestic help. Similarly, according to Niti Mishra, girls are given more preference as child labour due to their adaptability to household chores and suitability to various industries. For example, *Bidi* industry in Tamil Nadu has predominantly girl child labourers. Mayron Weiner considers lack of education as the biggest cause behind child labour as work is seen as more rewarding than education. Utsa Patnaik on the other hand, puts *economics of child labour* as the biggest factor for its existence.

There are two opinions on the question of continuance or banning of child labour in India. One group thinks that child labour should be banned since it is detrimental to physical and mental health of the child and is against the Directive Principles of the Constitution of India. The other group considers abolition of poverty as a pre-condition for abolition of child labour. Immediate blanket ban on child labour may not even be possible in a developing country like India where it cannot be backed by adequate resources. It may lead to undesirable consequences like child prostitution and malnourishment. So, rehabilitative measures like provisioning of proper educational and nutritional facilities along with banning it are necessary. A part of responsibility also lies with corporate sector which produces such goods which are made by employing child labour and partly with consumers who consume those goods.

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The Government of India has also adopted a new National Policy on Children in 2013. A National Labour Policy is already there in place since 1987 in accordance with the constitutional mandate. Child Labour has been banned since 1986 by a Parliamentary Act on recommendation of Gurupadswamy Committee. Article 24 of the Constitution also prohibits Child Labour. SC ordered a blanket ban in 2006. In 1992, India ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which implies that India will ensure wide awareness on the issues of the children among the various governmental and the non-governmental agencies. SC, in *Sivakasi PIL Case*, issued detailed guidelines on this matter. National Commission on Protection of Child Rights has also been formed to take care of child rights and strengthen the legislative and executive framework.

Slums and Deprivation in Urban Areas

The Government of India, for the purpose of the implementation of various schemes related to urban development, has defined a slum area as *a slum area means any area where such dwellings predominate, which by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design of buildings, narrowness and faulty arrangement of street, lack of ventilation, lack of sanitation facilities, inadequacy of open spaces and community facilities or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morale.*

WHY SLUMS ARISE

The National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, has recorded that the emergence of slums is essentially the product of three forces –

I. Demographic dynamism of a city attracting more people from the rural areas offering greater potential for employment.

II. A city's incapacity to meet the rising demand for housing.

III. The existing urban land policies, which prohibit the access of the poor to the urban land market.

Historically, Lewis Mumford and Fredrich Engels attribute the birth of slums to the rise of industrial cities and factory system. Wages in new industries were poor and the migrated people couldn't afford living in high cost houses. Two World Wars, during which building activities were sharply curtailed, also added to the slum problem. As urban space spreads, land and housing becomes even more expensive and it helps in further expansion of slums. Sometimes, a slum is the consequence of blight in the old parts of the city. At times, a slum is inherited in the form of an old village or a haphazardly growing locality within the extended territorial limits of a town.

The Task Force on Housing and Urban Development appointed by the erstwhile Planning Commission of India, estimated nearly 23 per cent people living in the urban area or over 3 crore 60 lakh persons as the urban slum dwellers. Among all the states, Maharashtra has the highest number of slum dwellers.

Slums are important from sociological study point of view for one more reason. Slums are also related to incidences of poverty. There are two predominant views on this. One is given by Oscar Lewis in his *culture of poverty* thesis. According to this theory, people are poor in slums not only for the reason that they lack resources, but also because of the fact that they acquire a poverty-perpetuating value system. The idea came under criticism in 1970s, but has been revived recently due to increased attention on cultural factors on socio-economic condition of the members of society. Harding and Lamont, in their

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article *Reconsidering Culture and Poverty, 2010*, examined many empirical studies and concluded that cultural values indeed play a significant role in fighting and escaping poverty.

The second explanation that establishes linkages between poverty and slums is the *domination theory*. It argues that the disadvantaged condition of the slum dwellers is forced upon them by the dominant sections of the society to subjugate slum dwellers for their own self interests. The slum dwellers consist of a predominant migrant population alien to the community. They are outsiders whose degradation doesn't emotionally disturb the dominant community. As a result, the leftover and the rejected occupations are taken up by the immigrant slum dwellers. The nature of these jobs provides no avenues of significant mobility and the slum dwellers remain poor in perpetuity.

Some of the common characteristics of slums are –

I. Dilapidated and poor houses in slums are made of poor design and scrap materials. These are often raised on unauthorised land.

II. High density of population and housing leads to over-crowding and congestion. One room is often used for all purposes of domesticating living. According to William Whyte, in his Street Corner Society study of Boston city, overcrowding is one of the key characteristic of slums.

III. Slums are characterised by lack of public utilities and facilities, such as, drainage, sanitation, water taps, electric light, health centres, common latrines and public parks.

IV. Slums have a culture of their own, which Marshall Clinard, in his *Sociology of Deviant Behavior, 1974*, has termed as *a way of life*. It is said to be largely an outcome of the culture of the lower class and which Lewis has referred to as the *culture of poverty*.

V. The slum-dwellers are functionally integrated with the mainstream of the city life, yet the high incidence of deviant behavior such as crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, drug use, beggary, illegitimacy, illicit distilling of liquor, gambling and other social evils are associated with slum areas.

VI. Though the slum-dwellers are functionally integrated to the city life, apathy and social isolation characterise a slum. It means that slums are largely subjected to neglect and apathy of the larger community. These areas are looked down upon and considered inferior.

VII. Composition of slum dwellers has been studied by Victor D'Souza and Ghanshyam Shah among others and they have found that Scheduled Castes have higher representation among the slum dwellers as compared to their representation in the wider population.

A R Desai and Devadas Pillai, in their work *Slums and Urbanization, 1990*, attribute rise in slum population as a failure of welfare state. According to them, though constitution guarantees various rights, state has failed to provide adequate housing source of livelihood. They suggest a radical solution in the form of nationalisation of urban land resources.

According to Gita Dewan Verma, in her *Slumming India*, 2000, slums are not only a material issue, but they are also a moral issue. They reflect the apathy of larger society and the governments. Urban land is used for non-essential glamorous uses like golf courses, leisure parks and farm houses with tacit government support. She also suggests generation of community feeling among those who live in slums so that problems can have long term and sustainable solutions through self-help.

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Rise of slums is also viewed in functional terms as they provide many low-cost services to the rich and the middle class. Slums also provide low costs dwelling place in cities to the migrants who have no other places to live.

Slums are not only a phenomenon of less developed countries, but are also equally present in developed countries. Michael Harington says that in the face of rapid industrial-urban growth in the technologically advanced and capitalistic country like the United States of America, there are such slums, which at times are referred to as the *other America*.

Because of the absence of *settled* property rights of the kind seen elsewhere, slums are the natural breeding ground for *dadas* and strongmen who impose their authority on the people who live there. Control over slum territory becomes the natural stepping stone to other kinds of extra-legal activities, including criminal and real estate-related gangs.

Various approaches to deal with slums problems have been suggested in the past like slum clearance, economic development of slums and slum improvement. They suffer from the limitations of their own. Slum clearance infringes on the right to life and is fraught with other problems like displacement of thousands of inhabitants. One of the greatest obstacles in effective implementation of the slum-clearance program has been the lack of adequate funds. Vote bank politics also promote their existence and no effective mechanisms are deployed to check their spread. Similarly, the idea of subsidised housing projects will make cities more attractive and the number of poor rural people arriving in cities will become difficult to handle. Possible long term solutions can be in the form of upliftment of rural areas, so that migration is stopped, and decentralisation of urban areas, so that burden on economic resources can be lowered and cost of living is reduced.

Response of state to tackle the problem of slums has been in form of legislative and policy measures. Rent Control Act, 1948, Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act, 1976, Pradhanmantri Awas Yojna of 2016, Housing for all by 2022 and Property Rights to Slum Dwellers Act, 2011 are some of the concrete steps in this direction. There have also been many rehabilitation schemes from time to time including regularisation of the slums in form of organised colonies. NGOs are also working in various areas like education of slum children and awareness about female hygiene. But results of these efforts have been mixed at the best.

Question Bank

1. Trace the path of evolution of modern industry in India. How was it different from the evolution of industries in the West?
2. What were the factors which led to modernisation of industrial sector of India?
3. After Independence, India followed a pattern of state sponsored industrialisation. What were the reasons behind taking such a path?
4. How has the industrial sector changed in the post-liberalisation era? Also discuss the impact of liberalisation of Indian economy on industrial class structure.
5. Was India always a rural society? Describe the process of ruralisation and the current process of re-urbanisation.

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6. Rapid urbanisation is antithetical to sustainable development. Comment.
7. The Century we live in will be an urban Century as the global average of populations living in urban areas is already close to fifty per cent. What are the challenges that urbanisation will pose to Indian cities?
8. Is urbanisation desirable? If yes, why? If no, substantiate your arguments with the help of alternative models.
9. Second decade of the 20th Century was a landmark decade in the history of trade union movements in India. Substantiate this argument with the help of specific incidents.
10. Describe the process of growth of working class in India with important landmarks.
11. Has the neo-liberal economic architecture weakened the process of workers' mobilisation?
12. What is informal labour? What are the reasons for its growth in the recent times? What are the various types of insecurities from which the informal labour suffers in India?
13. How have globalisation and liberalisation affected the informal sector of Indian economy? What are the various steps that the Government of India has taken to improve the condition of this sector?
14. Examine the relationship between the informal sector and weakening of working class mobilisation in India.
15. What is child labour? What is the current status of employment of children in India? Is there a blanket ban on employment of persons below 18 years in any type of occupation?
16. Child labour is a crime which is committed by a few, but the whole society is responsible. Comment.
17. Slums are a reflection of inequality in society. What are the reasons for their growth in India?
18. What are the salient features of the current slum development and rehabilitation policy of Government of India?
19. How are deprivation patterns in the urban areas different from deprivation patterns in the rural areas.

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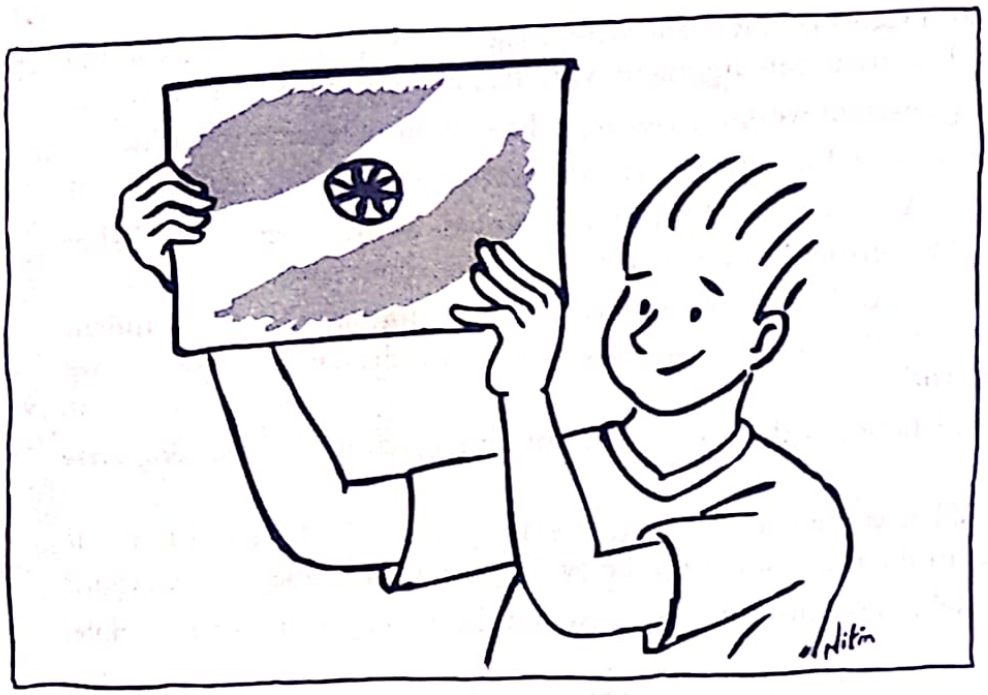
Politics and Society

22



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Know about the concepts of nationalism, democracy and citizenship in Indian context
2. Understand the concept of regionalism and decentralisation of power
3. Understand the various perspective on Secularisation in India

Democracy was not a new buzzword for India when it got Independence. It has been practiced here on and off for thousands of years in one form or the other right since the ancient republics of North India. But modern democracy was different from those older forms as it brought many new liberal ideas like – secularism, equality, fundamental rights and rule of law. Ideas of nationalism and secularism were interpreted differently by different sections. Many of these ideas were against some established traditional dogma and institutions. For example, new panchayats had a different agenda than the similar older community based organisations and the two often came into conflict also. Diversity of India was its strength, but it also posed a challenge when it came to reconciling regional differences. At the grassroot level, when the old order was challenged, it also led to resistance at times. With all the hiccups, Indian democracy has pulled off a feat which no other country has been able to do so far; the distinction of being the most diverse and the largest democracy in the world.

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Nation, Democracy, Citizenship, Political Parties and Pressure Groups

The concepts of nation, democracy, citizenship, political parties and pressure groups have been discussed in detail in the first part of this book. Hence, we will touch only upon the specific aspects of these topics. As discussed earlier, nation as an entity in itself is considered a very recent phenomenon by socio-political thinkers. Most of the social thinkers are of the view that India emerged as a nation only as a reaction to the colonial rule. T K Oommen has, however, identified seven ways in which the idea of nation is understood in Indian subcontinent, of which, the first three were pre-Independence conceptualisations, the fourth gave rise to partition and the last three describe the post-partition nation-state of India. First of all, India as a nation was understood in terms of an ancient civilisational entity which comprised of a well-defined geography and a predominant Hindu culture. Secondly, some described India as a fusion of culture; primarily of Hinduism and Islam. Akbar's creation of a synthesis of religions is taken as a shining example of it. Third, way of understanding was conceptualising the nation as a political entity. This was in a reaction to the colonial rule. Fourth, religion was propounded as the sole basis of nation. Radical Hindu and Muslim organisations started to peddle this idea and it ultimately led to the partition of India. Fifth, India as a nation is conceptualised as a territorial entity with specific cultural ethos. The territory is clearly delineated in the Constitution as well. Sixth, India is viewed as a nation of many languages. The Eight Schedule also recognises this fact by providing constitutional status to almost every major language of India. Seventh, India is a viewed as a synthesis of the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition.

Nationalism in India is viewed from different lenses by different social thinkers. Most of the political thinkers consider it desirable for the integrity of a nation state. According to Amartya Sen, nationalism in India borders on religious revivalism as national identity is often hijacked by majority groups. Such tendencies limit individual freedom as well. Andre Beteille, on the other hand, plays down the very concept of nationalism and advocates for a re-focus on pressing problems like poverty, hunger and illiteracy. In a diverse country like India, over-emphasis on a single absolute national identity can be problematic as such a single identity can never be all inclusive. As a result, some groups may grow suspicious of such efforts and shun the nationalism project all together. Ramchandra Guha suggests a way out of this situation by allowing people to construct their own ideas of nationalism like – cultural nationalism, cricket nationalism, Kargil nationalism and tsunami-victims-support nationalism.

Constitution of India defines the character of Indian democracy in form of a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic. We will not dwell into the nitty-gritty of these attributes of India as a nation-state. Indian democracy in itself is a unique institution as it is the largest and the most vibrant in the world. Factors like political corruption, illiteracy, casteism and regionalism have nagged the Indian democracy, but it is too resilient to be significantly affected by these. Political parties in India have played a significantly positive role in conserving and promoting the democracy in India. At the time of Independence, illiteracy was rampant and universal adult franchise was predicted to prove a failure by some Western naysayers. But people of India have not only proved their democratic capabilities elections after elections, but have also reposed their faith in democracy despite changing ground situations. Similar support was received from the armed forces and judiciary as well.

Political parties in India operate at two levels; state and federal level. Parties which operate at federal or multi-state level are also often called national parties (Election Commission has guidelines regarding

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this) and there are around seven of them. In 2016, the total number of registered parties was more than 1760, with seven national parties, 48 state parties and more than 1700 unrecognised parties. Political parties generally register themselves with the Election Commission of India and registered parties are upgraded as recognised national or state level parties, based upon certain objective criteria delineated by the Election Commission. Political parties in India serve several functions also. They mobilise political opinion, serve as media of communication in parliament, and raise social and economic issues with the government in power. India witnessed a stable political system for almost two decades after Independence, but later, coalition culture emerged. It also led to decline of party system as compromises and under the table political deals became the accepted political practices. But one positive outcome of the coalition culture was the promotion of a more inclusive politics as a result of growth of a vibrant multi-party system. There are some other imperfections also that are associated with the working of party system in India. They are often accused of promoting dynasty politics, casteism, corruption and communalism apart from promoting vote and note bank politics.

MERRIAM AND MUNRO: FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

They enunciated five crucial functions of political parties in a parliamentary democracy like India –

I. They make the working of parliamentary government possible as the political parties organise the representatives of people on party lines. In the absence of political parties, the elected representatives may work at cross purposes and can make the formation of a government, or even a meaningful opposition, an impossible task.

II. Political parties formulate public policies after winning the elections on the basis of their election manifesto.

III. In a country like India, where there are huge levels of illiteracy, political parties mobilise public opinions through simple symbols and local leadership. They enhance the political consciousness of the common man and also make him or her aware of the economic, social, and political condition of the country as well his or her rights.

IV. Political parties, especially the larger national parties, provide stability in the country like India where parochial forces like regionalism, casteism and factionalism have destabilising tendencies.

V. Political parties also serve as a recruiting point of future leaders. They provide an ideological basis to which such leaders are attracted.

Pressure groups in India have also stood up well in their niche space. Initially, the voluntary sector in India was slow to take off for various reasons. One was the domination of the state in all spheres and second was the lack of institutional capacities. 1980s saw the significant growth of voluntary sector and pressure groups as state was seen to abandon the developmentalism and neo-liberal forces arrived in the democratic arena. Over the years, as the fundamental socio-economic problems like poverty, inequality and deprivation persisted, state also started to suffer from some legitimacy deficit. A realisation also dawned upon various sections that resource distribution, in a society like India, is a zero-sum game and each group has to fight for its legitimate share. As a result, a diverse set of pressure groups like those based on business, caste, religion, region, occupation and interest have emerged. They influence politics without entering into politics. Nowadays, the pressure groups in India operate at more subtle levels and backdoor political lobbying is widespread. Indian pressure groups operate in a different milieu than their Western counterparts and are also vulnerable to parochialism. Many a times, such groups lack internal democracy and they follow unconstitutional means as well.

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Social and Political Elite

Elite are those who excel. Elites are not synonymous with power and wealth per se, rather, these are found in possession of elites due to their personal qualities, positions and affiliations.

Social elites are those who hold positions of prestige, power or influence due to their *status* in society. Status may be by virtue of birth, caste, lineage, knowledge, behaviour and wealth. Political elites derive their position due to the *power to influence* that they possess. Political elites usually have their unique position due to their numerical strength, their lineage, party affiliation, social linkages, and position in government. In traditional India, political elite belonged to certain social groups namely *Kshatriyas*, royal nobility, kings, priestly class, etc. It was mainly authoritarian and feudal. Change in elite structure takes place as the rulers change and ideology changes. For example, priestly class played little role during the time of Akbar, but during the Sultanate period, its role was immense. When democracy was adopted post-independence, the nobility also lost its relevance after consolidation of princely states. Composition of social elite is further altered as society moves towards a rational organisation based on egalitarian and achievement based structure.

In a society like India where kinship ties are still very strong, casteism is still played as an electoral card. As democratic system gave power to numbers, representatives of dominant castes assumed powerful roles. Emergence of new political leadership after decline of Congress in 1960s marked a change in composition of political elite as old guard made way for the new one. Despite significant changes, political elite in India is still characterised by nepotism, dynastic rule, personality cults, regionalism and casteism.

Social and political elite have different composition in rural and urban areas. In rural areas, the elite consists of well to do peasantry, ritually superior community, dominant castes and trading class. Politics has become competitive where all sections of society vie for a share. Most of the people participating in politics in a village are from dominant caste. Kinship and caste play an important role in rural politics. Education has also assumed an important role in rural leadership as more and more youth from rural background are exposed to the new ideas and beliefs. Rural elite leadership today doesn't come from ritually higher placed castes alone, it is becoming more secular. Elites in rural areas now come from all socio-economic backgrounds. For example, in Northern states of Haryana and Western UP, Jats and some other landed OBCs are new rural elite.

In urban areas, social elite now consists of mainly professional service class. Achieved status is the primary factor in determining the status in urban areas where opportunities are linked with personal efforts. Industrialisation has changed the composition of social elite in urban areas. Another contributing factor is the changing consumption habits. Business and trade leaders are gaining prominent position. Urban areas also have an advantage of education and those who make a mark in different fields of education emerge as new leaders.

Regionalism and Decentralisation of Power

Regionalism is defined as a phenomenon in which people's loyalties becomes region centric. Regionalism is an ideology which is based upon a number of factors like – language, race, religion, geography and

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so on and is usually a result of *diversity* and *disparity.* Interregional conflict is usually shaped around insider-outsider complex; a complex that nurtures nativism and *son-of-the-soil* ideology.

Regional movement is an identity movement seeking special privileges, protection, and concessions from the state. It is a movement for regional self-governance. In other words, it is a movement and ideology which aims to culminate itself into formation of a state, i.e., a movement seeking pluralisation and federalisation of existing polity and political process.

Region-state conflict usually takes place in the institutional structure of state system, wherein, a region questions the distributive policy of the state as discriminatory, exploitative and unfavourable to the overall well-being of the concerned regional community. It is from this perceived sense of deprivation, neglect and *internal colonialism* that the people of a particular region organise themselves into a movement. Its objectives may be accommodative, protectionist, welfarist, autonomist, separatist and secessionist. While regionalism is decentralising, nationalism is centralising. This is also a possible source of opposition between the two.

According to Harihar Bhattacharyya, in his *Federalism and Regionalism in India, 2005,* regionalism in India is rooted in India's diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, and religions. It is also encouraged by the geographical concentration of these identity markers in particular regions, and fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation.

Regionalism is not new, it is a pre-independence phenomenon. Politics of regionalism started with implementation of constitutional reforms of 1909, 1919 and 1935. Establishment of Justice Party and Akali Dal were the early signs of this trend.

Establishment of a democratic government also fuelled higher expectation and their non-fulfilment led to feeling of relative deprivation. Vested interests of former princes and rulers also articulated through ideology of regionalism. Reorganisation of states on linguistic lines further stoked the fire of regionalism. Many more movements with various aspirations came up ranging from Dravida Movement, agitations by Shiv Sena and so on. Language was perhaps the most often used pillar for expression of regionalism. Religion, economic and administrative, political reasons have also been used as basis of regionalism in the past.

Sociologist Harrison considers that regionalism is a precursor to nationalism. What starts as a regional aspiration will grow into nationalistic aspiration. In India, growth of Tamilian Movement and Khalistan Movement can be seen in this light. Gandhi also saw regionalism as a potential challenge to nationalism and according to him, such sentiments are harmful for a nation. According to Paul Brass, in India, regionalism is a result of social setup where masses drive larger gratification from caste, community and region and not from a pan-Indian identity.

However, contemporary view of regionalism is that it should be studied in a particular context as in the past 70 odd years, context has changed. Though it might be a challenge in 1950, it need not be today. According to Rajni Kothari, it has made federalism more deep rooted in India with the rise of true multi-party politics. Regionalism can also act as a healthy competitive force and hence, can fuel progress.

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IQBAL NARAIN ON REGIONALISM

Iqbal Narain has identified three major types of regionalism (or regional movements) in India –

I. Supra-State Regionalism – Supra-state regionalism is built around the issues of common interest in which group of states form a common political alliance, directed against either the similar alliance of other states or the Union. Supra state regionalism is issue specific. Dravidian movement by southern states is an example.

II. Inter-State Regionalism – Interstate regionalism is coterminous with state boundaries and involves juxtaposing of one or more state identities against another on specific issues, which threaten their interest. River water in general and border dispute in particular are its manifestations. This is very much evident from conflict between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over sharing of Cauvery water, or border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka.

III. Intra-State Regionalism – In this, a regional community is against the state in which they are situated. Intra-state regionalism is aimed at assuring oneself of self-identity and self-development. *Khalistan* Movement was one such example.

Similarly, according to Dipankar Gupta, regionalism may not be necessarily anti-people and anti-nation. Regionalism becomes problematic when it borders on chauvinism and interests of a region are branded as diametrically opposite to interests of other regions. Often scarce resources like water, employment act as catalyst. Examples of anti-North Indians drive by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) in recent times and bitter water disputes among Southern states are manifestation of such malignant regionalism.

So, regionalism can have two aspects –

I. *Functional* – It aims to strengthen roots of federal system and is a device to promote and preserve local cultures, languages, etc.

II. *Dysfunctional* – It has fissioning tendency and can lead to disintegration of the political system and can provoke people against each other. It promotes parochialism.

State's response to regional movements has been varying. We do not find any consistent policy in this regard. However, certain patterns and principles can be discerned in this regard. They are secessionist, demand are not conceded, rather, secessionism is suppressed by all necessary means as in case of Kashmir; central government also doesn't concede those regional demands which are exclusively based upon religious differences; and the demands for the creation of separate linguistic state are not conceded unless such a demand is socially very popular and is economically viable.

Regionalism in its parochial meaning can be dangerous to the hard earned national unity of our multi-cultural society. However, if regionalism is ingrained with positive meaning of regional pride and spirit healthy competition, it can also lead to more diversity, and faster growth and development also.

Decentralisation of power means empowerment of institutions of local governance like Panchayats and Municipalities. Decision making lies with the people in such systems. Local governance as a concept is well known in India since time immemorial. Panchayats in India are historical institutions and were known by different names during different periods. British rulers almost stifled them, except a few

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sporadic efforts like a resolution by Lord Ripon, and no significant steps were taken by the British Raj to promote institutes of local self-governance. During Independence Struggle, they were envisaged by Gandhi as the true realisation of *Swaraj*. After Independence, they were demanded as institutions of local empowerment in a backward nation and many states like Rajasthan took active steps to promote them. Indian Government gave them a serious thought after the failure of the Community Development Program and consequent recommendations of Balwantrai Mehta Committee.

PRIs were given a new identity with the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1992 and at the same time 29 functions were constitutionally devolved on them. Urban bodies were also given constitutional status with the 74th Constitutional Amendment. Constitutional status provided these bodies with some degree of independence and also provided for regular elections. Further, 33 per cent reservation is provided for the women candidates and reservation is also provided for the backward sections like SCs and STs. Thus, PRIs, in their new role, are also seen as instrument of social change and women empowerment. According to Vora and Palshikar, in their *Indian Democracy: Meanings and Practices, 2004*, grassroot politics has led to change in the very nature of Indian politics from *politics of ideology* to *politics of representation*.

Now panchayats have to prepare plans and schemes for economic development, promote schemes that will enhance social justice, help in the devolution of governmental responsibilities especially that of finances to local authorities, implement various government schemes like ICDS and MNREGS.

However, many provisions regarding empowerment of these local bodies are optional in nature and their implementation depends upon the states. As a result, while some states like Kerala have taken active steps in strengthening these bodies, others have refrained from devolving the power on PRIs. Capacity building, manpower and funds still remain the three critical issues from which institutes of local self-governance suffer in India. 13th Finance Commission recommendations were a landmark in this direction as it recommended share of panchayats in the Union Revenue Divisible Pool. 14th Finance Commission took this forward and recommended doubling up of the funds for these institutions and also called for regular submissions of annual accounts by the ULBs and PRIs. The 14th Finance Commission also called for an increase in their *own* revenue, and publication of benchmarks of urban services. Many of the functions which are today performed by the parastatal organisations need to be devolved upon these organisations. According to a 2013 report titled *Strengthening of Panchayats in India: Comparing Devolution across States* by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, different states have performed differently in terms of devolution of four 'Fs; frameworks, funds, functions and functionaries. Some states like Maharashtra, Kerala and Karnataka have done pretty well while others like Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Bihar have not done so well.

While PRIs in theory have emerged as a tool of democratic decentralisation, true empowerment has still to come by. Democratisation is not easy in a society that has had a long history of inequality based on caste, community and gender. In states like Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, voting in Panchayat election is still guided by factors like caste, kinship and family affinity. In many cases, especially in Northern India, castes or *Gotra* panchayats often subvert the working of these institutions. For example, in 2004, in Jhajjar district of Haryana a *Khap* panchayat ordered annulment of the marriage of a girl and boy because they had the same *Gotra*. Situation in other areas is not very different. Dominant castes still have a sway over Panchayat bodies. Women contestants are proxy candidates of their husbands on reserved

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seats. PRIs are marred by administrative and political compulsions also. Devolution of functions has been poor and self-financing is abysmal.

T K Oommen compared the PRI system of Northern and Southern regions of India. In South India, concept of *Gram Sabha* was historically present, so, PRIs in southern states have been more effective in implementation of system of local governance. Further, Hindi belt of North is still ridden by caste conflicts.

According to Gail Omvedt, Dalits have been perpetually considered as vote-bank of dominant rural elite and their rise in power through compulsory reservation is seen as un-acceptable to traditional dominant groups. According to Fernandes, in Tamil Nadu, from 1998 to 2005, 65 cases of atrocities on Dalits have been reported and often tactics like obstruction of Dalits from using franchise, prohibition of them from contesting of elections and putting their houses on fire are used. Similarly, in Bihar, a Dalit woman *Sarpanch* lost her life because she tried to hoist the flag on Independence Day.

PRIs are the only tier of administrative-political hierarchy where direct democracy can be exercised. They are the institutions which offer scope of empowerment of the poorest of the poor, women and other weaker sections. Hence, decentralisation of power, is in fact, a road map to rural development and social change in India.

Secularisation

Describing the process of secularisation, Bryan R Wilson writes that in secularisation process '*the various social institutions gradually become distinct from one another and increasingly free of the matrix of religious assumptions that had earlier informed, inspired and dominated their operation*'. Similar views are expressed by M N Srinivas in *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India, 1952.*

Ours is not a settled society like France or Germany, we are in a transitional stage and therefore, the meaning of or what kind of secularism we shall get will also be dictated by the specific features of this stage. India has a multi religious society and even definition of religion is not fixed. Indian secularism, according to Rajiv Bhargava, is not strict separation of religion and politics, but explained in terms of *principled distance between religion and politics*. Indian society had historically been tolerant towards religious affairs and secularism in the modern sense arrived only during the 19th Century as a part of cultural and religious reform movements. Nationalism, freedom struggle, growth of western education, etc. helped its

SRINIVAS ON SECULARISATION

M N Srinivas had famously defined secularisation as follows *'the term secularisation implies that what was previously regarded as religious is ceasing to be such, and it also implies a process of differentiation which results in the various aspects of society, economic, political, legal and moral, becoming increasingly discrete in relation to each other'*. However, according to him, differentiation does not mean disconnection.

Thus, his definition has two aspects –

I. Notion of religion itself

II. Differentiation of Institutions

He further says, secularisation as a process, has been subsumed in Westernisation which is a much broader term.

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rise. There is also a plurality of view over its definitional and emergence aspects. A liberal plural view was taken by modern nationalists before independence. It called for separation of religion and other institutions and advocated religious pluralism. An *orthodox plural view* was led by like of Gandhiji, Dayanand Saraswati, Ramakrishna Mission, etc. who saw Indian society as secular from beginning due to its marked tolerance. There was Marxist view also which interpreted secularism as disappearance of religion altogether. Our constitutional and parliamentary democratic framework adopts liberal plural view. According to Nehru '*It does not mean a society where religion is discouraged, it means freedom of religion and conscience, including freedom for those who may have no religion.*'

Our secularism is primarily directed against two evils; first, the religious strife between different religious communities and its extreme forms like communal violence and riots; and, secondly, the danger of religious communities overwhelming the state, each with its own view of *good life* and considering it valid for others too. Both arose as a problem in the second half of the 19th Century. It would not be wrong to suggest that the conceptual construct of secularism is adopted in India by way of a solution to the problems, posed by fundamentalism and communalism. Thus, Indian secularism is not a result of a tussle between the Church and the State as in case of Europe, but conceptualised as an anti-dote to twin evils of communalism and fundamentalism. It is more on lines of *sarva dharma sambhava*, rather than on strict *dharm nirpekhsta*. Articles of constitution like Articles 25-28 also stress on freedom of faith and religion, rather than banishing them.

There are other alternate views of the everyday meaning of the word secularism in India. The most common use of secular in everyday language is as the *opposite of communal*. So, a secular person or state is one that does not favour any particular religion over others. Secularism, in this sense, is the opposite of religious chauvinism and it need not necessarily imply antipathy towards religion as such. In terms of the state-religion relationship, this sense of secularism implies equal respect for all religions, rather than separation or distancing. For example, the secular Indian state declares public holidays to mark the festivals of all religions.

Indian version of secularism also poses certain challenges. Supporters of Western notion of secularism accuse state of indulging into religious sphere as state supports many activities like Haj Pilgrim and manage shrines like Tirupati and Vaishnodevi.

Another set of complications is created by the tension between the Indian state's simultaneous commitment to secularism as well as to protection of minorities. The protection of minorities requires that they be given special consideration in a context where the normal working of the political system places them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the majority community. But providing such protection immediately invites the accusation of favouritism or *appeasement* of minorities.

Andre Beteille comments that people of India are *bound more by culture than by constitution*. Religion in India is not just practiced, but it is a part of dress, food and mannerism of people. In words of T N Madan '*religion and secular cannot be separated, in other words, religion cannot be in any meaningful sense privatised.*' According to Ashish Nandy, secularisation and modernisation in India can lead to the revival of the traditional forces in India as modern means of communication also accelerate communal forces. Thus, there is a difference in de-jure secularism as envisaged in constitution and de-facto secularism as practiced by society.

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Question Bank

1. What are the rights and duties that the Indian citizenship confers upon an individual?
2. Write a short note on the evolution and current status of Indian nationalism.
3. Critically evaluate how political parties in India have supported the cause of democracy.
4. How are casteism and communalism impacting the democratic framework of India?
5. Democracy in India is an incomplete agenda as we have achieved political democracy to some extent, but socio-economic democracy is still far away. Discuss in the context of deep rooted socio-economic inequalities that exist in our country.
6. Indirect democracy in India has led to hijacking of democratic institutions by an elite few. Comment.
7. Indian democracy has proved resilient despite a diverse population. What has prevented India going the way some of her neighbours went?
8. Is creation of more number of states promoting regionalism? Is regionalism completely undesirable?
9. Why was the 73rd Constitutional Amendment brought? Why have Panchayats not proved as effective as they were envisaged to be?
10. Many states have made provisions for fifty per cent reservation for women in institutes of local self-governance, but this has not led to immediate rise in their ground level participation. What are the reasons behind this?
11. How have the reservation provisions in the PRIs helped in the upliftment of the depressed sections of society? What are the practical limitations in implementing these provisions?
12. What is the meaning of the term *Sarpanch-pati*? How can this practice be stopped?
13. What role do the dominant castes play in the Panchayat politics? What is the impact of the 73rd Amendment on this process?
14. What role do pressure groups and interest groups play in the Indian politics?
15. How Indian concept of secularisation is different from the western notion of secularisation?
16. What are the factors which are posing a threat to the secular structure of the Indian state? What are the various measures that we as a nation-state have adopted to promote and preserve secular identity of India?
17. Is secularism a weak ideology? If not, then what explains the growth of right wing organisations in India?
18. Pluralism is both a strength and a weakness of the Indian society. Comment.
19. Corruption in public life is the biggest ethical crisis that India faces today. Evaluate this statement keeping in view the social impact of the corruption.

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Social Movements in Modern India

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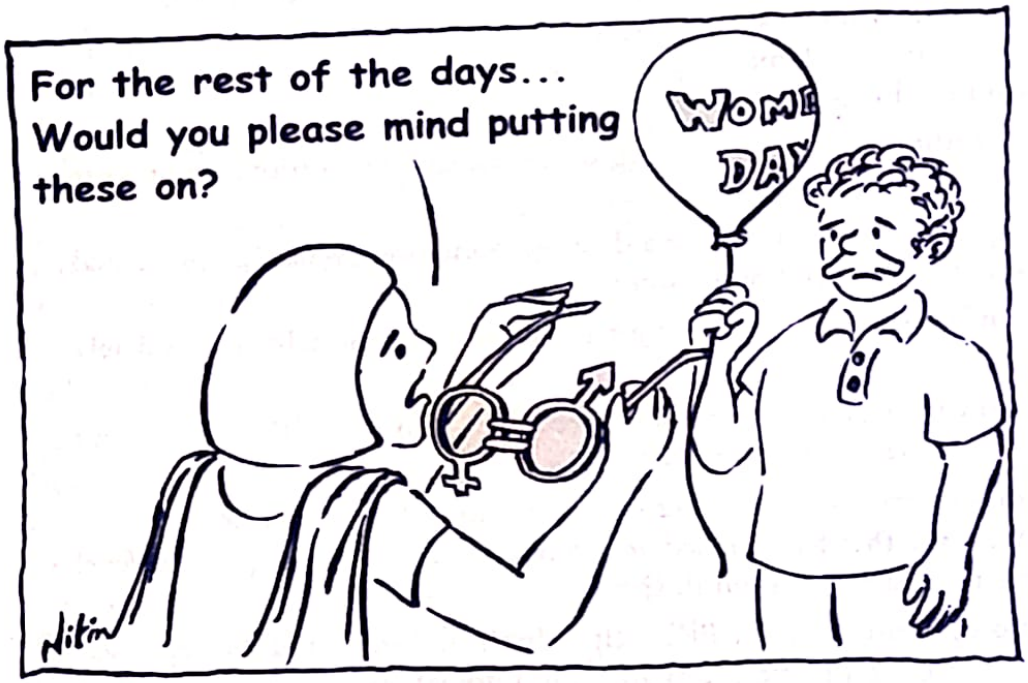

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the origin and development of social movement in India
2. Know about the peasants and farmers movement in India
3. Explain the Dalit Movements of India
4. Study and identify movements

India is a diverse country with many forms of inequalities. When these inequalities are challenged and collective mobilisation happens, social movements take birth. Social movements aim at collective change for the betterment of the aggrieved sections. Some social thinkers describe this collective space in form of a *social movement industry* also. This industry has flourished in India for a long time as our society had numerous fault lines which are highlighted by these social movements. Various forms of discriminations and dissatisfactions provided a fertile ground to this Industry in India. From *Bhakti* movements to modern rights based movements, India seems to have a continuous tradition of social movements. Historically, women, backward classes and tribes have been at the receiving end, and the history of social movements in India is also synonymous with the history of social movements related to these sections. Recently, issues related to quality of life have also come to fore in the Indian social movement industry.

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Nature of Social Movement in India

Social movements in modern India have a multi-dimensional face. They grew as consciousness and communication media grew. Education, political awareness about rights and new means of mobilisation provided a conducive environment for their rise. During the British period, they made their real beginning and they became even more vocal post-independence. Demands and goals varied from time to time as context changed.

According to T K Oommen, in his *Social Movements, 2010*, social movements can be studied from three approaches; historical, psychological and sociological. He used two criteria to differentiate the social movements in the 20th Century India; collectivity type on which the movement is based (biological, civil or primordial) and the type of goals that the movement seeks to achieve (instrumental or symbolic). On the basis of these orientations, he divided the social movement evolution in India into three phases –

I. Colonial Phase (1900-1947)

II. National Building Phase (1948-1989)

III. Contemporary Social Movements (1990-present)

According to Dhanagare, historical method has greater appeal among the sociologists like I P Desai, M S A Rao, P N Mukherji and T K Oommen to arrive at broad generalisations and explanations.

Following the global trends, New Social Movements gained currency in India in 1970s. According to Rajendra Singh, they originate through the grass root politics and are plural in their structure. They are also a response to the overarching systemic structures and a bid to protect the cultural sphere of life. In India also, the middle class is the torchbearer of these movements. Instead of bringing radical and instant change, these movements are symbolic.

Peasants and Farmers Movements

Peasants are conceptually different from farmers, who grow farm produce for commercial purpose and have considerable larger landholdings. Peasants, on the other hand, have smaller land holdings which are mostly of subsistence nature. Peasants may sometimes also do part time labour during leaner season. For this difference, the problems faced by the peasants are different from problems faced by the farmers.

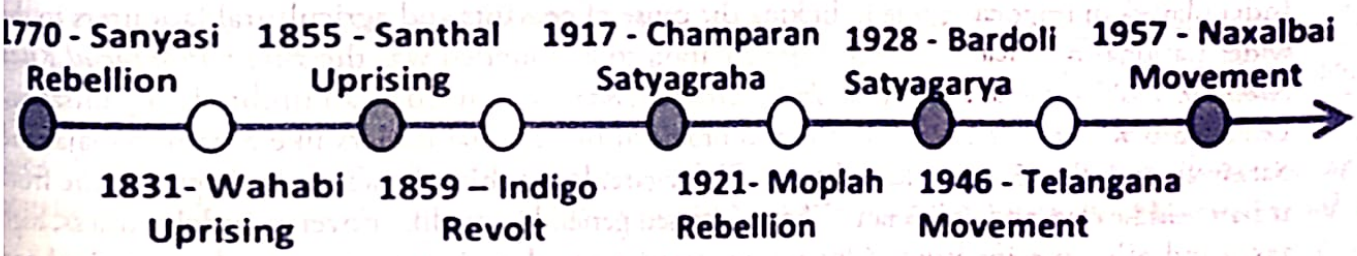

Fig. 23.1 Chronology of Peasant Movements in India

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The term *peasant* in India has multiple meanings. It is viewed as an *underclass* by Anand Chakravorti. It is seen as sharing caste features as per regional variation according to Javed Alam. Further, peasants in different regions have different socio-economic conditions due to different modes of production in different regions; feudal, semi feudal or capitalist. So, peasants in India are not a uniform class as in case of China or Russia. Hence, often their problems are also different. Peasant movements, thus, address the problems of actual cultivators, agricultural labourers and other agrarian artisans.

According to A R Desai, movements prior to independence were predominantly peasant movements, and post-Independence, they were primarily farmers' movements. While peasant movements aim at basic minimum livelihood, farmers' movements demand more. Shift from peasant movements to farmers' movements also underscores a shift to capitalist mode of production.

Loss of traditional rights and introduction of marketisation of land were the changes that led to deterioration of peasantry during British times. Usurious land revenue policies, *begaar* or the unpaid labour, forceful evictions, backwardness of agriculture, famines, forced cultivation of cash crops, restrictions on trade and dumping were some of the reasons that stoked the peasant movements during the British rule.

GAIL OMVEDT ON PEASANT MOVEMENTS

She has classified the peasant movements into four types –

I. Restorative Movements – They included movements like Sanyasi Rebellion and Pagalpanthi Movement which aimed at restoring the old glory apart from addressing the issues related to hardship of peasants.

II. Ethnic Movements – They included movements like Santhal Rebellion and Khond Rebellion which largely targeted colonial taxation polices, but mobilisation was on ethnic lines.

III. Social Banditry – They included movements like Tebhaga Movement and Eka Movement. They were militant and had leaders like Madari Pasi and Sahjanad Sraswati who wanted a radical change in the system.

IV. *Kisan Sabha* Movements – These movements raised peasants' and farmers' issues at the national level and also helped in mobilisation of peasants in mainstream national struggle.

In general, evolution of peasant movements in India can be explained in following stages –

I. *Pre-Kisan Sabha Movements (till 1920s)* – *Zamindari* exploitation, *beggar* or forced cultivation, food scarcity, etc. led to many movements like 24 Pargana Revolt in Bengal, Pabna Revolt and Deccan Revolt. These movements were led by local leaders and were driven by interest ideology. They often fizzled out when goals were met or when they were suppressed by the British.

II. *Post-Kisan Sabha (1920s-1947)* – In this phase, the question of peasants was linked to national cause and the peasants' movements acquired a national character. Communist movement in India played an important role in linking the cause of peasants and agricultural labourers to the wider national movement. The first organisation to be founded was the *Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha in 1929* and in 1936 the *All India Kisan Sabha* was founded as an umbrella organisation. Leadership was from within and was also provided by national leaders like Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and N G Ranga. According to Dhanagare, leadership of these movements came from urban middle class and politicians. They addressed general issues like poverty, indebtedness, high taxes and other specific issues. One unique feature was that they were properly organised and

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they even represented interests of farmers and even small landlords. Kisan Sabha proved to be an umbrella structure and it also boosted peasants' participation in national struggle. Apart from these, certain other movements also arose due to various reasons. Champaran Movement led by Gandhi on the issue of plight of the indigo farmers in Bihar, Bardoli Movement, led by Sardar Patel on the issue of tax relief for the peasants of Gujarat, Tebhaga Movement led by peasants of Bengal on issue of reducing share of land revenue were major movements. Communists also tried to club peasant movements with workers movements as in case of Telangana struggle.

III. *Post-independence, but pre-Green Revolution* – Much of the vigor was forsaken by the agrarian movements with the optimism associated with the state's welfare promises in a newly Independent India. Towering agenda of land reforms also overshadowed such movements. Only meaningful movements during this period were Bhoodan Movement and Gramdaan Movement. They aimed at supplementing government effort in bringing about social change in rural areas by using the strategy of moral persuasion. There were other localised movements also like Land grab movement during the 1960s, launched by CPI cadre in Basti district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. Concerned individuals, civil society organisations, voluntary organisations and NGOs played significant roles in such movements.

IV. *Post-Green Revolution Movements* – Faulty land reforms and unequal benefits of Green Revolution created discontent. Euphoria of independence and optimism with welfare state had also died down. Earliest expression was witnessed in the form of Naxal Movement. People's War Group in Andhra was another similar movement. Leadership was provided by middle class intelligentsia, CPI cadre, as well as from within the movement. Their methods often turned violent and they went for guerilla attacks, parallel courts and burning of records. Reactive measures in form of schemes like TRYSEM and IRDP were launched by the government to assuage the anger and grievances of the peasant class. These violent movements were not successful per se, but they were instrumental in persuading the government for a rethinking on its developmental strategy. Apart from these peasant movements, there were also many farmers' movements which fall under category of *new farmer's movements*. They were driven by interest ideology and they wanted to extract maximum benefit out of the state policies. There was also another stream of movement led by middle class intelligentsia and spirited social workers which clubbed the peasants' cause with the other social issues. *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, led by Medha Patkar, is one of the most important examples of such movements.

Peasant movements, according to Partho Chatterji, were not class movements as they were more guided by regional, ethnic and caste considerations. Peasant movements are also marked by their elasticity and often multiple issues like caste, poverty and linguistic issues are clubbed together. Poor peasants often face dual problems of economic deprivations and social discrimination.

Farmers' movements are conceptually different from Peasants' movements in terms of their organisation, purpose and ideology. They are largely a post Green Revolution phenomenon and emerged in prosperous regions of country and are also called *new farmers' movements*.

Post-Independence, farmers' movements have attracted significant attention. In a globalised and capitalistic mode of production, interests of farmers and peasants are often at crossroad as often

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capitalist farmers have peasants and labourers in a sub-ordinate and exploitative relationship. Further, rising income divide among the two has also created larger class divide.

Farmers' movements are also viewed differently by different scholars. According to Harrington, they are harmonious combination of environmental and peasant's right movements. Many other sociologists view them in the form of interest groups which are trying to extract their share of benefits. Dhanagare considers them as class movements and essentially capitalist movements. Paul Brass, on the other hand, puts them into the category of *New Social Movements* and considers them as charged against state and addressing a lot of other issues including gender and environmental issues. Gail Omvedt views them as a reaction to the state-market collusion and exploitations and they include all types of farmers' and not just affluent farmers' movements.

Success of Green Revolution made agriculture a commercially profitable activity for a section of rich farmers. They had their own agenda to retain agriculture as a profitable activity. So, they had specific demands and wanted concessions from state. They were mainly from dominant castes and had their own self-interest like rise in MSP, free electricity, water and subsidised fertilizers. Another accusation that farmers make is that they are treated as secondary to urban population and that government, in its bid to keep food supply cheaper to urban areas, has deliberately lowered the prices.

FARMERS' VS PEASANTS' MOVEMENTS

Farmers' movements are different from peasants' movements as –

I. Farmers' movements have wider resource base as compared to peasants' movements.

II. Peasants' movements address the issues of absolute deprivation, but farmers' movements address the issue of *relative deprivation*

III. Farmers' movements act like interest groups and are generally organised.

IV. Farmers' movements use new means like Rasta Roko, Rail Roko and agitations to compel government to agree upon their demands.

V. Farmers' mobilisations have been by and large open and non-violent, in contrast with characteristic unrest and conflicts associated with peasants movements in feudalistic agrarian systems.

Earlier, farmers' movements were led by communist leadership. But later, they formed organisations like Bhartiya Kisan Union led by Mahendra Singh Tikait in Northern India and Shetkari Sanghthan led by Sharad Joshi group in Maharashtra. Leadership was provided from within and often membership was from the dominant castes like *Jats* of Haryana, and *Jats* and *Yadavs* of western UP. According to Vibha Arora, in her article *Politics of Class(ness) in the Farmers Movement in India, 2001*, farmers movements in the post-Independence India emerged in the late 1970s and peaked in the late 1980s. They occasionally resurfaced in 1993 and in mid-1997 in the post-liberalisation period. Their rise is explained by the fact that Green Revolution and new farm technologies led to increase in productivity, but farm incomes didn't rise due to low market prices of farm price and high cost of farm inputs. They have emerged in the economically developed rural regions of India like in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Apart from physical mobilisation, such organisations and associations are now acting as pressure groups also. Their influence has ranged from organising demonstrations to withholding crops from the market to a refusal to pay outstanding utility bills and loans. They played a key role in the overthrow of the incumbent government in the 1989 elections. Pan-India farm loan waiver

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when United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government came into power in 2008 is another example of their clout.

In the post-Independence period, farmers were mobilised along following broad issues –

I. Lack of implementation of the land reforms.

II. Green Revolution and the rising disparities.

III. Non-access to institutional credit and usurious money lending from private lenders.

IV. Demand for MSP, free water and electricity.

V. Draught, dependency on rain and non-access to irrigation facilities.

VI. Lack of social security.

VII. There were also many local Issues. Farmers' agriculture related issues are compounded by local issues. For example, in caste wars in Bihar, invariable victims are poor farmers.

However, in the wave of new farmer's movements, interests of poor peasants and labourers are grossly ignored. Ironically, they also become the part of same farmers' movement with which their interests are almost diagonally opposite. Their demands for higher wages are often conveniently ignored and whenever there is a movement asking for a rise in agricultural wages, it is sometimes met with violence from the rich farmers and the landlords.

According to T K Oommen, the issues of farmers' and peasants' mobilisation have changed drastically over the time. The leadership of the peasants' movement no longer gives the call of *land to the tiller* as access land itself a scarcity now. Similarly, anti-tenancy voice has also practically lost all its steam as the term *tenant* today includes a variety of land owners whose interests often diverge. Communist parties in India have also ceased to talk of a *proletarian revolution* by the peasant class. Peasants movements barely address the cause of the deprived sections like Dalits and Adivasis while taking up the agrarian issues.

Farmers' strong lobby has also borne fruits in form of free electricity in states like Punjab, higher MSP than the statutory committees actually recommend and so on. Today, such movements have also mobilised support against wider issues like WTO, globalisation, retail FDI, MNCs and Contract Farming and GM Seeds. USA provided annual subsidies of around $57,901 per farmer as compared to mere $99 support that the Indian government provided in 2016, but still the developed countries want the subsidies in developing countries to go away. Farmers' groups are thus, taking their movements to a global level now.

In recent times, a serious crisis has emerged in the field of Indian agriculture in form of starvation deaths and farmers' suicides. Largest numbers of starvation deaths are still routinely reported from the backward regions of the country, especially Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and now increasingly from Rajasthan. The trend of suicides, generally prompted by heavy indebtedness, crop failures, or inability to find a market for the produce, is noticed even among the well-to-do farmers in the agriculturally developed areas of Punjab, Maharashtra and Karnataka. In Vidharbha region of Maharashtra, there were enormous protests from farmers as the region became notorious for farmer's suicide. This is a wakeup call for the policy makers, and it is a time to have a re-look at the idea of Green Revolution and to bring it back in a new avatar with a focus on traditionally neglected areas like dry land farming and improving farmers' income in backward regions.

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Women's Movement

Historically, women in India have suffered from various discriminations. They have been oppressed under a system of structural hierarchies and under injustices in a patriarchal system. Orthodox priests used to disallow them to read the holy texts, they used to be burnt alive on the pyres of their husbands, they were forced to wear a veil, and they were exchanged as a commodity in lieu of dowry. Some of these practices are still followed. Women are still not allowed to enter in the sanctum sanctorum of the places like Sabarimala temple in Kerala. Female foeticide is another modern day evil that still haunts Indian society. In this background, women's movements began to take shape in India in a bid to ensure that women in India enjoy equal rights, and are freed from the orthodoxies of the past.

The women's question arose in modern India as a part of the nineteenth century middle class social reform movements. The nature of these movements varied from region to region. They are often termed as middle class reform movements because many of the early reformers were from the newly emerging western educated Indian middle class. They were inspired by the democratic ideals of the modern west and by a deep pride in their own traditions of the past.

Among the pioneers of women's movements, Ranade and Ram Mohun Roy belonged to one kind of nineteenth century upper caste and middle class social reformers, Jyotiba Phule came from the class of social reformers who came from a socially excluded caste and his attack was directed against both caste and gender discrimination. Apart from these nascent feminist visions, there were a large number of women's organisations that arose both at the all India level and local levels in the early twentieth century. And then began the participation of women in the national movement itself. As a result, women's rights were made a part and parcel of the nationalist vision. In 1931, the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress issued a declaration on the Fundamental Rights of Citizenship in India, whereby, it committed itself to women's equality.

After Independence, many constitutional and legal measures awarded de jure equal status to women and as a result, women's movements were placated for many years. Two decades after Independence, women's issues re-emerged in the 1970s. In the 19th Century reform movements, the emphasis had been on the backward aspects of tradition like sati, child marriage and the ill treatment of widows. In the 1970s, the emphasis was on *new* issues like the rape of women in police custody, dowry murders, representation of women in popular media, gender inequality, political participation and the gender related consequences of unequal development. As a result, law was a major site for reform in the 1980s and thereafter, especially, when it was discovered that many laws of concern to women had not been changed since the 19th Century.

As we enter the 21st Century, new sites of gender injustice are emerging. Declining sex ratio, sexual harassment at work place, unequal representation in legislatures and other bodies, etc. are new issues in this Century.

Women's Movement in Pre-Independence Period

In India, the feminine force has been recognised since thousands of years ago as *Shakti*. Some of the earliest movements like Bhakti Movement saw active participation of many women saints like Mirabai, Akka Mahadevi and Andal. Women's movements began in the real sense only during the British period when the old ideas came in conflict with the new ideals of society. Women's movement in colonial India

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had their beginning through the efforts of the enlightened men themselves. Later, they also developed strong links with the nationalist movement. The participation of women in India's freedom struggle was significant, especially in Gandhian movements.

The first phase of women's movement during the colonial period was initiated by the educated men who were influenced by the modern ideas of equality and emancipation. Keshab Chandra Sen, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others provided this initial impetus. Under Brahmo Samaj, education of women was seen as the major instrument to improve women's position. Keshab Chandra Sen stressed the need for educating women at home and government support was sought for this purpose. An inter-caste marriage was also solemnised under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj. Efforts of these early reformers resulted in the passing of Anti-Sati Legislation in 1829 and Civil Marriage Act, 1872 which permitted inter-caste marriage and divorce. Prarthna Samaj in 1869 formed the Bombay Widow Reforms Association which arranged the first widow remarriage in 1869. Two leaders of the *Prarthana Samaj*, R G Bhandarker and N G Chandravarkar, later became the Vice-chancellors of the first Women's University set up by Karve in 1916 in Bombay.

Similar movements began within the Islamic community in the late nineteenth Century. However, emphasis on *purdah* system and slow spread of education among women delayed the development of a progressive movement to improve the opportunities for Muslim women. People like Begum of Bhopal, Syed Ahmad Khan, Sheikh Abdullah in Aligarh and Karmat Hussain in Lucknow spearheaded a movement to improve women's education. In 1916, Begum of Bhopal formed the All-India Muslim Women's Conference. Among other religious communities also, similar efforts were made. Stri Zarthosti Mandal (Parsi Women's Circle) was a Parsi organisation which had its primary agenda as educational upliftment of Parsi women.

Second phase of women's movement during colonial period was led by the women themselves. After World War 1, the picture changed significantly and women's organisations become even broader based and had a pan-India agenda. Cause of women was also linked to the idea of swaraj. Participation of women in national movement became wider under the leadership of Gandhiji. Sarojini Naidu, Lado Rani Zutshi, Rani Gaidinliu, Kamala Nehru, Hansa Mehta, Anantikabai Gokhale, Rukmini Lakshmipaty, Lilavati Munshi, Durgabai Deshmukh, Begum of Bhopal and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, to name just a few of thousands of women who came in the open and participated. Women's leadership in the nationalist phase, however, emerged from a small section of the urban, middle-class, who had its education in English and was invariably, in some way, linked to movements or organisations in the west.

The issues raised by the nascent women's movements were –

I. Equal voting rights and political participation. The Indian National Congress, in its Calcutta session of 1917, which was presided over by Annie Besant, supported the demand of votes for women and so did the Muslim League. As a result of their efforts, from 1920, provincial legislatures started giving voting rights to women, starting with Travancore. Government of India Act, 1935, further widened their voting rights.

II. Reformation of personal laws was another major demand. As a result of their efforts, Sarda Act was enacted in 1929 and it raised the marriageable age. This was a major victory on personal

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law front. Their sustained efforts also led to passage of Hindu Law Code Bills, 1950 after independence which recognised property rights of women.

III. Banning social evils like child marriage, promoting widow re-marriage and education were other perennial demands of the women's movements.

Many women's only organisations also emerged after the First World War. Women's Indian Association (WIA) was one such pioneering organisation and was established in 1917 in Madras. Initially, it had local membership from Tamil women community and local British women with primary agenda of promoting female education. Membership of the WIA was open to both Indians and Europeans. The founders of WIA were Annie Besant, Dorothy Jinarajadasa, and Margaret Cousins, and secretaries were Mrs Malati Patwardhan and Mrs Ammu Swaminathan. The WIA played a key role in pressurising government for voting rights for women and, in fact, it was the first organised effort in this direction. National Council of Women in India (NCWI) was another significant organisation and it was a national branch of the International Council of Women. The members of NCWI were women of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta who had network for their various clubs and association to the International council of women. NCWI was led by Mehribai Tata.

All-India Women's Conference (AIWC) was, however, the most significant women's organisation in the pre-Independence India. It was established in 1926. Initially, AIWC was concerned with women's education related issues, but later, it started to venture into the larger issues. The most important achievement of its movement was enactment of Child Marriage Reform Act 1929 or Sarda Act. Other women's organisations that flourished during that period were Desh Sevika Sangh, Nari Satyagraha Samiti, Mahila Rashtriya Sangh, Ladies Picketing Board, Stri Swarajya Sangh and Swayam, and they played a key role in organising the mass boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.

With active support of Congress, Gandhi and other nationalist leaders, women took active part in the nationalist freedom struggle. Organisations like AIWC, NCWI, etc. helped in pan-India mobilisation of women. According to Maitrayee Chaudhuri, in her *Feminism in India: Issues in Contemporary Indian Feminism*, 2005 – '*Women's participation in the struggle for freedom developed their critical consciousness about their role and rights in independent India. This resulted in the introduction of the franchise and civic rights of women in the Indian constitution.*'

Women's Movements in Post-Independence Era

In post-independent India, the women's movement was divided, as the common enemy, foreign rule, was no longer there. Many of the Muslim members went over to Pakistan. Some of the women leaders now formally joined the Indian National Congress and other political parties and held positions of power as Ministers, Governors and Ambassadors. Further, in the post-Independence period, constitutional provisions and social legislations for women, planned economic development and social change affected women's movement significantly. As result of this complacent environment, women again withdrew from public life and the debate on women's issues also faded out from the public arena. However, soon it was realised that in a democratic setup, women's movements have to become more organised and have to even acquire a political shape. With rising participation of women in economic and social spheres, they came to terms with the social reality of discrimination, and stage was set for rejuvenation of women's movements. As a result, many women who were dissatisfied with the status

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quo joined struggles for the rural poor and industrial working class through movements such as the *Tebhaga* Movement in Bengal and the Telangana Movement in Andhra Pradesh.

Turbulent 1970s saw the real beginning of these movements as they raised issues that were specifically concerned with women alone and not just social issues. United Nations declared 1975-85 as the *International Decade of the Woman* and in India too, a *National Committee on the Status of Women* was set up in 1970s, and it came up with a report popularly known as *Towards Equality Report, 1974*, which became a major landmark for the women's movements. The real beginning of the women's movement in India has often been traced back to this report.

Major movements during this period were –

I. *Political Movements – All India Democratic Women Association (AIDWA)* affiliated with Communist Party (CPI) was one of the major political women's organisations that was formed in 1981. Many Left-affiliated organisations and movements came up during the 1970s. Shahada Movement, in Dhulia district of Maharashtra was one such movement. In the wake of worsening socio-economic conditions during Bangladesh war many movements were launched. In Bombay, for example, Socialist Mrinal Gore and Communist Ahilya Rangnekar led the movement. It was also during this time that the Dalit movements and the feminism got linked. A Mahila Samata Sainik Dal too was formed by some Dalit groups in Maharashtra. Many disparate events like *Shah Bano* case also became a political rallying point among other communities.

II. *Non-Governmental Movements* – In the late 1970s, several women's organisations also emerged which were not affiliated to political parties or to trade unions. They were called autonomous women's organisations. They rejected the traditional *welfarist* approach adopted by the previous women's organisations, many of which were set up during the pre-Independence period, and adopted *protest policies* for mobilising women on specific issues. The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was formed in 1972 by Ela Bhatt in Ahmadabad, which was also a sort of pioneering women's trade union movement, and was such a landmark in the history of the contemporary women's movement. Similarly, the Progressive Organisation of Women (POW), formed in Hyderabad in the year 1974, worked towards organising women against gender oppressive structures in society, namely, the sexual division of labour and the culture that rationalised this discrimination.

Apart from these, there were many issue based movements like anti dowry movement, anti-*Sati* movement (after *Sati* of a newly married *Rajput* widow Roop Kanwar in 1987 in Sikkar district of Rajasthan) and anti-rape movement etc. Other issues which saw national-level collaborations were the *Muslim Women's Bill* in 1986, alcoholism, domestic violence and sexual harassment at work place (in famous *Visakha* case). Women's organisations also got involved in environmental movements like the *Bhopal Gas Tragedy Movement* of 1985 and *Narmada Bachao Andolan* led by Medha Patkar in Gujarat, *Chipko Movement* in Uttarakhand, etc.

More recently, sex-selective abortions, inadequate representation in legislatures, wage discrimination, domestic violence, dress code in public, and inadequate entitlements in personal laws have emerged as rallying points. For example, according to a 1998 study, Bina Aggarwal found that barely 13 per cent women in India are able to inherit immovable property. In the field of politics, 16th Lok Sabha had only 11 per cent of female members and despite this, it was the highest figure till then. International

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Center for Research on Women (ICRW) conducted a study in 2010, in which, 38 per cent of Indian men admitted that they have physically abused their partners. The 2016 Global Gender Gap report by the World Economic Forum ranked India at the 87th place on gender equality among 144 nations. A 2016 study by ActionAid UK found that 80 per cent of women in India had experienced sexual harassment of various forms ranging from unwanted comments, being groped or sexually assaulted. The brutal rape of a girl (which was later called *Nirbhya* by the nation) on 16 December 2012, in a moving bus, shook the conscience of the whole nation and it mobilised the government to pass some quick laws. Another trigger for contemporary movements is the resurgence of the right wing groups which try to stifle various freedoms of women. There have also been movements for equal rights of entry into religious institutions.

The tremendous efforts of the movements have bore many fruits as well. A separate ministry was established and a provision of 33 per cent reservation in Panchayati Raj institution was a landmark move. Debate is also on regarding reservation of women in Legislative bodies. Several legislative steps were taken to strengthen their position. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Prohibition of Indecent Representation of Women Act, National Commission for Women, Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace, 2013, etc. are result of the sustained efforts of women's movements. The efforts of these movements have also led to large scale participation of women in private sector and implementation of various other legislations like Equal Remuneration Act and Maternity Benefits Act along with those of several schemes by the government. Government has also introduced *gender budgeting* to provide financial support to activities related to women in all ministries.

However, the women's movements have been criticised for being upper class movements as they focus too much on women already privileged, and neglect the needs and representation of poorer or lower caste women. The effectiveness of these movements is also questioned as issues like female feticide and patriarchy still persist. Despite these apparent limitations, the women's movement in India today is a rich and vibrant movement, which has penetrated all the parts of the country. In fact, in contemporary times, there is no single cohesive pan-Indian movement in the country, but a number of fragmented campaigns which have different means, but common ends.

Backward Classes and Dalit Movements

Apart from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, the Constitution of India also provides for positive discrimination for other backward *classes* (OBCs) as well. It should be noted that the word *class* and not *caste* is used in the constitution. Historically, there were a large number of castes that were of low status and were also subjected to varying levels of discrimination, just short of untouchability. These were generally the service and artisan castes or the so called *Shudras,* who occupied the lower rungs of the caste hierarchy. These groups, which need not be based on caste alone, but are generally identified by caste, were described as the *socially and educationally backward classes* in the Constitution. The term *backward communities* was used for the first time in the official parlance by the State of Travancore in the 1930s to include all educationally and economically backward sections. Madras province used it in the 1930s to refer to the castes which were just above untouchables. Thus, the concept of *backward classes* was there much before it got recognition in our Constitution.

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Since caste has entered all the major Indian religions and is not confined to Hinduism alone, members of other religions are also there who belong to the *backward classes* and share the same traditional occupational identification and similar or worse socio-economic status. For these reasons, the other backward classes or OBCs are a very diverse group.

Marc Galanter, in his book *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India, 1984*, observes that *backward classes* is a very loose concept. Sociologically, these classes consist of a large number of the backward castes which remain above the Scheduled Castes and below the upper castes. These castes consist of intermediate castes, the cultivating castes, artisans and service castes. Like Dalits, they were also victims of caste system and social oppression. Their cause lies in inequality of status and unjustness of caste system. Western education, liberal polity and reformist ideology acted as a catalyst in awakening the backward classes to question the supremacy of the upper castes. Leadership was provided from both within the community and outside. Ideology of these movements was also diverse ranging from Sanskritisation to anti-Brahminical to revivalist and reformist.

The backward classes emerged as a powerful social, economic and political block during the post-Independence period in the countryside as a result of the policies of the state. The principal policies which impacted them included the land reforms, which consisted of the abolition of landlordism, putting ceilings on the size of the landholdings, consolidation of landholdings, and Green Revolution in the selected areas of the country, legal-constitutional measure conferring equal status and welfare schemes for lower backward classes. Besides, the state policies, the changes which occurred from within the society; population growth, breaking down of the *Jajmani* system also affected them. On account of their numerical strength, along with the control on the village land, they came to control the village vote banks. All the upper backward classes are relevant examples of this change; *Jats*, *Yadavs*, *Kurmies*, *Gujjars*, *Kappus*, *Kammas*, *Reddies*, *Lingayats*, *Vokaliggas*, *Patels*, *Kolis*, *Marathas*, etc. in different regions of the country. While the intermediary castes came to control the affairs of the village society, the artisans and the service castes joined the ranks of the marginalised groups of the wage labourers, marginal and poor farmers.

Due to their diversity, the backward classes are defined differently by different scholars –

I. Some scholars define backward caste/class as the ones which are not *Dwija*. *Dwija* or the twice born in the narrower sense used for Brahmins, but generally used for the three upper *Varnas* who wear the sacred thread.

II. Others like M S A Rao differentiate the backward classes into three groups –

   a. Landed class backward classes.

   b. Non-landed service class.

   c. Untouchables (SCs as per Indian Constitution).

III. According to another more generally accepted view, these classes consist of a large number of the backward castes which remain above the Scheduled Castes and below the upper castes. Thus, these castes consist of intermediate castes; the cultivating castes, artisans and service castes.

According Kaka Kalekar Commission of 1952, the backward classes are more than 3000 in number in India and Mandal Commission, 1980, said that they are around 52 per cent of the Indian population.

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Initially, government of India didn't recognise the caste as the only basis of backwardness and, hence, rejected the recommendations of the First Backward Class Commission which advocated caste as the only basis of backwardness. But, now, after the acceptance of the recommendations of the Second Backward Class Commission, the most widely accepted notion of backward classes is also synonymous with backward castes as well.

Backward Class Movements, thus, represent both *ritual* as well as *material* issues. Among Dalits, these problems were more acute. They were mainly against the disabilities imposed by caste and exploitative nature of caste system. M S A Rao, in his book *Social Movements in India, 1984*, discussed three types of Backward Class Movements on the basis of the structural cleavages among different strata –

I. *Brahmins vs Others* – In this type of movement, Brahmins were on one side and the interests of all other castes were pitted against their interests. Justice Party Movement was one such movement. They were limited to South India as Brahmins in North were generally poor and there were other castes that were dominant. However, there were examples in North as well like *Jogi* Movement in Punjab.

II. *Brahmins vs Lower non-Brahmins* – Generally Dalits were outside the purview of such movements and *Shudras* were the main force. *Satyashodhak Samaj* movement was one such movement.

III. *Dalit vs All others* – They were of various types viz. Sanskritisation movements, which focused on ritual upliftment, but there were other types of movements also like SNDP Movement which were focused on creating a ritual order of its own by discarding the Brahminical traditions.

Apart from this classification, Backward Class Movements can be also classified as *pure Backward Class Movements* and *Backward Class Movements linked with other movements* like peasants' movements. In the pre-Independence period, Backward Class Movements had the following significant effects –

I. They led to increased participation of backward classes in other occupations.

II. The efforts of the backward classes led to the initiation of policy of reservation.

III. They also led to increased political participation as demands for universal adult franchise was raised by these movements.

IV. These movements made liberation of the backward castes an issue in the freedom struggle. Gandhi himself hailed the movements like *Guruvayur Satyagraha*.

V. Their efforts finally led to adoption of a constitution which rejected caste altogether.

Post-Independence Backward Class Movements were totally different from pre-Independence movements. Many movements like SNDP and Arya Samaj institutionalised themselves. New types of movements emerged with following features –

I. Although constitution rejected caste, but in practice, it continued. As a result, Sanskritisation movement continued, but it came to an end with the acceptance of Mandal Commission's recommendations.

II. OBCs started to vie for similar benefits that were given to the Dalits, but this also lost legitimacy with the acceptance of Mandal Commission's recommendations.

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III. There were some mixed movements also which addressed the other problems of backward castes also. For example, many women's movements clubbed the cause of backward classes as well.

A large number of backward class associations also appeared in the post–Independence period. Marc Galanter observed that by 1954, there were 88 organisations in India, which articulated the interests of the backward classes. The most important of these existed in North India. These were *UP Backward Classes Federation* and *Bihar State Backward Classes Federation*. These two organisations merged on 26 January 1950 to form *All India Backward Classes Federation (AIBCF)* due to the efforts of Punjab Rao Deshmukh.

Other Backward Classes also started to flex their muscles in the political arena apart from pursuing agitational tactics. It was due to the efforts of this section of the OBC leadership that the Janata Party government appointed the Second Backward Class Commission, known as Mandal Commission, named after its chairman B P Mandal.

While the intermediate castes among the OBCs or the upper backward have emerged as among the most assertive social groups in the country, the other sections of the OBCs also known as the *Most Backward Classes (MBCs)* remain excluded from the preview of development and empowerment.

Northern Backward Class Movement vs Southern Backward Class Movement

Social movements for backward classes were historically stronger and more popular in South and it was Southern India that pioneered such movements. The Brahmins had monopolised the high castes domination over the low castes in South India. In contrast, the Brahmins were not the only high castes in North India. Their domination over the low castes was shared, thus, diluted by several other dominant castes like *Rajputs*, *Kayasthas* or even *Vaishyas*. In North India, the organisations like *Arya Samaj* spread the message among the backward classes that it was the *Karma*, not the birth, which determines the place of a person in the society. While it encouraged the backward classes to Sanskritise themselves by tracing their lineages to the high castes, wearing *Janeo* (sacred threads), etc., it also attempted to bring back to the fold of Hinduism, those Muslims, who were supposed to have converted from Hindu religion. This, instead of challenging the hegemony of the high castes, revived it and strengthened it. As a result, it dampened the chances of development of a strong Backward Class Movement in North India. Christophe Jaffrelot has also, in his *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of Low Castes in North Indian Politics, 2002*, attributed the early rise of backward classes in South India and their late rise in North India to the process of ethnicisation and Sanskritisation respectively. Through ethnicisation, the backward castes of South questioned Brahminic hegemony. It was a revolt against Sanskritisation in

THE SELF-RESPECT MOVEMENT

The Self-Respect Movement was launched by E V Ramaswami Naicker in Tamil Nadu against the Brahminic hegemony. It was based on the premise that the original inhabitants of India were non-Brahmins or the Dravidians, not the Brahmins. The main principle of this movement was *Samadharma* or equality. According to him, in order to get their self-respect, the non-Brahmins should replace the dominance of Brahmins in education, culture, politics and administration. He advocated a cultural revolt against Brahminism and the Self-Respect Movement included boycott of Brahmins in rituals like weddings, condemnation of *Varnashrama dharma* and burning of copies of *Manusmriti*.

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the South. Maharaja of Mysore has, as far as in 1921, decided to implement reservation for backward castes. After Independence, reservation was very well in place by 1960s in most of the Southern states of India.

Not only in South India, even in West India the backward classes were mobilised much earlier in comparison to the North. Jyotiba Phule belonged to backward *Mali* caste and he became a source of inspiration for the later-day social reformers like E V Naicker, Dr B R Ambedkar and the non-Brahmin Maratha rulers of Kolhapur Sahuji Maharaj. Phule set up *Satya Shodak Samaj* in 1873 in the Bombay Presidency in order to mobilise the low castes including Dalits and non-Brahmins or backward classes. Christophe Jeffrelot considers Phule to be the first social reformer who did not fall into the *traps of Sanskritisation*. Phule also gave *Aryan Theory* which suggested that the high caste Aryan were not the original inhabitants of India. They had come from outside. His Aryan Theory inspired several low castes leaders of the early 20th Century who put forward their own interpretations. For example, Mangoo Ram held that the Dalits in Punjab were Ad Dharmis, and Achhootan and in UP held that Dalits in UP were Adi-Hindus. The Maratha princes like Maharaja of Baroda and descendent of Shivaji, Maharaja of Kolhapur, Shahu, inspired by the philosophy of Phule challenged Brahmins' domination.

The backward classes in South India questioned the domination of Brahmins in culture, administration and politics. Anti-Brahmin *Nadar* Movement in Madras was one of the earliest such movements. The most effective expression of the Dravidian revolt against the Brahmin domination in south was provided by the Self-Respect Movement, led by E V Ramaswami Naicker, alias Periyar, during the 1920s and 1940s.

The mobilisation of the backward classes in North has been around two issues;their electoral participation and the reservation. Their mobilisation on other issues like those related to the farmers also got linked to the electoral politics. In North India, they have been mobilised by Charan Singh, Socialists including Ram Manohar Lohia, Karpoori Thakur and different political parties like Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They linked the social issues of the backward classes with the economic issues of the peasantry. The appointment of Kaka Kalelkar and Mandal Commissions and the implementation of the latter's report were result of the backward class mobilisation.

Major differences in the Northern Backward Class Movements and the Southern Backward Class Movements can be summed up as –

I. Northern Backward Castes resorted to Sanskritisation and asserted their status through new rituals and stories, glorifying their history as well as mythology, but Sothern Backward Castes rejected Sanskritisation altogether.

II. In comparison to backward classes of North India, the backward classes in south India were mobilised much earlier. They not only got reservation in the government jobs, but they were also mobilised into the social movements and entered politics in South India much before the backward classes of North India.

III. South Indian Backward Class Movement was anti-Brahmin. Southern Backward Castes completely countered Brahmins and asserted themselves as Dravidians and Brahmins as invaders. Thus, in South, Non-Brahmins asserted their superiority and cultural purity. They even called themselves as a separate Tamil Nation and refused to acknowledge Brahmins as a part of this land.

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IV. In North, Backward Castes had numerical strength as well as resource clout in many areas. With the advent of the democratic system, they leveraged it to mobilise the support and obtained reservation for backward castes. Thus, unlike southern backward castes, they didn't adopt a confrontationary stance. Backward Castes in North formed their association which resorted to petition and memorandum to get more rewards for them.

V. Backward Class Movements in North met with less success as compared to their southern counterparts. One of the reasons was that upper castes in northern states like Bihar and UP reacted more sharply and often tried to overcome such movements.

Dalit Movements

The Dalits as a social group belong to the *Avarnas*; the fifth stratum in the caste hierarchy. They were, and in some aspects still are, the most deprived section of society; both ritually as well as socio-economically. The term *Dalit* literally means *the broken or oppressed* and is of recent origin. It was first used in Maharashtra and was popularised by Jyotiba Phule. Their sub-human treatment over Centuries led to inner revolt in Hindu social organisation in form of Dalit movements. These movements address issues of cultural segregation, political and economic exploitation and the most importantly a struggle for recognition as fellow human beings. They have been redemptive, reformative and revolutionary all at the same time.

Before independence, they were also broadly clubbed with *Backward Caste Movements*, but they gained a distinct identity of their own post-Independence. At a broader level, they are classified as Pure Dalit movements, Dalit movements linked with Backward Class Movements and Dalit Movements linked with other movements like peasant movements.

The Dalits not only belong to the lower caste category, but also belong to the lower class category of the Indian society. They are mainly poor peasants, share-croppers and agricultural labourers in the rural economy. In the urban economy, they basically form the bulk of the labouring population in petty services and occupations.

In pre-Independence period, though Congress talked about the necessity of removing untouchability, it did not articulate any concrete demand or program to protect the interests of the depressed classes till 1917.

Dalit movements before independence were often combined with Backward Class Movement and untouchability was a common agenda. *Satyashodhak Samaj* movement, led by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, was also a pioneer Dalit Movement. It was a movement to improve the condition of not only *Shudras*, but *Ati-Shudras* as well and it had an anti-Brahminical ideology.

Namshudra Movement of Bengal, *Adi-Hindu* Movement of Kanpur and SNDP movement were other such examples. Their leadership was from within as well as from outside. M C Raja of Depressed Class Foundation in Madras presidency, Saint Ayyankali in Travancore, etc. were some of the noted leaders. Their ideology also ranged from Sanskritisation to anti-Brahminical to reformist. The focus of early Dalit Movements in this period had been on the temple entry, restoration of self-respect, removal of civic disabilities and getting reservation for the Dalits in the political and government institutions. Ambedkar was the first to mobilise Dalits at all India level. Many major gains were also made. For

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example, *Guruvayur Satyagrah* led to temple entry, Saint Ayyankali launched a movement which led to opening of public places for the Dalits and opening of roads.

Prior to Ambedkar, there had been attempts to bring about reforms in their condition in some of the Indian princely states also, for example, Shahuji Maharaj of Kohlapur, C R Reddy in Mysore and K Ramakrishna Pillai in Travancore. In 1942, Ambedkar formed the *All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF)* which emerged as a torchbearer for the cause of the Dalits. Earlier, he had formed several organisations, the most important being the *Indian Labour Party (ILP)*. The ILP was an organisation of a different kind in the sense that it aimed and attempted to mobilise a broader section of the Indian society and not exclusively the Dalits. He sought to use this organisation to appeal to wider audience including the industrial workers and the agricultural labourers. Duncan argues that he formed the ILP probably because he was convinced that a wider support base than the Scheduled Castes was essential and, hence, he embarked on a more class like strategy.

In post-Independence period or post-Ambedkar period (since this assertion took place after the death of Ambedkar, all these phases belong to the post-Ambedkar Dalit Movement), the Dalit Movement took multiple forms; socio-cultural, economic and political. Post-Independence period in India has seen assertion of the Dalits in India in many forms and phases –

I. *The phase of Republican Party of India and Mahar Movement* – The formation of the *All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF)* was a very significant development in the history of the Dalit mobilisation in the country though the party was not much successful and suffered defeat in the elections of 1946 and again in 1951. These reversals convinced Ambedkar that a separate political party was required which will have a wider electoral strategy. After his death in 1956, the AISCF was dissolved and the Republican Party of India (RPI) was formed in 1957. This party aimed at amelioration of the socio-economic conditions of the Dalits and the poorer classes and to enable them to capture political power. The RPI became popular mainly in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra in the 1950s and 1960s. *Mahar* Movement was another strand and was already there before Independence and it also rose in Maharashtra. *Mahars* were an untouchable caste in Maharashtra. It was anti-Brahminical in its ideology and instead of reforming caste, it advocated rejection of caste. It termed caste system as anti-democratic and anti-human. Many followers of Ambedkar finally opted for Buddhism over Hinduism showing their disregard for caste system.

II. *The phase of Dalit Panther* – Influenced by Marxism, Ambedkarism and Negro literature, a group of Dalit intellectuals founded Dalit Panther in Maharashtra in 1972. It was a revolutionary anti-caste organisation, founded by Namdeo Dhasal and J V Pawar, and initially also followed rustic violent means. The name of Dalit Panthers was borrowed from the *Black Panther* Movement of the Blacks in the USA. It was basically a movement of Dalit intellectuals, which contributed to generating consciousness among Dalits to a significant extent. It attacked the Hindu Caste system through literary activities, debates and discussion in homes, offices and public places. The movement was significant in the history of the Dalit Movements because it emerged to fill the vacuum created in the Dalit politics of Maharashtra when the Republican Party of India split into many factions. The Dalit Panthers also led to some sort of renaissance in Marathi literature and arts as they spread their ideas through a lot of literary activities.

III. *Phase of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)* – BSP was truly the first major political party which freed the Dalit mobilisation from the mainstream politics. Earlier, the cause of Dalits was only a sub-

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agendum of the major national political parties. BSP gave a vocal voice to the voice of millions of Dalits on the national stage. But BSP has two major problems; one, lack of clear ideology and secondly, it is a *leader centric* party. Gail Omvedt has noted that the BSP ideology can best be described as vague. She argues that there is no clear ideology in the program and functioning of the party. The sole thrust is on the breaking of the caste system after acquiring state power. The BSP and its founder Kanshi Ram believed that the Indian society consists of two different groups. The first group consists of the low castes including the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and the religious minorities. In the second category, it is the Brahmins, *Kayasthas*, *Banias* and *Rajputs* or the traditional upper castes.

IV. *Post-reservation Sanskritisation Movement* – Sanskritisation largely ceased to exist among Dalits as policies of positive discrimination, reservation and equal status instilled a new confidence in them. Further, political mobilisation and revival of Dalit consciousness also played a role in downplaying the Sanskritisation factor.

V. *New Socio-religious Movements* – A wave of new socio-religious movements began to take shape in 1970s as alternative social movements started to gain currency. These movements had a wider secular appeal and were open to non-Dalits and members of the other communities as well. Thus, they were not pure Dalit movements per se, but like many cults and sects, they attracted the depressed sections in a big way. Alternative cult and sect based movements like *Radha Swami Satsang* Movement and *Dera Sachha Sauda* were formed and they continue to find major support among Dalits even today.

Dalit Movements have been amorphous in shape, but some elements are common. *Satnami* Movement of Chamars of MP, *Ad Dharmi* Movement in Punjab, the *Mahar* Movement in Maharashtra and anti-Brahmin movement of South India all had such common elements like a quest for humane treatment.

AD DHARMIS

The Ad-dharmis are follower of a purportedly *original* religion and trace their origin in the Ad Dharmi Movement which was started in 1920's in Punjab, for the purpose of getting a distinct religious identity. The movement projected saint Ravidas as their spiritual Guru and also adopted a separate sacred book called *Ad Parkash*. In the 1931 census, more than 450,000 people from Punjab and adjacent areas registered themselves as members of this new Dalit faith. But the movement largely declined after Independence mainly because of the proactive reservation policy of the state. But even today, they account for around 15 per cent of Dalit population in Punjab.

Gopal Garu, Selvam, etc. consider Dalit movements as cultural movements because of their quest for a ritual-less, anti-orthodox society. They denounce an un-egalitarian God. According to Gail Omvedt, Dalit movements also have a class element as most of the Dalits are economically depressed as well. Caste ideology is used only to justify class inequalities. Fernandes also terms Dalit movements as a form of secular movement as these are influenced by modern ideas and western political ideology. Dalit *Sahitya* (Dalit Literature) further stoked the feelings and successfully brought to the fore the deeper social malaise of untouchability and it clearly debunks *Chaturvrna* literature.

Ambedkar has emerged almost as a demi-god figure for the contemporary Dalit Movements. The movements are taking new shapes and forms. Massive mobilisation on the issue of the suicide of a

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student Rohith Vemula in the University of Hyderabad in 2016 is one such example. Dalit Movements are more aspirational and vocal today than ever before and are effectively utilising the platform of social media. According to Professor Surinder Jodhka, in his *Caste, 2014*, with globalisation, Dalit movements no longer remain inward looking and they don't rely upon Sanskritisation alone. They are in a better position now to compare their position with other groups globally which face discrimination on the basis of birth, lineage and color. This has also given them an opportunity to form alliance at global levels.

Three specific movements, namely, Satyashodhak Samaj, SNDP and Self Respect Movements are also discussed for their landmark contribution towards Dalits and backward classes upliftment.

Satyashodhak Samaj

Jyotirao Phule or Mahatma Jyotiba Phule formed *Satyashodhak Samaj* (Society of Seekers of Truth) in 1873. The main objectives of the organisation were to liberate the *Shudras* and *Ati Shudras* and to prevent their *exploitation* by the upper caste like Brahmins. He advocated the worship of Raja Bali as opposed to Brahminic god Lord Rama. He totally rejected the Vedic tradition and the purported Aryan heritage. He regarded the Aryans as conquerors and destroyers of the indigenous non-Aryan culture. He made fun of the *Puranas* and Vedic literature and ridiculed those who believed in the mythological stories narrated by the Brahmins. It also encouraged Maharaja of Kohlapur to launch a non-Brahmin movement.

He demanded representation of all classes of the Hindus in all the local bodies, in services and institutions, and also established a primary school for the so-called untouchables in Poona. He also established a school for girls and a home for widows. Tracing the evolution of the Non-Brahmin movement in Western India from 1873 to 1930, the *Satyashodhak Samaj* has been described by Gail Omvedt as *a cultural revolt in a colonial society*. The *Satyashodhak* movement attacked the Brahmin priests who insisted on acting as intermediaries between God and devotees. Phule believed that there was no need for any intermediary in the matters of religion and refused to recognise the traditional role of the Brahmins as custodians of Hindu religion or interpreters of scriptures.

Phule also recognised the role of power structures in perpetuating the exploitation of the backward classes. So, he opposed the stranglehold of the Brahmins on the Indian bureaucracy. He often complained that the upper caste Brahmin bureaucrats were responsible for misleading the colonial rulers and hence, they should be substituted by the non-Brahmins who would be better informed about and more sympathetic to the condition of peasants and backward classes in rural areas.

The Satyashodhak Movement also emphasised the role of education in facilitating social change. Phule campaigned against the increasing habit of drinking alcohol and urged the Poona Municipal Council not to permit the opening of liquor shops. He persuaded people to give up the habit of drinking and instead spend their money on buying books.

SNDP Movement

The Shri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP), literally meaning the society for the propagation of moral teaching originated among the *Izhavas* or *Ezhavas* (toddy-tappers) of Kerala in 1903. Toddy-

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tapping was considered to be a defiling occupation and *Izhavas* were regarded as unapproachable in the traditional caste hierarchy. They suffered from many disabilities, both civic and ritual. They were not allowed to worship in the temples of caste Hindus or to bathe in the tanks of caste Hindus. They could neither wear any footwear nor build *pukka* houses. Shri Narayana Guru who was founder of this movement was born in 1856 in the *Izhava* community. He laid out the ideology of the movement in form of *SNDP Yogam* which took up several issues including the right of admission of the public schools, recruitment to public employment, entry into temples and political representation. He fearlessly criticised and campaigned against the rigors of the caste system, the Brahmin hegemony and the numerous social disabilities of the *Izhavas* and other lower castes. Soon, Shri Narayana Guru became the rallying point for the *Izhavas* and *Thiyyas* to unite and organise.

Within a short period, Sri Narayan Guru and *Yogam* attracted a band of dedicated workers, including poet Kumaran Asan, whose efforts exemplified what a community, submitted to centuries of tyranny, can do and achieve through unity. Separate temples were also constructed by SNDP. It transformed the lifestyle of *Izhavas* and instilled new religious beliefs, ritual and outlook. It provided an ideology of withdrawal from the exploitative dominant mainstream religion, and of self-organisation that raised the self-respect, honor and worth of individuals. Thus, SNDP constructed an alternative narrative with its institutions of temples, priests, monks and monasteries.

Self-Respect Movement

The Self-Respect Movement was a movement against Brahminical order with the aim of achieving a society where backward castes have equal human rights. It encouraged the backward castes to have self-respect in the context of a caste based society that considered them to be at the lowest end of the hierarchy.

It was founded in 1925 by E V Ramasamy Naicker (also known as Periyar) in Tamil Nadu, India. The movement was extremely influential in not just Tamil Nadu, but also overseas in countries with large Tamil populations, such as Malaysia and Singapore.

Periyar declared that the way of the self-respect alone could be the genuine freedom movement, and political freedom would not be fruitful without individual self-respect. Periyar observed that political freedom as conceived by nationalists, not excluding even Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, did not cover individual self-respect.

The movement is also interpreted as an effort to break Brahminical hegemony and giving due respect to Dravidian identity. Periyar supported cause of down trodden, organised temple entry, marriages without priest, and burned copies of *Manusmritis* etc. One of the major sociological changes introduced through the self-respect movement was the self-respect marriage system, whereby marriages were conducted without being officiated by a priest Brahmin. Periyar had regarded the then conventional marriages as mere financial arrangements which often caused great debt through dowry. Self-Respect Movement encouraged inter-caste marriages, replacing arranged marriages by love marriages that are not constrained by caste.

The movement also made an incisive political statement. In fact, the main objectives of this movement were inculcation and dissemination of knowledge of political education. Right to lead life with dignity

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and self-respect, and discard the exploitative system based on superstitions and beliefs. Abolition of the evil social practices, protection of women rights, and establishment and maintenance of homes for orphans and widow and opening of educational institutions for them, etc. were other major activities. A number of political parties in Tamil Nadu, such as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) owe their origins to the Self-respect Movement.

But movement was by no means a mass movement. The opposition to Brahmin dominance did not come from the low and the oppressed castes but from the leaders of the powerful rural dominant castes such as *Reddy* and *Kammas* in Andhra, *Vokkaligas* and *Lingayats* in Karnataka. These were high caste groups with a social position next to the Brahmins.

Environmental Movements

Environmental movements have enlarged the vision of economics and politics and have expanded the idea of justice. Environmental problems are also social problems as the extent to which environmental problems affect different groups is a function of social inequality. Social status and power determine the extent to which people can insulate themselves from environmental crises or overcome them. In some cases, their *solutions* may actually worsen environmental disparities. In Kutch, Gujarat, where water is scarce, richer farmers have invested in deep bore tube-wells to tap groundwater to irrigate their fields and grow cash crops. When the rains fail, the earthen wells of the poorer villagers run dry and they do not even have water to drink. Similarly, deforestation and use of forests for economic gains by governments and poachers can have grave social impacts upon the lives of those who depend on them for their livelihood. Similarly, rising water levels will hit the low lying countries like Bangladesh the most, which are also the poorest ones, but have contributed almost negligibly to the growth of Green House Gases. In this sense, environmental crises have their roots in social inequality and environmental movements aim to address the wider question of social inequalities as well.

Environment and ecology have played an important role in shaping the human civilisation. Early civilisations were founded on the banks of the major rivers on fertile alluvial plains. All economic activities are closely linked to the environmental phenomenon. We also put various cultural, aesthetic, spiritual, utilitarian and ecological values on environmental resources. A river is not only used for economic activities, it is also worshipped in India. Similarly, forests and mountains are not only source of livelihood for tribals in India, people revere them as totemic deities and spiritual entities. Many Hindu gods are named after environmental phenomenon and they are invoked during various rites during birth, marriage and death.

Environmental Movements appeared in the background of a misplaced notion of *development* that prevailed throughout the modern history. It led to unequal benefits and did considerable harm to mother earth. Industries displaced agriculturalists from their homes and livelihood and agriculturists themselves displaced forests on the other hand. But, soon it became clear that man's victory over nature was an illusion.

Gadgil and Guha, in their *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India, 1992*, highlighted that though environmental movements are new, environmental consciousness is a historical fact in India.

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The nexus of nature and culture was first disturbed in India during colonial rule when forests were heavily exploited and industrialisation started. Since the early displaced were tribals who also had deep affinity with forests for cultural reasons also, they were perhaps the pioneers and unsung heroes of environmental movements in India.

CHIPKO MOVEMENT

In India, environmental movements are closely linked to the larger issues of livelihood, inequality and poverty. Chipko Movement is such an example which was pioneer of environmental movements in India. It started in 1973 when forest officials refused the use of forests to villagers, but sold the rights to a private company for manufacturing of sports goods. According to Ramachandra Guha, in his book *Unquiet Woods*, villagers, inspired by the leader Chandi Prasad Bhat, rallied together to save the oak and rhododendron forests near their villages. When government forest contractors came to cut down the trees, villagers, including large numbers of women, stepped forward to hug the trees to prevent their being felled. Women's active participation in the *Chipko* agitation was a very novel aspect of the movement. The forest contractors of the region usually doubled up as suppliers of alcohol to men. Women held sustained agitations against the habit of alcoholism and broadened the agenda of the movement to cover other social issues. The question of villagers' subsistence was at stake. This conflict placed the livelihood needs of poor villagers against the government's desire to generate revenues from selling timber. The economy of subsistence was pitted against the economy of profit. *Chipko* Movement also expressed the resentment of hill villagers against a distant government headquartered in the plains that seemed indifferent and hostile to their concerns. So, concerns about economy, ecology and political representation underlay the *Chipko* Movement. The movement achieved victory when the government issued a ban on felling of trees in the Himalayan regions for fifteen years, until the green cover was fully restored. Inspired by the Chipko Movement, the villagers of Western Ghats, in Karnataka started Appiko Movement in 1983 which also had a similar strategy and objectives.

According to Madhav Gadgil, environmental movements highlighted issues like forest and land related rights, dams, commercial exploitation of mines, and right over marine resources. Various other environmental issues can be enumerated as air pollution, water pollution, solid waste, resource depletion, soil degradation, desertification, deforestation, genetically modified foods, loss of biodiversity, river pollution, man-animal conflicts, environmental disasters like Uttarakhand floods of 2013 and industrial disasters like Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984. Certain environmental concerns sometimes appear to be universal concerns, not particular to specific social groups. For instance, reducing air pollution or protecting biodiversity are in everyone's interest.

Environmental movements gained currency in 1970s when New Social Movements were in vogue. At that time, growing developmental needs were identified as having an adverse impact on environment. In the same decade, UN conference was held in Stockholm and idea of *sustainable development* gained ground for the first time at an international level.

Environmental movements are classified as –

I. *Pure environmental movements* which are based on the idea of conservation. Its examples are air pollution movement in Delhi, movement against water pollution in Chennai due to leather industry and so on. They were mainly concentrated in urban areas and mainly organised by NGOs and leadership was provided by elite or middle class intelligentsia.

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II. *Combined movements* like Tehri Movement led by Sundar Bahugune, Chipko Movement, 1973 led by Chandi Prasad Bhat, Narmada Bachao Andolan and 1988 led by Medha Patker which also included peripheral issues like livelihood, rights of the poor and deprived also. Paani Panchayats Movement in Ralegan Siddhi in Maharashtra also addressed issue of poverty along with water conservation. Apart from these, activities of the *waterman* Rajender Singh of Gujarat, Save Chilka Campaign, *Tarun Bharat Sangh* in Alwar for water conservation are other examples of successful movements.

Environmental movements are also classified on the basis of the strategy employed by them, i.e., Gandhian, Marxian and reconstructive. Gadgil and Guha identify four broad strands within the environmental movements in India based on vision, ideology and strategy.

In the wake of global warming, ozone depletion, bio-diversity loss and inequitable development, environmental movements have taken a shape of global social movement industry which has tremendously helped in raising awareness and putting pressure on national governments. Such movements have tried to build a consensus between developmental needs and environmental protection. As a result, government in India has also taken many steps from time to time to address the issues raised by such movements. Courts have also acted on PILs to address environmental problems and right to healthy environment is considered as a part of *right to life* by the courts. Introduction of CNG vehicles in Delhi was such an instance of judicial activism on environmental issues. Supreme Court established *Green Benches* to address environmental issues. Government has launched a *National Environmental Policy, 2006* to address many of the issues raised by such movements. Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dweller's (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act,, 2006 has also tried to address the issue of livelihood along with the issue of conservation.

Ethnicity and Identity Movements

An ethnic group is a group that shares some common physical or socio-cultural characteristics or markers. Concept of ethnicity is purely cultural and is sociologically used to distinguish it from race which is often considered as biological. Ethnic identity can be based out of one or multiple cultural symbols like language, region, religion, common heritage and history. Mobilisation of the people on the basis of markers which they share, real or imagined, into collective action, is called ethnic mobilisation.

ETHNIC MOVEMENT TYPES

Paul Brass, in his *Ethnicity and State, 1985,* defined three types of ethnic movements/conflicts –

I. Intra ethnic – In this, there is a different ethnic identity within an umbrella ethnic identity. The movement strives for the perceived separate benefits for its members. Shia and Sunni conflict can be viewed from this perspective.

II. Inter ethnic – In this type of movement, ethnic identity of one group is seen as completely different from others. Movement of Assamese against the migrants is such an example.

III. Ethnic group vs state – In this, an ethnic group sees its identity as different from larger state. Naga Movement is such an example.

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Generally, ethnic groups, which are in minority, involve themselves in ethnic mobilisation. However, in India, scholars generally prefer to call such movements with their specific nomenclatures like linguistic mobilisation, communal mobilisation, Dalit mobilisation, caste mobilisation and tribal mobilisation. In Western literature, such distinction is less prominent. In India, only the tribal movements and racial movements are generally kept under the category of ethnic movements. For example, Paul Brass uses ethnic and communal mobilisation interchangeably. On the other hand, Dipankar Gupta, in his book *The Context of Ethnicity: The Sikh Identity in a Comparative Perspective, 1997*, differentiates between communalism and ethnicity. He argues that the ethnic mobilisation is related to the nation-state; the territory and the sovereignty, but the communal mobilisation does not involve the nation-state.

Ethnicity is a relative term. An ethnic group differentiates itself from other groups on the basis of certain attributes. It feels that it has to preserve its identity and interests from the perceived or real threats of other ethnic groups and institutions and processes associated with them. Ethnic mobilisation finds expression in the form of self-determination movements; autonomy movements, cessation, insurgency or ethnic conflicts. Ethnic consciousness and conflicts are pervasive throughout the world. Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have already been disintegrated on the back of such ethnic movements.

Ethnic movements, apart from having a concern for identity, are political, economic and cultural manifestations of ethnic solidarity. They are a result of perceived feeling of marginalisation or relative deprivation. Political subjugation and infiltration of *outsiders* are the most common causes of ethnic mobilisation.

It is not always that only the deprived ethnic communities are engaged in ethnic movement, but the well-off communities can also initiate ethnic movements of say separation, regionalism, etc. It can be explained by *relative deprivation* and *perceived deprivation* theories. For example, according to D L Sheth, in the process of development, some minorities have done better than the majority. Those who have done well feel that they could have done even better if only their future was not tied with others in the structure of a single state or community.

In general, common causes for the rise of ethnic movements can be broadly orthogenetic or internal causes and heterogenetic or external cause which can be summed up as –

I. *Economic factors and regional disparities* – Modernisation and industrialisation in large, multi-ethnic societies tend to proceed unevenly and often, if not always, benefit some ethnic groups or some regions of a country more than others.

II. *Relative deprivation* – Lenin famously held the view that it is the feeling of being exploited rather than the exploitation itself that makes a person revolutionary. According to this theory, it is not just the poorer regions that develop ethno-nationalism. The rich regions may also be ethno-nationalist if they perceive relative deprivation. Indian scholars often cite Punjab Insurgency as an example.

III. *Modernisation and political centralisation* – In post-colonial societies, the early nationalist leadership in its passion for modernisation and nation-building, glossed over the ethnic differences which had their roots in the processes of colonial rule, emancipation and national mobilisation. Consequently, the post-colonial world order in the newly independent countries,

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engineered on the concept of the state supremacy and anchored on a somewhat superimposed nationalism, legitimised by secular ideologies rooted in constitutionalism and enforced by an extremely powerful bureaucracy, is under great strain. Its manifestations are in the form of ethnic and identity movements.

IV. *Historical reasons* – The colonial period had brought about a high degree of politico-territorial integration through an efficient, centralised way, coercive machinery of the government. However, it also helped cultural and ethnic groups to organise themselves politically and stand up against the State.

V. *Competition for scarce resources* – Resources can be economic or political. Development leads to a rise rather than a decline in ethnic mobilisation because it provides resources to ethnic groups in the periphery, increasing their bargaining position and enhancing their organisational capacity for action.

VI. *Internal colonialism* – It arises out of relationship between members of the dominant or core community within a state and members of the minority or peripheral communities, which is often characterised by exploitation. This model also challenges the functionalist prediction of an inevitable decline in the very concept of ethnicity with the rise of cultural homogenisation of the population as a part of industrialisation and modernisation.

VII. *Cultural deprivation* – One of the significant pushes to ethnic chauvinism comes from the feeling of insecurity among ethnic minorities as a result of their fear from getting lost in the sea of majority. The apprehensions of minority ethnic groups about loss of their cultural identity arise from two sources. The first is the dominant majority attempting to impose its own religious or cultural values as that of the whole society. The second arises from the ideology of the modern states to equate the state with the nation. This modern centralised nation-state, even in democracies, thinks of regions and local units as its subordinates and agents. Any challenge from them is considered as anti-national and subversive of national unity. In some cases, states refuse to recognise even the limited traditional rights of minorities to religion, language and culture. This leads to ethnic rivalry and conflict.

VIII. *External provocations* – Neighboring countries of India also have vested interests in destabilising India and have hence, supplied arms and ammunition, created false propaganda and have played a role in heightening sub-nationalist ethnic jingoism.

Leadership of ethnic movements is from within as notions of strong collective common identity find it hard to accept outside leadership. Ideology of these movements is diverse as is apparent from the examples of North-Eastern states, Dravida Movement, Khalistan Movement, etc. Ethnic and identity movements, when take the forms of movements for regional autonomy, for creation of separate states, demand for secession or insurgency, are also called Self Determination Movements. The self-determination movements actually question the nation-state building model which was introduced by the Independent India. In Tamil Nadu, following the legacy of E V Ramaswami Naicker (Periyar), three issues formed the basis of Dravidian ethnic movement in the first two decades following independence language, Dravidian culture, and religion.

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TRIBAL ETHNIC MOVEMENTS

Tribals provide the most appropriate example of ethnic movements. They are divided into five groups which primarily raise dual issues related to cultural identities and resources usage –

I. Cultural revivalist movements – As in case of the Adivasi Mahasabha established in Bihar 1938 and various other tribal movements.

II. Agrarian and forest based movements – As in case of *Rampa* Rebellion of Andhra Pradesh.

III. Autonomy movements – As in case of Ladakh.

IV. Movement for separate state – As in case of Jharkhand Movement.

V. Insurgency and secessionist movements – As in case of Naga Movement.

Mahapatra has classified the tribal movements into three categories; reactionary, conservative and revolutionary. The reactionary movement tries to bring back the good old days. The conservative movements try to maintain the status quo and resist every external intervention. Revolutionary movements aim towards bringing radical changes in the tribal society and there can be various motives for doing so, like eliminating social evils and getting rid of external threats. Surajit Sinha has offered a fivefold classification; reform movements, ethnic rebellion, agrarian unrest, political autonomy movements and secessionist movements. Creation of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh states in 2000 was a result of political autonomy movements.

In case of tribal movements, almost all factors, both real and imagined, which the tribal communities share among themselves; culture, customs, language, race, religion (indigenous or otherwise), economic issues, contribute to their mobilisation. The most common issues which account for the tribals' ethnic mobilisation are perceived or a real threat to their indigenous culture and economy including the natural resources like mineral, forest and modern market opportunities by the outsiders (non-tribals middle classes, businessmen, moneylenders, bureaucrats), their discrimination by the state, especially at the central levels and its representatives (central government employees, army, police, etc.). Tribal issues in North East are, at times, related to the geographical factors and other regional dimensions. Problems of ethnic people in North East are also explained in terms of the neglect of the region in a blind pursuit of nation building. They accuse the federation of a step-motherly attitude. *Bodos* of Assam, *Khasis* of Meghalya have varying demands ranging from regional autonomy to separate state to secession. Ethnic movements in Assam are also a reaction towards the influx of outsiders; from Bangladesh, *Marwaris*, Bengali, etc., which has reduced the original inhabitants into minority and has also deprived them of socio-economic benefits. As a process of integration with the wider mainstream, tribal societies also get more differentiated, i.e., develop class and other divisions within themselves and, hence, new bases for the assertion of tribal identity also emerge. According to Virginius Xaxa, emergence of a middle class within the tribal society, especially in the North East is giving a new direction to the tribal movements by making issues of culture, tradition, livelihood, even control over land and resources, as well as demands for a share in the benefits of the projects of modernity, an integral part of the articulation of identity among the tribes.

Ethnic movements with various demands were launched in other parts also. For example, the ethnic movement in Punjab was based upon three types of issues, regional, religious and perceived economic discrimination and finally, agitations were launched for a Punjabi Suba. The ethnic movement in Punjab again arose in the 1980s. It challenged the sovereignty of the Indian state. It sought to establish a sovereign state of *Khalistan*, to be based on the tenets of Sikhism. The scholars have also explained the ethnic movement of the 1970s and 1980s in Punjab in terms of socio-economic and political factors. Those who explain it in terms of the socio-economic factors follow the Marxian perspective.

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They argue that the *Punjab Crisis* occurred in the wake of economic upheavals caused by the Green Revolution and the inability of the Sikh farmers to meet the rising cost of investment in agriculture, rising unemployment among the youth and growth of the consumerist culture which gave rise to the feeling of losing Sikh identity. It finally contributed to the rise of militancy also in Punjab.

Professor Apurba Baruah, in a 2013 seminar at the Gauhati University, argued that the contemporary ethnic movements are often monopolised by the emerging middle class from within those ethnic communities. He is pessimistic about such involvement of middle class in the ethnic movements as the movement loses its potential with such involvement. Dr Nani Gopal Mahanta warns about another disturbing growing trend under which the politics of these movements get so over-burdened with their own identity that it generates intolerance and hatred against outsiders making homeland identity politics parochial and obsessive. It has also resulted in incidents of violent ethnic clashes in the recent times. It has threatened the prospects of democracy as well.

Success or failure of ethnic movements depends on political factors. Once, one set of demands in ethnic mobilisation is accepted, in due course of time, the ethnic movements start on other demands. Thus, ethnic mobilisation is a continuous political process. Ethnic movements will continue to remain important in future as ethnic diversity is a source of exchange, innovation and creativity and is as essential for mankind in a similar fashion as biodiversity is essential for nature.

Question Bank

1. Peasants and farmers are two different analytical constructs with different features and interests. In this context, examine the differences between the peasants' and farmers' movements.
2. Trace the origin and evolution of peasants' movements in India. What are the various steps that government of India has taken to address the issues raised by such movements?
3. What are the causal factors which are leading to the growth of agrarian unrest in the 21st Century India?
4. Evaluate the success achieved by the peasants' and farmers' movements in post-Independence India?
5. Discuss the nature of women's movement in India from a historical evolutionary perspective.
6. Women's movements in India are often accused of having a narrow middle class base. Evaluate the statement in terms of the leadership and issues of these movements.
7. Discuss the role that contemporary women's movements have played in liberating the woman from archaic social structures.
8. Indian economy is characterised by an overcrowded agrarian sector and an industrial sector which is not very employment intensive. Discuss with special emphasis on the current health of agrarian economy.
9. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was the first true anti-caste crusader of India. Comment.

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10. Compare and contrast the pre-Independence Backward Class Movements of North and South India.
11. Anti-caste social movements before Independence were, in way, anti-Brahministic, especially in southern parts of the country. Examine the causes and nature of such movements.
12. Dalit consciousness has emboldened after independence due to various factors. Examine.
13. 1970s was a monumental decade for environmental movements in India and world. Elaborate.
14. Write short notes on Chipko and Narmada Bachao Movements. Also elaborate how they shaped the narrative of environmental movements in India.
15. What are the factors which have led to degradation of urban environment?
16. Over-emphasis on environment has led to stalling of development projects. Indian poor cannot remain hostage to this stalemate. Comment.
17. What are the causes of the various ethnic movements in North Eastern India?
18. What challenges do the ethnic identity movements pose to nationalism in India? Is ethnic sub-nationalism in India in conflict with the pan-Indian identity?

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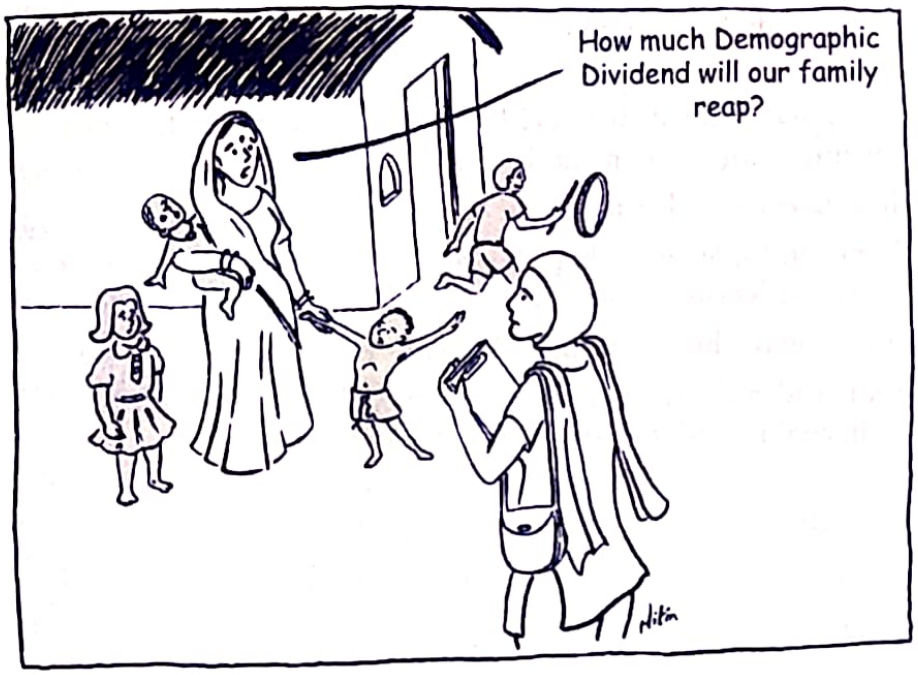
Population Dynamics

24



After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the demographic profile of India
2. Explain the distribution of population and its composition in India
3. Know about the various issues related to population like – Ageing, Mortality and Reproductive Health

Population of a country is its horoscope. High burden of population can take a toll on resources on one hand; on the other hand, it can also be converted into demographic dividend if judiciously utilised. A few centuries ago, Thomas Malthus predicted a bleak future for world in the wake of rising population, but recently, China has showed that population may not necessarily be a hurdle in development. Population of India poses a big challenge and many demographers term it as root cause of all the problems in India. Its high growth rate also poses another challenge, especially in the area of planning. In such a scenario, special attention is required to some sections of society like the aged, women and children. In a patriarchal society, vulnerability of old women increases many a fold.

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Population studies or *demographic studies* is a relatively new area of scientific study in most of the countries, but has assumed a great significance. For judicious use of finite resources, analysis of demographic data has become very important. India is among, perhaps, the only few countries which have a unique distinction of conducting census every decade for such a long time. First truly pan-Indian Census was conducted in 1881. Census data is also used to target specific sections of population like – the elderly and the children. First sociological analysis of population in the post-Independence India was done by the United Nations Population Commission and Government of India. Another major empirical work *The Population of India and Pakistan, 1952* was commissioned by Kingsley and Davis around the same time and this work is taken as a reference point for studying the population related issues in India from a sociological perspective. Another landmark was the formation of *Indian Association for the Study of Population,* in 1971.

Population Size, Growth, Composition and Distribution

Three determinants of size, growth and distribution of any population are how many persons are born, how many persons die, and how many persons are added to the population after considering the number of persons leaving the country and the number of persons coming into the country. India's population, as per 2011 Census, stood around 125 crore, making India second most populous country in the world. India will overtake China as the most populous country in 2025. In terms of growth parameters, India still continues to grow at a rate of around 1.9 per cent annually, which is still away from the replacement level growth rate. Its population has grown more than three times than what was at independence; from 36 crore to more than 125 crore. *National Population Policy of 2000* set 2045 as deadline for stabilisation of population, which was later shifted to 2065. In 2011 Census, population growth figures were significant for various reasons. It was for the first time since independence that decadal growth was less than 20 per cent. Further, urban population growth was higher than the rural population growth rate. It was also observed, that literacy and development have inverse co-relation with population growth. As per 2011 Census, Bihar observed the highest growth rate of 25 per cent among large states and Kerala registered the lowest with 5 per cent growth.

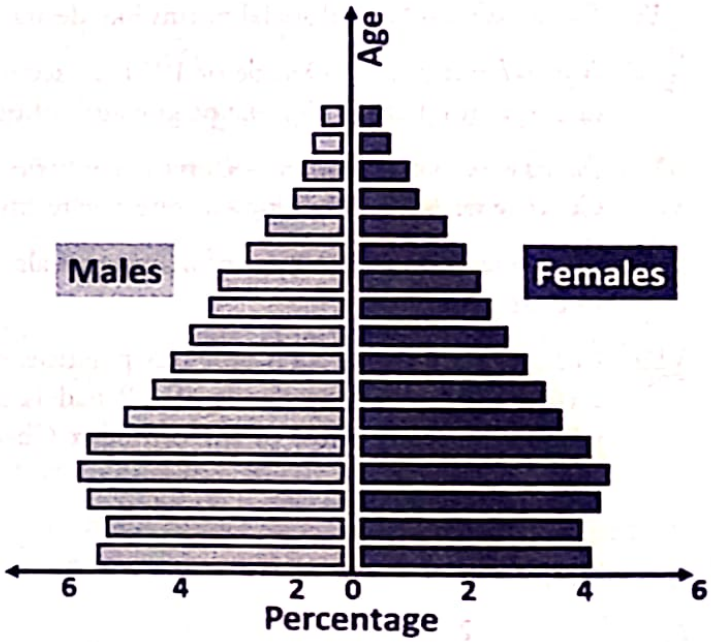

Fig. 24.1 Population Pyramid based on 2011 Census

Composition of Indian population is as varied as its diversity. In terms of age group, India has a very young population with enormous demographic dividend to reap. Another feature of Indian population is the skewed sex ratio of around 940. Hindus account for around 80 per cent of the population, followed by 14 per cent Muslim population and rest are other communities. 75 per cent of the population is literate. However, literacy among various communities varies.

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Determinants of population growth can be divided into the following broad categories –

I. *Demographic factors* – Birth rate, mortality rate, etc. Demographic Transition Theory says that growth rate is high when death rate is controlled with the advancement in medical sciences, but birth rate is still unchecked. Similarly, as birth rate is also controlled by means of efforts like family planning, it leads to low population growth.

II. *Economic factors* – It has been noticed by National Population Registrar and Census Office India in 2011 Census that lower the economic status of family, greater the number of children per family. Further, states which are economically weaker are also the leading states in population growth. During 2001-2011, Empowered Action Group states, which are economically backward have observed a decadal growth rate of more than 20 per cent, while non-EAG states have observed growth rates of less than 15 per cent.

III. *Educational status* – Educational status is closely linked with fertility rates. Often, less educated families are found to be less informed about family planning techniques.

IV. *Social values* – Several social norms like desirability of male children lead to high birth rates.

V. *Natural calamities* – Decade of 1911-21 recorded negative growth rate despite high birth rate due to natural calamities like plague and influenza.

VI. *Increase in net migration* – Certain countries like Fiji and Mauritius, in the 18th and 19th Century witnessed high growth rate due to migration from countries like India and Burma.

VII. *Age of marriage* – Lower age of marriage is also considered an important factor towards increase in birth rates.

VIII. *Cultural factors* – Certain religious practices prohibit the use of contraceptives. For example, certain *ulemas* in hinterlands of UP had issued *fatwas* calling use of contraceptives as anti-Islamic. Similarly, most of the orthodox Christians do not permit abortion at any stage. An

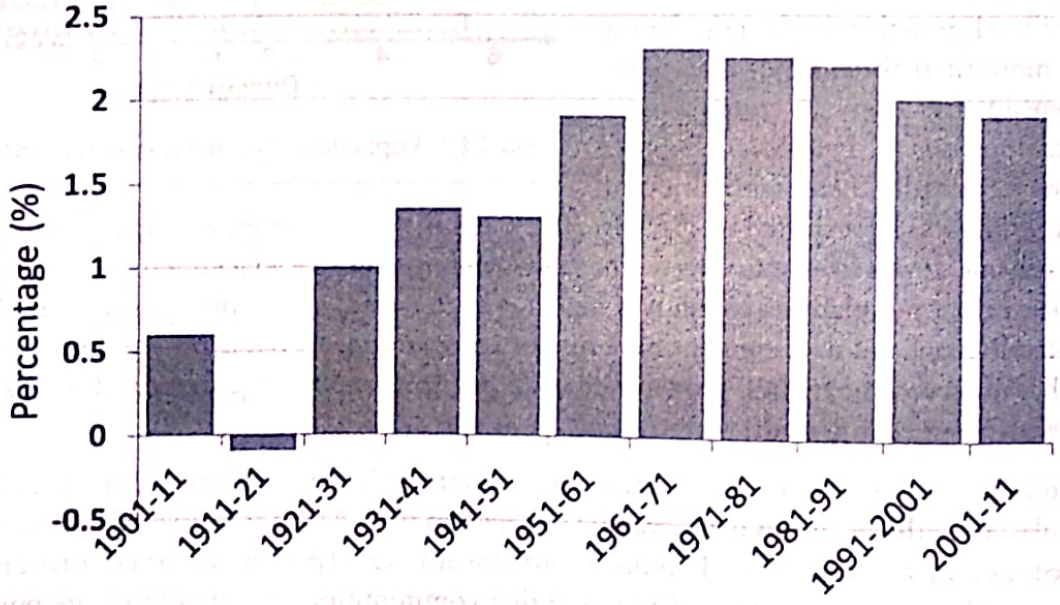

Fig. 24.2 Decadal Population Growth Rates in India

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incident of death of an Indian origin doctor in Canada in 2012 due to such rules is an example. All the major religions of the world, except Buddhism, contain injunctions for their followers to breed and multiply.

IX. *Diseases* – Certain pandemics like AIDS are also causing havoc in African countries and on one hand, they are causing the decline of population, on the other hand, discouraging people to become more cautious about sexual relations.

X. *Increases in food production and distribution* – This has reduced the food insecurity problem, and mortality due to malnutrition has come down.

XI. *Infrastructure* – Rapid means of transport and communication have facilitated rapid movement of food-grains from surplus areas to deficit areas. People now do not die due to epidemics, drought or famine.

XII. *Sanitation* – Better sanitation has led to fewer diseases being spread through water and contaminated surfaces.

Distribution of population is driven by various factors like migration, physical geography, urbanisation and industrialisation. Historically, plain areas around the river basins have been magnets of population settlements. As Colonial trade started, many coastal cities like Mumbai and Kolkata were also developed. Similarly, growth of industry led to growth of new towns like Ludhiana, Gurugram (erstwhile Gurgaon) and Pune. Literacy levels also affect population distribution. States with poor literacy rate observe high birth rate and hence, higher population. Most populous state, according to 2011 Census, is Uttar Pradesh, followed by Maharashtra and Bihar.

Unchecked population leads to pressure on natural and human resources. Rapid degradation of environment across the globe is a result of unchecked human population. Earth has a limited *carrying capacity* and cannot bear human population beyond that.

Consequences of unchecked population growth can be summarised as –

I. Malthusian hypothesis predicted that high population growth rates will eventually lead to such a scarcity of resources that ultimately it will lead to enforcement of *positive checks* by nature in the form of starvation and disease.

II. Carrying Capacity hypothesis predicted that due to exponential growth, population may surpass carrying capacity of the land and natural resources.

III. Due to large population, enormous difficulties are encountered by policy makers in implementation of all national and state developmental programs. Rapid growth in population is also associated with droughts, famines and political disturbances. As a result, plans are never successful. Set targets are never achieved. The national, as well as per capita income does not increase by the same rate as planned and envisaged.

IV. One of the explanations for the sticky nature of poverty in the developing countries is the rapid expansion of population observed since the end of World War II.

V. The world's current and projected population growth calls for an increase in efforts to meet the needs for food, water, health care, technology and education and this will put enormous pressure on the existing resources.

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VI. Denudation of forests has happened to increase the area under agriculture. Pollution of water, land, food materials, etc. are other emerging challenges associated with population growth.

VII. It has become difficult to provide employment opportunities to the vast army of unemployed.

VIII. Increase in population has resulted in decrease of savings and capital formation.

IX. Population growth in rural India has led to fragmentation of land holdings below the economic level. It has impacted livelihood in rural areas and as a result, agriculture sector has become overcrowded.

MALTHUSIAN HYPOTHESIS

Thomas Malthus gave a theory of population growth, outlined in his *Essay on the Principle of Population, 1798*, and it was a rather pessimistic one. He argued that human populations tend to grow at a much faster rate than the rate at which the means of human subsistence (especially food, but also clothing and other agriculture-based products) can grow. Therefore, humanity is condemned to live in poverty forever because the growth of agricultural production will always be overtaken by population growth. While population rises in geometric progression (i.e., like 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc.), agricultural production can only grow in arithmetic progression (i.e., like 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, etc.). Because population growth always outstrips growth in production of subsistence resources, the only way to increase prosperity is by controlling the growth of population. According to him, humanity has only a limited ability to voluntarily reduce the growth of its population (through *preventive checks* such as postponing marriage or practicing sexual abstinence or celibacy). Malthus believed, therefore, that in such a situation, *positive checks* to population growth, in the form of famines and diseases, were inevitable because they were nature's way of dealing with the imbalance between food supply and increasing population. To avoid such positive checks, he suggested that people should control the frequency of their sexual intercourse. This theory was later challenged by theorists who claimed that economic growth could outstrip population growth. Nevertheless, it still serves as one of the earliest thoughts on the consequences of unchecked burgeoning population.

Components of Population Growth – Birth, Mortality and Migration

Demographers have listed three factors as the most important factors/components of demographic change – Birth, Mortality and Migration.

Birth Rate

One of the most commonly used indicators of birth rates is *Crude Birth Rate*. It is called *crude* because of its general character and it doesn't tell us about other demographic parameters like male-female ratio. It is generally expressed in number of live births per 1000. There are also specific birth rates for a particular age group and gender as well. Birth rates are also expressions of fertility of women of a given population.

Birth rate in a society depends upon various factors including cultural, geographical, educational, developmental, etc. According to Demographic Transition Theory, birth rate remains high for a nation from its under-developed to developing phase. High birth rate leads to high population and hence,

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higher burden on resources. Birth rate is directly related to fertility of female population. Birth rate stabilises as people get educated and become aware about benefits of family planning. Governments also incentivise birth rate moderation through family planning programs.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION THEORY

This theory was developed from the ideas of Warren Thompson, an American demographer who linked demographic trends to industrialisation. It was later refined by demographers in the form of a 4-5 stage Demographic Transition Theory. It is based on the idea that there are important transitions in a society's birth rates and death rates which have a profound impact on their overall population. Societies pass through various stages as they pass through stages of industrial development. In stage one, called *high fluctuating*, both birth and death rates are high and hence, population growth is uncertain and is not much. In stage two, called *early expanding*, which began in most of Europe and the United States in the early part of the 19th Century, death rates fell, but fertility remained high leading to high population growth. In stage three, called *late expanding*, birth rates also fall and population growth slows down as in case of mature industrial economies. India, currently, is also undergoing this third stage. In stage four, both birth rate and death rates are under control and population stabilises or shows minor declines as in case of the most post-industrial societies.

In India, while death rate has come down significantly due to improved health facilities and a check on epidemics, famines, plagues and other morbid factors, the birth rate has not registered a sharp fall and it still hovers around 19 per cent as compared to 9 per cent death rate as per the 2011 Census. This is because the birth rate is a socio-cultural phenomenon that is relatively slow to change. By and large, increased levels of prosperity exert a strong downward pull on the birth rate as is evident in the case of states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu where birth rate has even come down below and the states are likely to witness a decline in population in the near future. Once infant mortality rates decline, and there is an overall increase in levels of education and awareness, family size begins to shrink. There are very wide variations in the fertility rates across the states of India. Some states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have managed to bring down their total fertility rates (TFR) to 1.7 while others like Bihar, West Bengal still have high rates.

Fertility

Fertility is ability to produce offspring. The fertility rate refers to the number of live births per 1000 women in the child-bearing age group, usually taken to be 15 to 49 years. Fertility rate determines the growth or decline in population.

Several factors contribute to the high fertility of Indian women. Some of these factors are –

I. *Religious factors* – Belief in high fertility has been strongly supported by all the major religions of the world, except Buddhism. In one form or the other, they contain injunctions to their followers to breed and multiply. Religions and social institutions in India also influence the norms regarding appropriate family size.

II. *Universalisation of marriage* – Another factor contributing to high fertility is the universality of the institution of marriage. Amongst the Hindus, a man is expected to go through the various stages of his life (*Ashramas*), performing the duties attached to each stage. Marriage is considered one such duty.

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III. *Age of marriage* – In India, traditionally, women used to get married at young age and start childbearing at an early age, and continue to do so till they cross the age at which they are no longer biologically capable of bearing children.

IV. *Social norms and values* – As in case of all traditional societies, in India too, great emphasis is laid on bearing children. A woman, who does not bear children, is looked down upon in society. In fact, the new daughter-in-law attains her rightful status in the family only after she produces a child, preferably a son.

V. *Preference for sons* – The preference for sons is deeply ingrained in the Indian culture. Sons are required for extending the family line and for looking after the parents in their old age and women who have girl children as first or second child, bear more children to have a male child.

VI. *Child labour and other issues* – Children in the Indian society have a great economic, social, cultural as well as religious value. Poor family sees large family as conducive for economic production as children also contribute in household works.

VII. *Joint family* – Further, there is no economic motivation for restricting the number of children, because the biological parents may not necessarily be called upon to provide for the basic needs of their own children since the extended family is jointly responsible for all the children born into it.

VIII. *Lack of awareness about family planning* – In the absence of widespread adoption of methods of conception control, the fertility of Indian women continues to remain high.

Implications of high fertility are visible at family level at manifest level and at the level of society as well, i.e., at latent level. Apart from contributing in a big way to the population problem of the country, high fertility affects the family and, in turn, society in many ways –

I. Women are tied down to child-bearing and child-rearing for the best years of their productive lives. They are, therefore, denied the opportunity to explore other avenues for self-expression and self-development. This, in turn, creates economic disparity between man and woman.

II. Excessive child-bearing affects the health of women and that of their children. Looking after a large number of children puts further strain on the slender physical and emotional resources of such women.

III. The burden of providing for a large family sits heavily on the bread-winner of the family and frustration may lead to resorting to drinking etc.

IV. The children, often unwanted, unloved and neglected, are left to their own devices to make life bearable. Indulgence in delinquency is sometimes the result. The children in large families often have to start working at a very early age to supplement the meagre financial resources of the family.

V. The girl child is the worst sufferer. She is often not sent to school at all, or is withdrawn from school at an early age to help her mother in carrying out domestic chores and to look after her younger siblings when the mother is at work. Early marriage pushes her into child-bearing, and the vicious cycle continues.

VI. Poor financial health of family results in poor education of the children and hence, poor employment opportunities.

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Mortality or Death Rate

Mortality or death rate is another important component of population growth. There are three basic measures of mortality; the crude death rate, the expectation of life at birth, and the infant mortality rate (IMR). There is another important indicator of mortality; Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR). The Crude death rate is the ratio of the total registered deaths occurring in a specified calendar year to the total mid-year population of that year, multiplied by 1000. There is an absolute growth in population if mortality is lower than the birth rate. Maternal mortality and infant mortality are more important out of these as they reflect developmental level of society. Mortality rates are higher in under-developed and moderate in developing countries as per Demographic Transition Theory. In India, mortality rates have come down significantly in the past seventy years after Independence due to better healthcare.

Some of the major factors affecting mortality rates are –

I. High IMR and MMR indicate poor health facilities, poor institutional deliveries and apathy of administration.

II. Unequal access to healthcare is another major reason for mortality among the poor.

III. Cultural religious factors also affect mortality rates. In Muslims of India, instances have been reported in which the *Maulvis* have prohibited administration of oral vaccines to the children.

IV. Girl children and women in general are also discriminated against boys in terms of access to health.

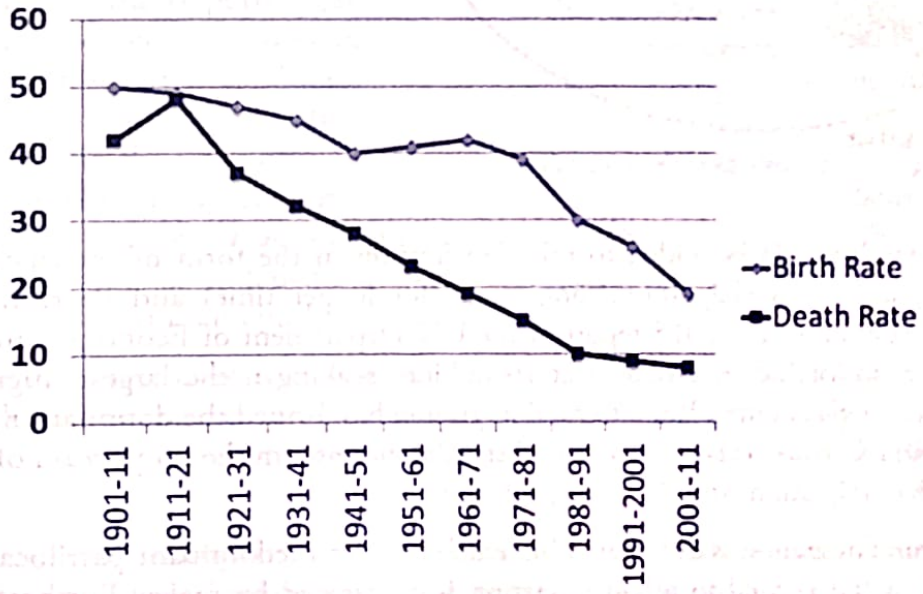

Fig. 24.3 Birth and Death Rates in India over the Years

Up to 1921, the crude death rate in India was quite high (between 40 and 50 per thousand population), the highest being for the decade 1911-21, mainly because of the influenza epidemic in 1918, when more than 15 million persons died. Since 1921, the death rate has been declining. From 1911-21 to 1971-81, that is, in a period of 60 years, the average annual death rate declined from 48.6 per thousand to 14.9 per thousand; a reduction of more than 69 per cent. In 2001, the crude death rate declined to 8.5 per thousand. Similarly, life expectancy has also improved from 20 years in 1911 to 68 years today.

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Improvements in medical cures for deadly diseases like plague, smallpox and cholera, programs for mass vaccination, and efforts to improve sanitation helped to control epidemics and hence, helped in bringing down mortality. Famines, which were also a major and recurring source of increased mortality, are also now a history with increased food production and better storage and transportation. However, diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and dysentery continue to kill people even today, although the numbers are nowhere as high as they used to be in the epidemics of the past. The decline in the death rate and relatively high birth rate are now the main factors responsible for the growth of population as the declining death rates have not been accompanied by corresponding declines in the birth rates.

Migration

Everett Lee, a well-known demographer, defines migration broadly as *a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence*. Others like Eisenstadt consider it as more or less permanent in nature. Migration is the one of the three components of population change, the other two being mortality and fertility. Migration is a response of humans to economic, social and demographic forces in the environment and like the other two components of population, is not biological and can be voluntary, for example, brain drain, as well as forced, for example, migration due to calamity and war.

Migration also plays an important role in the distribution of the population of any country, and determines the growth of labour force in any area. Migration is, thus, an important symptom of social change in society.

In India, the migrants are classified into four migration streams, namely –

I. Rural to rural

II. Rural to urban

III. Urban to urban

IV. Urban to rural

A few more dimensions can be added to this classification in the form of international migration including immigration and emigration, long range (for longer time) and short range migration, voluntary and involuntary. The 2015 report of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) puts the size of Indian Diaspora at 16 million, making it the largest migrant population originating from a single country. Rural to rural migration has formed the dominant migration stream since 1961 till 2011 Census. There have been substantial increases in the proportion of rural to urban, and urban to urban migration with the passage of time.

While rural to rural migration is dominated by females due to predominant patrilocal marriages and village exogamy in India, rural to urban migration is dominated by males. Further, rural to urban migration is dominated by migration of young population. According to Myron Weiner, in his 1978 work on *sons of soil*, rural migrants leave their native place because of lack of employment, landlessness, poverty, political and religious persecution. Increasing man-land ratio is another big contributing factor for rural to urban migration. A 1976 sociological study by Connell et al shows that family size also affects migration decisions. Larger families are more likely to see their members migrate for both positive and negative reasons. Caste also plays an important role in determining the patterns of migration. Lower castes in the village move out due to persecution or to seek better ways of subsistence. Apart from these

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factors, there are many class neutral motives of the migration as well. For example, urban areas also exert a pull pressure which attracts migrants from all strata of rural society.

Another important characteristic is that the migrants have a tendency to move to those places where they have contacts and where the previous migrants serve as links for the new migrants, and this chain is thus, formed in the process, and is usually called *chain migration*. Thus, kinship also plays an important role in migration patterns.

The major reason of voluntary migration is economic. In most of the developing countries, low agricultural income, agricultural unemployment and underemployment are the major factors pushing the migrants towards areas with greater job opportunities. Even the pressure of population resulting in a high man-land ratio has been widely recognised as one of the important causes of poverty and rural outmigration.

The most important economic factors that motivate migration may be termed as *Push Factors* and *Pull Factors*. The classification is originally attributed to Everett Lee. Poverty, low productivity, unemployment, exhaustion of natural resources and natural calamities are some of the *push factors*. They compel the individuals to 'leave' their current position to find new places and opportunities. Opportunities for better employment, higher wages, better working conditions and better amenities of life like education and health come under the latter type. In the context of the developing countries like India; there are other factors, according to Ashish Bose, which are termed as *Push Back Factors*. As unemployment and marginal employment in cities increases, it acts as a deterrent for rural population to find a place in urban areas and pushes them back.

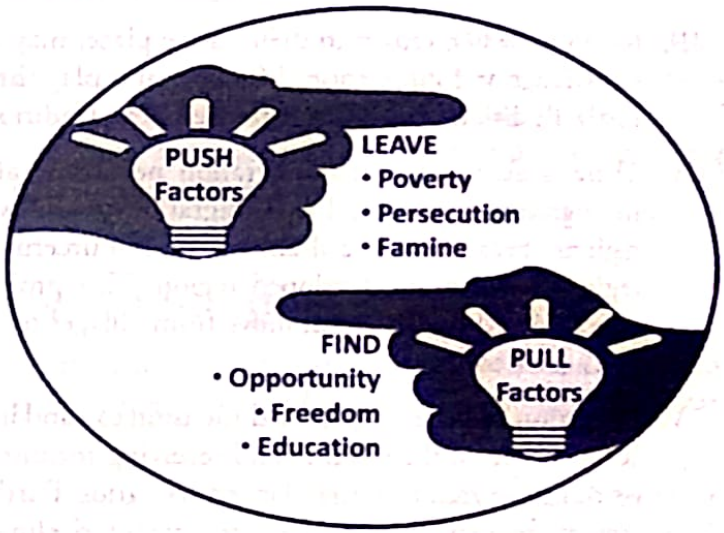

Fig. 24.4 Factors Promoting Migration

There can be various other reasons as well. According to R C Chanda, in *A Geography of Population, 1986*, some seek more religious freedom which is offered in a cosmopolitan environment of city. Sometimes there is a tacit government guideline which promotes economic and cultural activities at specific places.

Political factors also play an important role. Some states like Maharashtra, under parties like Shiv Sena follow an ardent *sons of the soil* policy which leads to forced migrations. Even in Calcutta, the Bengali-Marwari conflicts have far reaching implications. Assam and Tamil Nadu are other such examples.

In India, not much attention has been paid at the policy level to study the pattern of either international or internal migration. Primary information is obtained through the National Sample Survey (NSS) and Census data. The primary motive for migration, recorded by the census as well as the NSS, is an important indicator of how mobility is influenced by conditions of the labour market. These two data show that around 28 per cent of Indian population migrates every year and the predominant share is of those who migrate to seek employment. At the international level, the country does not even have up

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to date statistics of the immigrants and the emigrants, although, most of the international migration is controlled by passports and visa permits. Questions have been raised about the brain drain from India in various forums, but little has been done to stop it.

Consequences of migration are social, economic and psychological –

I. Migration from a region, characterised by labour surplus, helps to increase the average productivity of labour in that region, as this encourages labour-saving devices and/or greater work participation by the remaining family workers.

II. Migrants also support their families back at home in form of financial assistance. Such financial assistance may strengthen local as well as national economy. India received annual remittances of around $70 billion from its migrant population in 2016.

III. Migrants, when return to their native place, may also support their native regions by spread of knowledge and innovation. Migrants also play the role of value disseminators. They expose the Little Tradition of the village to the Great Tradition of the urban areas.

IV. There is also a view that migration negatively affects the emigrating region and favours the immigrating region, and that migration would widen the development disparity between the regions, because of the drain of the resourceful persons from the relatively underdeveloped region to the more developed region. This problem is especially acute for rural areas where educated and skilled youth move from villages to cities, and rural areas are left with little skilled and educated youth.

V. Migration has a demographic dimension too and has a direct impact on age, sex and occupational composition of the sending and receiving regions. Migration of the unmarried males of young working age results in imbalanced sex ratios. Further, due to migration, there is a decline in the coition frequency and hence, fertility rates decline. It has an impact on family size as well.

VI. Migration which results in the absence of the adult males for long periods of time may cause dislocation of the family, and, under such circumstances, women and children often have to take over more and different types of work and other more important roles in household decision-making. Women, back at home, are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.

VII. Migrant workers are also vulnerable to multiple exploitations, poor social security and poor access to facilities like health, education and other civic amenities. Change of political parties in the foreign territory creates unpleasant situations. For example, American president Donald Trump's administration in 2016 issued restrictive orders for the expats which affected Indian Diaspora as well. Similarly, in Arab countries also, Indians face hardships due to various reasons.

VIII. Migration also changes the political equations as well. Vote bank politics has led to issuing of voter-ID cards in India to lakhs of illegal migrants and this has created dissent among the local population.

IX. Migration brings about a cultural change as well. Many *new* cities like New London (USA) and New South Wales (Australia) came up as migrant population made the existing cities too small to accommodate them. Cultural intermixing produces composite cultures. Cosmopolitan cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru (erstwhile Bangalore) present a heady mix of cultures, and people celebrate the festivals of each other, share cultural symbols in form of dresses and eating habits.

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X. There are ethnic dimensions as well. Migration leads to more ethnic and cultural diversity. This sometimes creates friction as well. Ethnic and racial conflicts are such examples and the northeastern part of India is particularly susceptible to such movements as economic opportunities are scarce which lead to an aggressive fight for scarce resources.

XI. Recent studies in Kerala have also shown the psychological impacts of migration. Excessive male migration leaves female population behind which often suffers from hysteria, neurosis, etc.

Many changes have occurred recently to address the issues affecting the welfare of the migrants driven by government and the voluntary sector. For example, in West Bengal, the bargaining power of migrant labourers has improved due to the intervention of the Krishak Sabhas and panchayats. In Ahmadabad of Gujarat, DISHA, a voluntary organisation, is addressing the living and working conditions of construction workers, migrating mainly from the Panchmahals area of Gujarat. There is a legislation also known as Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979 which aims to safeguard migrants, but the legislation is obsolete and is hardly enforced in any part of the country. For the protection of the international migrant labour, Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana was launched in 2014. To address some of the issue of intra-state migrants, some states are using technology and *Aadhar* linked payments to facilitate anywhere transactions related to social security schemes.

Population Policy and Family Planning

While the global population has increased only three fold during the last century, from 2 billion to 6 billion, Indian population has increased nearly five times, from 238 million to one billion in the same period.

India had an official population policy for more than a half century. In fact, India was perhaps the first country to explicitly announce such a policy in 1952 when the population policy took the concrete form of the National Family Planning Program. The broad objectives of this program have remained the same; to influence the rate and pattern of population growth in socially desirable directions. In the early days, the most important objective was to slow down the rate of population growth through the promotion of various birth control methods, improve public health standards, and increase public awareness about population and health issues. Population policy of India can be seen as evolving through various broad phases as –

I. The population control plan of the First Plan envisaged control on birth rates and it emphasised natural devices for family planning. Guidelines of the First Plan continued unaltered during the Second Plan except that the voluntary sterilisation scheme was introduced in 1956 or *Clinical Approach* was adopted.

II. Due to unexpected high population growth rate in 1961 Census the *Clinical Approach* of the population policy was replaced by an *Extension Education Approach* during the Third Plan. Thus, creation of social climate in favour of small family norms, provision of readily accessible services, adoption of effective family planning methods by all eligible couples, stimulating such social changes as increasing marriage age, education and employment of women, low mortality rate, higher sex ratio, overall economic development, and continued research and evaluation, became the guiding principles of population control strategy of this plan.

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III. The Fifth Five Year Plan introduced basic change in the population policy by integrating family planning services with welfare services covered under the minimum needs program.

IV. The Family Planning Program suffered a setback during the years of the National Emergency (1975-76). The National Family Planning Program was renamed as *the National Family Welfare Program* after the Emergency, and coercive methods were no longer used. The program now had a broad-based set of socio-demographic objectives. National Population Policy was officially announced in 1976 and was further modified and re-announced in 1977. In this new policy, what was reinforced was education and health. The latter component of the reformulated policy included the general as well as maternal and child health both. Voluntary Family Planning was also introduced here on.

V. Current Population Policy was announced in 2000. It has a multidimensional view of population control and it also envisaged a roadmap of converting our large population from a liability to an asset. Thus, new population policy is broad based and goes beyond just population control.

NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY, 2000

It had following broad targets –

I. Reduce IMR to 30.

II. Reduce maternal mortality rate to 100.

III. Improve child, maternal and reproductive health.

IV. Prevent communicable diseases and other diseases like AIDS.

V. Achieve 100 per cent birth and death registration. Compulsory registration of marriage and pregnancy, along with birth and death.

VI. It had special focus on health and education strategies like free school education to children up to the age-group of 14, 20 per cent reduction in the drop outs of children in schools at primary and secondary levels.

VII. It envisaged the target of stable population by 2045 AD (which was later pushed back to 2065).

VIII. The policy included freezing of Lok Sabha seats of 543 till 2026.

IX. It advocated for providing cash incentives for compliance with requirements regarding antenatal checkup, institutional delivery by a trained birth attendant.

X. Increasing the number of health workers.

XI. Improve the availability of contraceptives and strengthening the health and family welfare services.

XII. The medium term objectives of the policy included bringing down the total fertility rate to replacement level by 2010.

XIII. Under the policy, the Government of India offered an incentive package to model small families. It included improvement in the facilities for safe abortion, prize to village panchayats and district boards, fulfilling the target of model small families in respect of reducing infant mortality rate and improving literacy.

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Family welfare programs are another important component of family planning process. Over the years, different family welfare programs have been launched to provide for maternity health, child care, awareness etc. to complement family planning. Some of them are –

I. *National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)* – National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was launched in 2005 and its primary focus was on maternal and child health. It aimed at improving the health of the mother and child to reduce mortality and improve other health indicators. It was later merged with National Health Mission.

II. *Janani Suraksha Yojna* (JSY) – This was launched as a part of NRHM. It aimed at reducing both maternal and neo-natal death. It promoted institutional delivery by offering cash assistance. It integrated cash assistance with delivery and post-delivery care. This had special focus in the states which have low institutional delivery.

III. *Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)* – It focuses on both mother and child. The scheme was launched in 1975 for holistic development, immunisation, care and nutrition of children below six years of age, and proper nutritional and health education of pregnant and lactating mothers with 33 projects and 4,891 *anganwadi* centres (AWCs). It has now been universalised.

IV. *Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)* – This was launched in 2009-10 with the objective of providing a safe and secure environment for comprehensive development of children in the country who are in need of care and protection, as well as children in conflict with the law. It provides preventive and statutory care and rehabilitation services to any vulnerable child including orphans, HIV infected, drug abused and trafficked or sexually exploited.

V. *Universal Immunisation Program (UIP)* – The UIP targets 2.7 crore infants and three crore pregnant women annually and is one of the largest programs in the world.

VI. *Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)* – It aims at correcting the imbalances in availability of affordable/reliable tertiary level healthcare in the country in general and augmenting facilities for quality medical education in the under-served States.

VII. *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY)* – It is a conditional cash transfer scheme and under the scheme, cash transfers will be made to all pregnant and lactating women as incentives based on fulfilment of specific conditions relating to mother and child health and nutrition.

Emerging Issues: Ageing

Ageing is defined as *accumulation of changes in personality.* Changes can be biological, social or psychological. With biological ageing, social ageing is also accompanied and the norms, values and roles that are particularly associated with a chronological age also change. Ageing as a phenomenon poses challenges for the individual as well as for society. As a process, it poses challenges at every phase of life from puberty to old-age. Countries like Japan, today face enormous pressure as a significant chunk of their population is now approaching old age and dependency ratio is increasing. India, too, is slowly moving into that direction. According to 2011 Census, there are more than 100 million people with age above 60 in India, and by 2050, according to the UN Population Division, this figure will touch

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315 million. Presently, 75 per cent of the elderly live in rural areas. Declining fertility rate and longevity will be the prime drivers of the bulging elderly population in India in coming decades.

Ageing brings emotional challenges as well. For example, youth face generation gap, older people face loneliness. For the problems related to ageing and the best practices, countries across the world have signed *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002* as an outcome document of the Second *World Assembly on Ageing.*

Theoretically, many explanations have been offered to explain the process of ageing and its social implications –

I. *Disengagement Theory* – As persons grow old, they disengage from larger society to find meaning of their lives. It is a functionalist theory which argues that disengagement of the elderly people from their current roles also helps in freeing up of these roles for others who can perform them more efficiently. This theory, however stereotypes older people as frail, unproductive and of less importance.

II. *Age Stratification Theory* – It came as a reaction to functionalist explanation of ageing in 1970s. According to this theory, social structures affect individuals and the wider strata of older people.

III. *Political-Economy Theory* – This is given by Carroll Estes in her *Critical Perspectives on Ageing, 1991* and according to her, political economy defines the roles which are to be given to the aged.

IV. *Role Theory* – A man performs various roles over lifetime. Even traditional Hindu notion of various phases like *Brahmcharya, Grihastha and Vanprastha* is related to the concept of ageing and social roles.

V. *Activity Theory* – More the activity, greater the life satisfaction. Example of Fauja Singh, a centenarian Sikh, who used to take active participation in marathons worldwide to raise awareness and promote charity, exemplifies this theory.

The aged are defined differently in different societies. In developed countries, there are people more than 65 years old, in developing societies where life expectancy is lower, it includes people above 60. However, sociologically, it is very complex phenomenon involving biological, psychological and sociological change which cannot be attributed to a single arbitrary number.

Treatment meted out to the aged depends much on the cultural and value system of the society. In Japan, China, etc. older people are traditionally revered and looked upon as storehouse of knowledge. Societies like the US, the UK are more likely to dismiss them as unproductive. Various sociological studies have also been conducted to inquire into the status of the elderly in India. Nuclearisation of families and growing individualism is leading to neglect of the elderly members in the family. Panda, in a study of Orissa, found that increasing economic strains on family are leading to the poor care of the adults in the family.

The growth in the proportion of the aged in the population is directly linked to the phenomenon of demographic transition. Two major causes are decline in fertility and longevity due to improvement in health facilities. This leads to higher dependency ratios.

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DEPENDENCY RATIO

The dependency ratio is a measure comparing the portion of a population which is composed of dependents, i.e. elderly people who are too old to work, and children who are too young to work, and other sections of population who are not able to work due to some physical infirmity, with the portion that is in the working age group, generally defined as 15 to 60 years. The dependency ratio is roughly equal to the population below 15 and above 60, divided by population in the 15-60 age group; the ratio is usually expressed as a percentage. A rising dependency ratio is a cause for worry in countries like Japan that are facing an ageing population, since it becomes difficult for a relatively smaller proportion of working-age people to carry the burden of providing for a relatively larger proportion of dependents. On the other hand, a falling dependency ratio can be a source of economic growth and prosperity due to the larger proportion of workers relative to non-workers. This is sometimes referred to as the *demographic dividend*, or benefit flowing from the changing age structure and rising population in the working group. India is gazing at such dividend with some cautious thoughts. In India, the dependency ratio across the states varies. Some socially advanced states like Kerala have high dependency ratio as they have witnessed a rise in the population of the aged.

In the pre-industrial society, the family was also the unit of production and the productive assets were controlled by the elders, which ensured their influence and status despite their declining individual attributes. Also, in their family enterprise the aged could work as long as their condition permitted and on task consistent with their diminishing capacity, which ensured gradualness in their ageing process. On the other hand, in the modern industrial society, as the family tends to lose its production function, the younger tends to become economically independent of their elders, giving rise to a change in the family structure. Thus, in the new type of family structure in the industrial society, the aged are often left to fend for themselves at a time when their capacity for social adjustment tends to decline.

The women become especially vulnerable in old age. Compared with their male counterparts, the aged women possess a much lower level of education, a much lower degree of participation in gainful employment and own little or no economic assets. In countries like India, they have little economic security as ownership of property is still in patriarchal fashion. Hence, they are almost totally dependent upon their male relatives. They are further handicapped by the fact that the majority of them are without their husbands.

Developing societies, such as India, which are subjected to economic development and modernisation, are experiencing an increasing degree of deterioration in the situation of the aged. In India, although the percentage of the aged in the population is not very high compared with the developed countries, it is progressively increasing and their absolute number is enormous. But the development of the public support system is still in a nascent stage.

Problems faced by the aged are of various types ranging from material, physical and emotional –

I. *Physical problems* – Loss of productive capacity, decline of physical vigour, the loss of cells and functions and the growing susceptibility to disease in organs.

II. *Psychological problems* – There is a change in cognitive capacity and self-image and often self-image tends to be rather negative.

III. *Emotional problems* – Isolation, loss of status, loss of spouse, etc. In every sphere of life, as the individual becomes old, his or her capacity to adjust himself or herself to the society declines.

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IV. *Material problems* – Loss of income and lack of adequate social security in countries like India make the matters worse for the poor elderly.

V. *Ageism* – A discriminatory and stereotypical behaviour with the aged is also common. The aged are stereotyped as less efficient and dependent on others.

VI. *Generation Gap* – There is a gap in the way of thinking of the younger generation and the elderly population. Often, views of older people are ignored as archaic which may hurt them.

In big metros like Delhi, instances of violence have also become common where single living elderly become easy targets for the criminals. With rise of nuclear families, these problems become more acute. Further, there is gender dimension to these problems as well. Often female spouses outlive their male partners and in a patriarchal society, where they have fewer economic means, psychological problems are aggravated with economic problems. Vrindavan widows in India and their plight is a case in point. In a developing country like India, where social security support is meagre, condition of old people can be worse. Due to emerging social dynamics, suicide rates among older people are increasing across the world.

The Article 41 of the Indian Constitution directs the state to make effective provision of public assistance for the benefit of the disadvantaged and weaker sections including the aged. Government has also launched *Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme* under its National Social Assistance Programme. It has also come up with *National Policy on Older Persons*. Besides the government, there are a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which offer various kinds of services to the aged. Government of India has passed an enabling legislation – Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, that puts obligations on State as well as individuals and children to take care of parents and the elderly. Despite these measures, India lags behind many of its Asian counterparts like Singapore and Japan which have put comprehensive policies in place. Singapore even has a Minister in place for elderly welfare.

Some critics of the dominant apprehensions about ageing argue that ageing may not be as big a problem as it is presented. In his *Social Security: The Phoney Crisis, 1999*, Dean Baker argues that ageing is unlikely to have huge impact in economic terms in America and instead, much of the pressure on financial systems has come from business lobby. Similarly, British Sociologist Phil Mullan, in his *The Imaginary Time Bomb, 2002*, argues that the belief that the ageing population is a ticking bomb is not true. As health facilities improve and people live longer and healthy, burden of the aged is, in fact, coming down. But the study is primarily focused on the Western countries and may not be applicable to India where life expectancy has increased, but there is no significant rise in the healthcare facilities, especially in the rural areas.

Emerging Issues: Sex Ratio

Sex Ratio is defined as ratio of male and female population. The Indian Census has preferred to define the sex ratio as the number of females per 1000 males, though the definition of the sex ratio followed the world over is the number of the males per 1000 females. It can be further defined as adult sex ratio and child sex ratio. Sex ratio is one of the key demographic indicators which also reflect the socio-

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cultural values of a society. Poor sex ratio in India reflects a preference for male child in a patriarchal society. Poor sex ratio creates demographic void and has serious implications for society.

While there has been an appreciable gain in the overall sex ratio of 7 points from 933 in 2001 to 940 in 2011, the decline in child sex ratio (0–6 years) by 13 points from 927 in 2001 to 914 in 2011 is a matter of grave concern. It is also to be noted that child sex ratio has declined across most of the major states in India in the last Census.

Factors responsible for poor sex ratio in India –

I. Female feticide or the killing of girl babies in the womb due to religious or cultural beliefs, more specifically due to preference of male child.

II. Severe neglect of girl babies in infancy, leading to higher infant death rates.

III. Violence against women which includes dowry deaths, honour killings, sexual violence and so on.

IV. Migration is also emerging as one of the factors as male bread earners are leaving their native places to other places in India and abroad.

V. In a developing country like India, another factor could be added to this list. There is always a possibility that women are under-enumerated because they are not reported as members of the household by the head of the household, when the Census enumerator collects the information.

It is also worth noticing that the lowest child sex ratios are found in the most prosperous regions of India. Haryana and Punjab have one of the lowest sex-ratios in India. So, the problem of selective abortions is not due to poverty or ignorance or lack of resources, it is largely socio-cultural issue. It is also possible that as economically prosperous families decide to have fewer children, often, only one or two now, they may also wish to choose the sex of their child. In Haryana, relatively backward regions like Mewat and Fatehbad have better sex-ratio than the rest of the state. It is argued that backward areas have relatively poor penetration and access to sex determination tools to the poor families.

Though females are biologically stronger than males, they suffer due to their culturally disadvantaged position. Impact of poor sex ratio on society is manifold, it includes –

I. Demographic distortion leading to unhealthy social mix.

II. Imported brides and human trafficking of females to deficit areas and such cases have often been reported from Haryana.

III. Increasing incidences of sexual violence.

IV. Increase in instances of polygamy.

V. It also reinforces other social evils like dowry and dowry deaths.

Steps by government to check sex detection and to improve sex ratio –

I. PCPNDT Act 2003 has been passed which makes sex determination as illegal.

II. Special incentives are launched by some states where ratio is poor. For example, in Haryana, cash incentives are given for girl child. Education has been made free by Haryana government till graduation. Even UPSC waives off examination fee for female candidates.

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III. Many specific schemes have also been launched by both the central and state governments. Haryana government runs schemes like *Apni Beti, Apna Dhan* and *Laadli*. Government of India also launched *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* scheme in 2014.

IV. Technological solutions are also being experimented. A tool called *Silent Observer*, which is fitted along ultrasound machines, is used by states like Maharashtra and Haryana governments to record the observations.

However, these measures, including the PCPNDT Act, have largely proved ineffective in checking the menace of female feticide. Under the PCPNDT Act, very few convictions have been made till date. Instead, more dangerous trends are coming to fore. In Haryana, instances have been reported in 2013, in which, portable ultrasound machines were seized from Sirsa and some other districts. Such illegal machines will make sex detection possible in every nook and corner. A mass awareness campaign to sensitise the people along with a cultural shift in values is required so that females are treated equally in our society and sex ratio can be improved.

Emerging Issues: Child and Infant Mortality

Infant mortality rate is generally taken as death rate of children of age 0-1 year per 1000 children born. In India, it was around 40 per 1,000 live births in 2016 and India was barely able to meet the target set by the MDGs to halve the IMR by 2015. In comparison, the Asian average declined to 25, for OECD it was 5, for China it was 21 and for Sri Lanka it was 15. By 2017, many states had managed to have an IMR, for example – Kerala had managed to achieve an IMR of 6, which was at par with the OECD rates.

Various factors that affect child and infant mortality are –

V. *Biological factors* – They play a dominant role in determining the level of neonatal mortality. These factors are also known as endogenous factors. Nearly three quarter of infant deaths are neonatal deaths.

VI. *Age of mother* – It is known that neonatal mortality rates are higher when the mother is below the age of 18 or above 35.

VII. *Interval between two children* – When the interval between two births is less than one year, there are higher chances of mortality. World Population Fund and Indian Government recommend a gap of 3-4 years between two children.

VIII. *Weight at birth* – The standards laid down by the World Health Organization specify that babies with a birth weight of less than 2,500 grams should be considered as *high risk* babies, needing special care. But 24 to 37 per cent of Indian babies have a birth weight below 2,500 grams and they also don't receive any special care.

IX. Ante-natal care – It is generally concerned with the pregnant woman's well-being. It is severely lacking in our country for various reasons like patriarchy, traditional values and poverty. An anemic mother gives birth to a low-weight baby with slender chances of survival.

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X. *Hygiene* – Proper hygienic conditions and medical care during and after delivery are not ensured, especially in the rural areas. The delivery is generally conducted by an untrained traditional birth attendant called *dai*or an elderly woman called midwife. Institutional delivery is still poor despite significant improvements.

XI. *Diseases* – Common childhood diseases, such as, diphtheria, pertusis (whooping cough), measles, polio and tuberculosis contribute substantially to the post-neonatal and child mortality. Diarrhoea alone claims 30 per cent children death in India.

XII. *Poor immunisation* – Immunisation also needs to be strengthened. Government has launched Universal Immunisation Program, but its coverage is still not 100 per cent.

Fortunately, the practice of breast-feeding is widespread in our country. This protects the baby from exposure to several infections. Breast-feeding is, however, initiated only after 48 to 72 hours of birth, and is absolutely prohibited during the first 24 hours due to various cultural notions. If the baby is put to the breast soon after birth, it acquires several immunities which are passed on by the mother through colostrums (the first flow of milk).

High infant mortality has several social consequences –

I. High rates of infant and maternal mortality are unambiguous indicators of backwardness and poverty. Development is accompanied by sharp falls in these rates as medical facilities and levels of education, awareness and prosperity increase.

II. Because of the high levels of infant and child mortality, a couple may go for a large number of children in the hope that at least a few would survive to adulthood.

III. Mortality of children also has an adverse effect on the health of mothers who have to undergo multiple cycles of pregnancy with, often, a precarious health condition. Parents also face psychological trauma.

IV. Bearing a child is also an economic burden for poor women who are members of labour force in un-organised sector as no compensation is paid for the work not done during the pregnancy.

Emerging Issues: Reproductive Health

Reproductive health concerns with issues like ability to reproduce, safe motherhood, prevention from sexually transmitted diseases, hygiene and family planning. It is an important social and demographic indicator which is closely related to maternal mortality, neo-natal mortality and overall health of cohabiting partners.

In India, malnutrition, proper adult education, age at marriage and lack of medical infrastructure are key factors affecting reproductive health. Social beliefs regarding menstruation have also worked against good reproductive health of women. Institutional delivery is still less than 80 per cent and pre-natal and post-natal care is still not up to desirable standards. 35 per cent of girls still get married by the age of 18 years and early child bearing affects their reproductive health adversely.

Reproductive health is an important area of demographic discussions because it impacts a lot of other related factors like size of family and size of workforce. Reproductive health, thus, has both social and

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economic implications. After years of following one child policy, and owing to declining fertility rates and issues related to reproductive health, China, too, renounced her one child policy. In countries like Japan, where demographic changes are more acute, reproductive health has become an even bigger concern for the policy makers.

Reproductive health is becoming even more significant an issue with rise in cases of infertility and diseases among the women. According to Nirmala, in her 2013 study, elderly women now witness increasing instances of ovarian cancer, uterus removal, acute menopausal symptoms, etc. This is because women are exposed to more risk factors than the men.

National Population Policy 2000 has a specific focus on reproductive health and it has for the first time acknowledged sexual and reproductive needs of adolescents. Government has also launched various schemes like *Kishori Shakti Yojna* for improvement of reproductive health of adolescent girls. Nehru *Yuva Kendras* also promote awareness about reproductive health and hygiene among youth.

Question Bank

1. Population is the biggest liability of India. Comment.
2. In which phase of demographic transition will you put India into? What are the various challenges and opportunities which are associated with this phase?
3. Migration distorts the demographic composition of various regions. Discuss this statement in view of the high rates of migrations from some southern states of India to Gulf countries.
4. Migration also leads to various socio-psychological challenges. Discuss.
5. Fertility rates in India are declining due to social as well as environmental factors. Discuss.
6. What are the salient features of the last population policy of India?
7. Discuss the preparedness of India in context of reaping the potential demographic dividend.
8. Family planning continues to remain a major component of population policy in India. Trace the different stages of family planning in India.
9. How are large sized families affecting the welfare of the poorer sections in India?
10. Examine the ways in which socio-cultural factors affect family planning in India.
11. India is on the brink of reaping demographic dividend, but at the same time it is also moving towards a phase of high dependency ratios. Examine this statement in context of rising population of the aged in India.
12. The elderly in India face numerous challenges. Describe such challenges. What role do legislations like Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act play in this direction?

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13. Sex-ratio in India is a reflection of our patriarchal mindset. Evaluate this statement and also comment on various other factors which have contributed towards a decline in child sex-ratio in the recent times.
14. There is a disparity in sex-ratio across various states and regions in India. Explore the causes with suitable examples.
15. What are the major factors contributing to a higher infant mortality rate in case of girls as compared to boys?
16. Infant mortality in India is higher than many of her neighbors like Sri Lanka. What are the factors that affect infant mortality and how it is affecting the demographic structure of India?
17. What are the various factors that affect the reproductive health of women in India?
18. Discuss the concept of generation gap in the context of differential cultural exposures of different generation of Indian population.

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Challenges of Social Transformation

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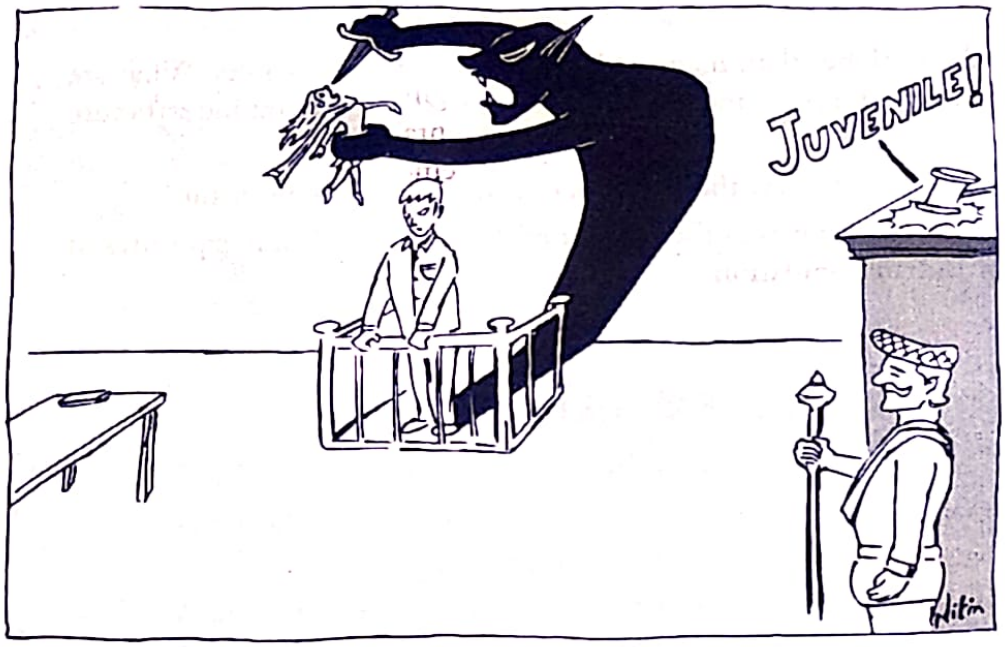

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of social transformation in India
2. Explain the concept of development and the problems related to it
3. Understand the problems faced by the women of India
4. Explain the existence of problems like ethic and religious conflicts in India

The 2012 Nirbhya case presented a peculiar situation before the nation and the government. On one hand, there was a girl, who was brutally raped and later died, symbolising unsafe nature of our society and on the other hand, there was a juvenile perpetrator who was a testimony to the neglect of the same society towards the cause of children. Notwithstanding the enormous effort by the successive governments and non-government sector, the social transformation agenda remains incomplete in India. Despite focus and resources, complex and evolving social dynamics prevent realisation of radical results. For example, violence against women has become a more complex issue with the surge of technology, indulgence of juveniles and lack of adequate social awareness. Similarly, substantialisation of caste has created new caste fault-lines. Surge of new forms of terrorism has further convoluted the communal issue in India. Poor investment in education sector has led to insufficient avenues of social mobility especially for the lower strata of the society. These and other challenges are a hurdle to the democratic structure and unity of the country, and require urgent attention

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Crisis of Development – Displacement, Environmental Problems and Sustainability

Development refers to the change in the desired direction. According to Yogendra Singh – '*Development refers to the strategy of planned social change which is considered desirable by the members of the society.*' So, the notion of development may differ from society to society. It often leads to an increase in scale, efficiency, mutuality and freedom. According to Gunnar Myrdal, rationality is the precondition of the economic and social development in the modern world.

Crisis of Development is a paradoxical situation which refers to the development combined with its negative fallouts. It is a curious combination of un-development resulting from the process of development. It, thus, questions the prevailing notions of development vis-à-vis the emerging challenges, problems and hardships for those who are purported beneficiaries of this developmental process. This paradoxical situation is manifested in form of displacement, loss of livelihood, emotional trauma, migration, environmental damage and inequality.

Current notion of development is largely based on idea of industrialisation and economic growth. Development model that India adopted after Independence adopted a trickle down approach. In the zeal of collective welfare, depressed sections often suffered in the processes of displacement, migration and discrimination. Tribal groups and the agricultural community were the biggest sufferer. So much so that, according to Fernandes, in the past 50 years, around three crore people were displaced and more than 42 per cent of them were tribals. Displacement is direct as well as indirect. Direct displacement is often in form of eviction due to various reasons and indirect displacement is often in form of migration due to uneven developmental process, lack of livelihood opportunities, discrimination, fragile ecosystem and socio-religious tensions. Issues related to displacement process include realistic estimates of affected population, deciding compensation and its mode, timings of displacement and the rehabilitation policy. Rehabilitation and impact analysis are the two biggest factors to be considered while formulating policies for the displaced. Compensations are often ill designed and social consequences are rarely factored in.

Forests and mines remained State monopoly even after Independence and tribals were at the receiving end of this. Their traditional rights over land and forests were conveniently ignored and their powerless status posed no big threat to developmental plans which led to their large scale displacement. In the 1990s, development-induced displacement emerged as a major concern due to dramatic rise developmental projects, and urban expansion in the 1980s. In the decade of 2000s, states like Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal have displaced a very large number of people in order to acquire land for industrial SEZs and IT parks. An SEZ Act was also brought in by the government in 2005. A new trend has started in the 2010s, in which, state governments are competing with each other and are organising *global business summits* to attract foreign investment under *Make in India* mission with an export oriented strategy. More industries will mean more land requirements and more displacements.

Major consequences of the developmental related displacement include –

I. Displacement has a domino effect and primary displacement also leads to secondary and tertiary displacement.

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II. It also results in disruption in kinship relations, gender impacts and loss of livelihood. Family and kinship ties also become fragile in a process of displacement.

III. Cultural conflict also ensues when the displaced people move to other areas.

IV. Displacement of people engaged in agriculture leads to conversion of people from self-cultivators to non-agricultural wage labourers.

V. The displaced people also find it difficult to adjust with the new ecology of the place where they go.

VI. Poverty incidences also increase as livelihood is disrupted.

VII. Mridula Singh has, in her 1992 study, concluded that rehabilitation policies are often blind to rights of women. Often unmarried adult daughters and abandoned women are considered dependent and no separate rehabilitation consideration is given.

VIII. Tribals and ethnic groups are often at the receiving end. Fernandes, in his study of Maharashtra, found that in case of displacements due to projects, majority of the affected were tribals and only 15.8 per cent of tribal families were given land.

IX. Displacement also leads to cultural threat to ethnic groups like tribals which face extreme situations like isolation and assimilation.

However, today situation has changed significantly, especially after 1970s, and developmental issues are scrutinised with a wider view of its impact on locales and wider ecology. Civil Society groups are becoming vociferous supporters of the rights of inhabitants. A prolonged and sustained protest in Odisha against land acquisition by Korean steel major Posco is one such recent example, in which, the deal was ultimately cancelled in 2015. There is also a new Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation Act, 2013 which has for the first time considered the issue of displacement in such an extensive manner. However, still more needs to be done. The displaced people should also be offered to become stakeholders in the projects. Rehabilitation should be done before-hand and should be included in the cost of the project.

Another issue related with developmental process is of environmental problems and sustainability. In 2013, floods caused major havoc in the regions of Uttarakhand. It was primarily a result of developmental activities in fragile Himalayan ecosystem. Similarly, environmental challenges have been posed by construction of dams, coal and nuclear power plants, unstructured urban growth and so on. It has resulted in the loss in species diversification and extinction of indigenous species. Urban development has posed another big challenge. There is a large gap between generation and treatment of domestic solid waste and waste water in India. The majority of the government-owned sewage treatment plants remain dysfunctional most of the time due to faulty design, poor maintenance and lack of technical know-how. According to a 2005 report titled *Status of Sewage Treatment in India* by Central Pollution Control Board, only 20 per cent of the sewage water is treated in India. Sewage effluents are often released in river channels and aquifers and it is leading to serious problems of drinking water.

In March 2009, there was news of Uranium poisoning in Punjab and it was allegedly caused by the fly ash ponds of thermal power stations, and it reportedly led to severe birth defects in children in the Faridkot and Bhatinda districts of Punjab. Air pollution by industry, urban areas and agriculture related

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activities is also leading to serious problems. The annual crop burning practice in Northwest India leads to problem of smog all over North India. A 2016 WHO study ranked Delhi as the second most polluted major city in the world.

Due to these emerging concerns, environment and ecological issues are now a part of developmental agenda of the government. Environmental clearances are now mandatory for any developmental project. Offences related to environment and ecology are dealt with seriously and *National Green Tribunal* and *Green Benches* in Supreme Court of India have been recently established. In 2000, Supreme Court issued directions to all Indian cities to implement a comprehensive waste-management program that should include household collection of segregated waste, recycling and composting. In 2011, several Indian cities started waste-to-energy projects using the similar technology which is used in developed countries like Germany, Switzerland and Japan. In 2014, government launched an *Air Quality Index* to monitor levels of air pollution in major cities. India has also supported international initiatives like Kyoto Protocol and Earth Summit in a bid to prepare an agenda for ecological conservation in wake of developmental activities.

Poverty, Deprivation and Inequalities

Poverty is defined as pronounced deprivation in well-being and it comprises many dimensions. It includes low income, inability to acquire basic goods and services required for survival with dignity. Incidence of poverty and deprivation in India became more rampant after British rule. Indian society was primarily an agrarian society and there were lesser number of social strata. Colonial rule and arrival of market system created number of inequalities which did not exist earlier. Land tenure system during the British rule led to mass impoverishment of peasantry. As a result, at the time of independence, India inherited more than half of its population as impoverished.

Early studies in poverty were guided by concerns for growth and economic development. Income and expenditure were considered to be better measures of poverty which relied on data provided by National Sample Survey (NSS). The erstwhile Planning Commission, set up soon after independence, played a leading part in initiating, stimulating and organising the research on poverty. Further, early conception of poverty was in terms of it being a rural phenomenon and hence, early schemes and programs were rural-focused.

Poverty, deprivation and inequality in India have multiple dimensions and causes. Many cultural factors like caste, untouchability and patriarchy have also contributed to poverty and inequality in Indian society. Unequal position of women is largely attributed to patriarchal system. There

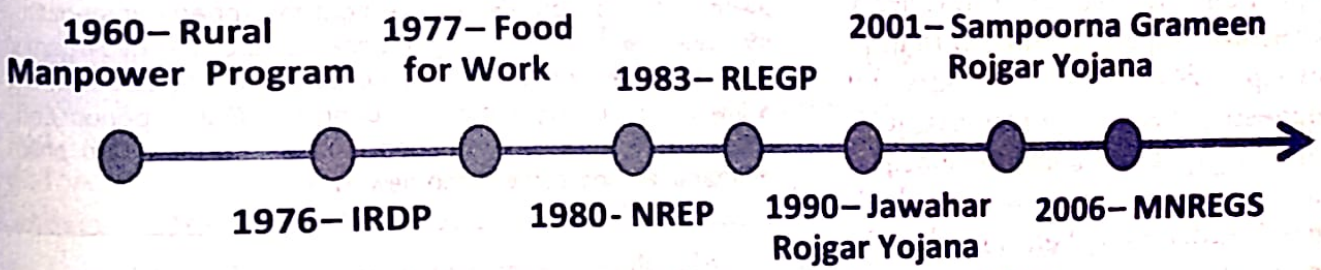

Fig. 25.1 Chronology of Wage Employment Schemes in India

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are also spatial dimensions of inequality. In India, there is unprecedented gap between urban and rural areas.

Minimising poverty, deprivation and inequality has been the foremost agenda of India after independence. A multi-pronged strategy was used comprising wage employment, self-employment, area development and land reforms and social benefits approach. Another classification of strategy to fight poverty can be made as growth, redistribution, basic needs and direct target programs. Initially, a community led approach coupled with a trickle down approach was adopted. Integrated rural development programs were also launched. Land reforms, cooperative movements, Panchayati raj system, Green Revolution, etc. all aimed at ameliorating inequality. Our constitution also states that minimising inequality is one of the goals of the State. However, limitations of the approaches were soon apparent and government revamped its effort. The Fifth Five Year Plan had specific focus on poverty alleviation and called for *Garibi Hatao*. Recently, more efforts have been put in the form of National Rural Livelihood Mission, MNREGS, etc. to remove poverty in rural areas. Schemes like *Swarna Jayanti Sehri Rojgar Yojna*, Basic Services for Urban Poor focus on urban areas.

Due to these efforts, India has made significant progress on the front of poverty alleviation. The World Bank's Global Monitoring Report for 2014-15 on the Millennium Development Goals highlighted that India was the biggest contributor to poverty reduction between 2008 and 2011 and lifted around 140 million people out of absolute poverty. However, Klonner and Oldiges, in a 2012 study titled *Employment Guarantee and its Welfare Effects in India*, concluded that MGNREGS has helped in reducing rural poverty gap and seasonal poverty, but not overall poverty. So, despite of multiple efforts, poverty and inequality remain big challenges. Unless structural causes like corruption, caste, gender bias and regional bias are not addressed, the problems are likely to persist.

Violence against Women

Violence against women is primarily a result of unequal patriarchal social structure. Woman is pushed at margins in relationships, is given lesser rights and is expected to subjugate to whims of male counterparts. Absence of equal rights and financial liberty, coupled with gender stereotypical notions, leave her vulnerable to multiple violence right from birth to death. This violence sometimes appears as *manifest* in form of rapes, dowry deaths, feticides and domestic violence. Sometimes it is more indirect and *latent* like unequal rights, poor nutrition of girl child, inferior education of girls, no share in parental property, low social status, unequal sexual division of labour, discrimination in employment, pornography and misrepresentation of women in the media.

WOMEN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In Rigvedic times, women enjoyed equal status with the men. They received equal education, observed *Brahmcharya* and were even used to undergo *Upnayana* ceremony. They used to study Vedas and women like Ghosha, Apala and Vishvara even composed Vedic hymns. Their participation in public life was also equal to men. Child marriage, *Sati*, polyandry and dowry were unknown. Their position deteriorated in the later Vedic period and birth of daughter became an inauspicious event and girls were denied the right to property. Inter-caste marriages, widow re-marriages became rare and hypergamy became the preferred marriage mode which relegated women a low status. Dowry emerged during the Gupta period and impact of Islam also introduced *Jauhar*, *Purdah*, and child marriage, among some of the new evils.

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As per 2011 census, there is almost 20 per cent difference between literacy of males and females. As per National Family Health Survey 3, more than 50 per cent of women are anemic. Maternal mortality rate in India is one of the highest in the world and is far from touching the target set by Millennium Development Goals. A study by SEWA in 14 occupations found out that more than 85 per cent of women earn wages that are just equal to poverty line income. It is another well-established fact that *glass ceiling* exists for women in not only public, but private sector as well. Representation of women in legislature is also less than 20 per cent and the Woman Reservation Bill in legislatures is still hanging fire.

Lotika Sarkar considers that anxiety is other name of women in Indian context. She is surrounded by anxieties from puberty till death. She undergoes from one form of anxiety to another, anxiety to protect her body, pregnancy related anxiety, post-delivery anxiety and anxiety associated with her family. Utsa Patnaik, talks about the economics of dowry and she indicates that dowry inflicts injury onto the minds of women compelling her to feel worthless who cannot live without marriage and without the support of her husband. While upper class goes for dowry due to affluence, middle class goes for it for status and lower class goes for it for compensation. Amartya Sen highlights that till 2011, there have been more than 20 crore *missing women* due to feticide in India.

According to Uma Chakravorty, despite liberal legislations condition of woman remains un-improved because culture and patriarchal social structures dominate statutory norms in day to day life.

Spending on health and education of women is highly skewed which lays foundation for lifelong discrimination and backwardness of women. Most of the family planning programs are intended to target women, often creating health complicacies for them.

Another form of challenge that adds to above concerns is increasing commoditification of women. Woman is depicted as an item of desire, a mere marketable object, through thriving pornographic industry and advertisement industry. Pornographic literature, magazines, pictures, hoarding and films are published which are seen as upholding the *right to freedom of expression*, in actuality they violate woman's dignity and right to equality and equal treatment. They create and perpetuate patriarchal images of *strong*, *aggressive*, *violent*, and chauvinistic men on one hand, and *meek*, *submissive* and *vulnerable* women as sex objects on the other.

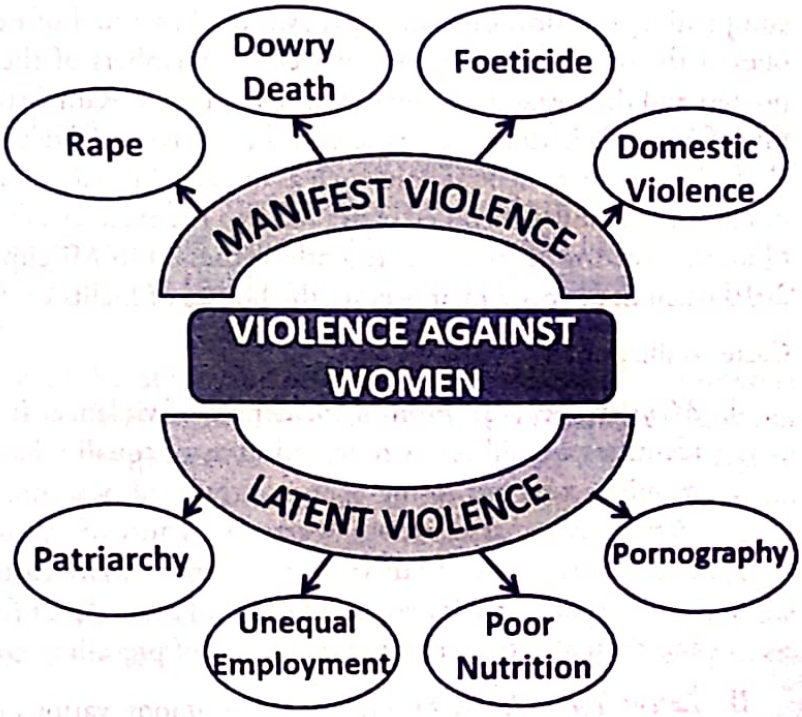

Fig. 25.2 Aspects of Violence Against Women

To stop this violence, active steps must be taken by all stakeholders in the society. Women themselves must be crusaders against it. Various government schemes and laws like Domestic Violence Act,

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Anti-Dowry legislation and Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act must be properly implemented. Apart from these deterrent measures, government has also taken up active positive steps for the empowerment of women against violence and discrimination. Such steps include National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001, National Commission for Women has also been established, gender budgeting provisions have also been introduced, various schemes like Integrated Child Development Scheme, *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna*, Ujjawala, *Swadhar Greh* and SABLA have also been launched. School education should have a component which sensitises young minds about ill effects of violence against women. Thus, a socio-legal framework covering all stakeholders can only tackle this problem.

Caste Conflicts

Caste as a social institution in India is marked by multiple fault lines and inequalities which lead to a lot of friction. Rebellion from the depressed castes and the tendency of upper castes to suppress lower ones lead to conflicts. Causes of caste conflict lie in ritual status, untouchability, group hegemony, identity politics, discrimination, feudal mind-set, economic exploitation, etc.

Caste conflicts emerged only after reformation movement started. Earlier, the conflicts were on ritual grounds only; on issues like temple entry and usage of common village resources. Early conflicts started during the British period itself when reform movements started. After Independence, when constitution declared untouchability as an offence and provided equal status to all Indians and even provided positive discrimination for depressed classes, the higher castes exhibited indignation. In a competitive economy, caste ideology was used as a tool of exploitation of the lower castes. Often, the ones at the receiving end were not well off members of the lower castes, but the one who were the poorest and the weakest among them. According to Ramakrishna Mukharjee, caste riots were observed more frequently in those areas where the caste wise social deprivations are manifestly correlated with the class wise economic deprivations such as in case of Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Andhra. When the members of upwardly mobile scheduled castes react to the excesses of upper castes, they are made targets of fury of upper caste members as was recently witnessed in Mirchpur village of Hisar district of Haryana in 2010 when upper caste members set the houses of Dalits on fire.

Caste conflicts are at two levels –

I. *Manifest level* – In form of incidences of violence. It is more acute in rural areas where caste identities are still very strong and ideas of equality have still not got into minds of upper caste members who fear losing of their privileged position. It is a manifestation of feudal mind-set of rural caste based society, where any effort of the depressed to challenge the supremacy of upper castes is met with violent response. Many caste *senas* were formed by the upper caste members like Ranvir Sena and Diamond Sena. Apart from violence, untouchability, segregation and mutual hatred are other symptoms of prevailing conflict.

II. *Latent level* – At latent level, conflicts among various caste groups is reflected in behaviour of various castes toward each other. This conflict is evident on various occasions like denial to inter-caste marriages, struggle for reservation and social intercourse. Discrimination is worst form of latent conflict. More than 150 types of untouchability have been recorded in Andhra in a study by Prasad.

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Further, nature of caste conflicts has also changed over the years. While earlier conflicts were seen as a reaction to the ritual notions, today, they are more as a result of more secular causes like lack of opportunities, development, access and political participation. Caste system and caste conflicts are effectively used as tools of economic exploitation and political suppression. According to Arun Sinha, contemporary conflicts are a *class war* rather than sporadic caste conflicts. They are waged by rich peasant classes which belong to middle castes and not from the ritually higher Brahmin castes.

Evidences, however, suggest that constitutional and legal framework coupled with rising awareness and a sound judicial system has helped in bringing down the cases of manifest conflicts to a significant degree. Political participation, rise of media and modernisation of Indian society has also gradually blunted the edge of caste and ensuing conflicts.

Ethnic Conflicts

The term *ethnic* is derived from the Greek word *ethno* meaning *nation*. It was originally used to denote primitive tribes or societies that formed a nation on the basis of their simplistic forms of government and economy. The term was put into use to overcome the controversies related with race, and ethnicity emerged as a key sociological and political concept only in the early 1970s. Today, race is typically associated with perceived (and not actual) biological features and ethnicity has cultural/social notions. It is now employed in a broader sense to signify self-consciousness of a group of people united, or closely related, by shared experience such as language, religious belief, common heritage, caste, race, etc. There is nothing innate about ethnicity, as it is imbibed in an individual through socialisation. Ethnicity is not fixed; it is situationally defined. According to Barun De, it is a creative response of the group which is marginalised in society.

Ethnic activity and separation came in a big way in the post-colonial, newly emerging nations like India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nigeria and it has also affected developed countries as well; the problem of Welsh and the Scots, the Basques in Spain, to name only a few. The term *ethnicity* acquired enormous political implications in particular after the disintegration of erstwhile nation-states like former Soviet Union, Pakistan, Yugoslavia and events that followed the 9/11 bombing of Twin World Trade Centre towers in New York in 2001.

Given the enormous diversity of India, there is hardly any consensus over the use of very term *ethnicity* in India. Different scholars have used different frameworks. According to Punekar, there are four major premises where ethnicity in India operates – language, region, religion and caste. It may be argued that castes are divided into sub-castes, language into dialects, region into sub-regions, and religion into sects and, hence, there can be infinite bases to the ethnic identity in India. But ethnic diversity is often less pronounced at these sub levels when compared to the larger levels of caste, language, religion and region. Further, ethnic conflicts are often a consequence of organised communal bodies. For the conflict to become a public issue, usually the organised bodies, which are backed by political parties, have to come to the fore.

Major dimensions of ethnic conflict in India can be identified as –

I. *Linguistic identities* – Soon after Independence, the most powerful manifestation of ethnicity in India was the demand for creation of a state or province on linguistic basis and as a reaction,

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there were instances of latent and manifest clashes. The State Reorganisation Committee was formed in 1956 and boundaries of the states were redrawn on the linguistic basis. The formation of linguistic states was a manifestation of language based ethnic identity. The Independent India's attempt to create a supra national identity in an otherwise segmental ethnic society expedited tensions in several parts of the country. The Government also tried to impose Hindi as the national language to create a national community by joining all the members of the different linguistic ethnic communities. This attempt at *unity in diversity* had adverse effect on the Indian population. Anti-Hindi movement in South lingered on for many years as a reminiscent of the language based ethnic conflicts.

II. *Religion* – Ethnic clashes among various religions, especially between Hindus and Muslims, were witnessed more conspicuously during and after British rule. British policy of *divide and rule* is one of the causes behind it. Clashes in Godhara in Gujarat in 2002, Muzzafarnagar in UP in 2013 are examples where religious ethnic conflicts escalated into incidences of widespread violence. Religion based ethnic conflicts in India are often discussed under the head of communal conflicts.

III. *Tribal identity* – There are two distinct sub-categories in this as tribals in India can be broadly divided into two groups; those belonging to the Himalayan regions as in case of Northeast India and those living in the hinterland. Himalayan tribals are also racially distinct and they have their own identity issues, which are very diverse. As a result, Northeast of India is another prominent theatre of ethnic conflicts in India. Assam was a simmering pot for a few decades until recently. Ethnic conflicts in Assam were based on multiple issues ranging from *sons of soils* argument, illegal migration, autonomy and development. All these created an environment in which the insiders were pitted against the outsiders. This issue of cleansing Assam of foreigners held the state to ransom for six long years from 1979 till the Assam Accord was signed in 1985. Hatred was also stoked up against the *Bodos*, the *Bengalis*, the *Marwaris* and the non-Assamese Muslims. As a result, ethnic conflicts flare up on and off in Assam even now. In July 2012, violence broke out with riots between *Bodos* and Bengali speaking Muslims in which around 80 people died and more than four lakh were displaced. Apart from Assam, other Northeastern states have also witnessed instances of ethnic conflicts, but sustained efforts of government of India, local leaders and political class have led to signing of various accords and peace agreements.

IV. *Aryan and Dravidian identities* – This is another purported framework to analyse the ethnic conflicts in India, though it is debunked by many scholars. The Aryan Theory was largely a figment of imagination of the colonial rulers and was interpreted differently by different groups and later a binary was created around this in form of *Aryans and Dravidians* dichotomy. Many movements like Self Respect Movement during colonial period, anti-Hindi movement in South after independence were result of this latent conflict. However, in the contemporary times, this marker has been diluted to a great extent after the Indian state accommodated most of the legitimate expectations of the people from each part of India.

Sometimes, ethnic conflicts also cross national boundaries. Tamil ethnic conflicts involving India and Sri Lanka is an example of such transnational ethnic conflicts. Demand of Tamlians in India for a fair deal for Tamilians in Sri Lanka gave rise to tension which, they claimed, was a response to attempt of Singhalese majority of ethnic cleansing of Tamilians. Violence in Punjab was example of another form

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of ethnic conflicts which were rooted language, religion and relative deprivation. Post 1990s conflicts in Kashmir are also termed as religion based ethnic conflict with cross border support.

Ethnic conflicts are often, but not always, said to arise between groups that are based on unequal relationship, namely the *majority group* and the *minority group*. There can be other instances of conflicts involving majority and majority or minority and minority as well. *Ethnic cleansing* is the worst form of ethnic conflict in which the dominant ethnic group systematically eliminates or ousts the members of minority ethnic groups. Sri Lanka is accused of going on for such an exercise during war with LTTE. Similarly, Hitler went for ethnic cleansing of Jews during the Second World War. Genocide of minority Tutsi community by majority Hutu community in Rwanda in 1990s is one of the most recent examples of mass ethnic conflicts. Back at home in India, conflict between native Assamese and Bangladeshi migrants is such an example. Ethnic conflict may exist at a more subtle and latent level when open conflicts are kept in check. Latent ethnic conflicts appear in form of discriminations, prejudices and feeling of mistrust or antagonism. Ethnic conflicts and ethnic movements in India and around the world can be explained by many theoretical strands like *relative deprivation theory* and *resource competition theory*, some of which are –

I. Kellas points out that many examples show material and economic interests at stake in ethnic politics, and individuals seek an advantage, usually by playing up their ethnicity to secure scarce resources. So, ethnic fault lines are only a facade behind which lies, competition, economic or political, for scarce resources.

II. Another theory is *resource mobilisation theory*, and according to it, development leads to a rise rather than a decline in ethnic mobilisation because it provides resources to ethnic groups in the periphery, increasing their bargaining position and organisational capacity for action.

III. According to *internal colonisation* theory, relationship between members of the dominant or core community within a state and members of the minority or peripheral communities is characterised by exploitation. Ethnic groups from Northeastern India often blame government of pursuing a policy of internal colonisation.

IV. *Cultural deprivation* theory on the other hand argues that one of the significant inducements to ethnicity comes from the feeling of insecurity among ethnic minorities as a result of their fear of getting lost in the sea of majority. Threat of assimilation into majority leads to ethnic movements and conflicts. Intrusion of Bangladeshi into Assam and resulting conflict can be seen in this light.

V. Another explanation is that ethnic conflicts are result of excessive ethnocentric world view of different communities involved. There are strong notions of *insiders* vs *outsiders* or *us* vs *them.*

Apart from these reasons, external support in form of arms, money, etc. is also becoming important in fomenting ethnic conflicts. Haans J Freddy, in a chapter titled *Conflict in Northeast India: An Overview* from his 2017 book, provides a historical account of the emergence of ethnic conflicts in Northeast which are seen as a continuance of the colonial policy of alienation and segregation of the ethnic groups living in the region from the rest of India.

According to James Manor, in his write-up *Ethnicity and Politics in India*, historically, an accommodative approach was followed by leaders like Nehru to check ethnic conflicts in India. Under this strategy,

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political bargaining was used to share the resources and power with the people from different groups and sub-groups. Later, political leaders tried to be more manipulative and as a result only limited success was achieved in curbing ethnic conflicts. Force has also been used as a knee jerk response at times. Ashutosh Varshney, in his article *Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond, 2001*, argues that some towns, cities, areas and localities are more prone to ethnic conflicts. Therefore, ethnic conflicts have to be looked from a micro lens. Instead of focusing on national level structures to quell ethnic flare-ups, local level inter-ethnic relationships should be improved. According to Ashutosh Varshney, strong inter-ethnic engagement in local communities like villages often disincentivises politicians and other vested interests from stoking ethnic violence for electoral gain. On the particular issues related to Northeastern India, Clemens Spies, commented that – '*The various problems and conflict constellations in the Northeast represent durable challenges to the integrative and accommodative capacity of Indian democracy.*' Thankfully, despite many hiccups and hurdles, most of the ethnic groups in India have reposed their faith in the electoral and democratic process. It has immensely helped India as a nation to hold itself together for the past seventy odd years.

Communalism

Communalism has been described as a sectarian exploitation of social traditions as a medium of political mobilisation. Communalism arises when some characteristics of an ethnic identity; it can be race, religion, etc. and not necessarily religion alone; are taken and emotionally surcharged and used for satisfaction of some interests which are generally political interests. It is a strong allegiance to one's own ethnic group rather than to the wider society. In India, basis of allegiance had predominantly been religion, so, in context of India, communalism is chauvinism based on religious identity. Clifford Geertz, an American anthropologist, in his *The Interpretation of Cultures, 1972*, wrote, *when we speak of communalism in India, we refer to religious contrasts, when we speak of it in Malaya, we are mainly concerned with racial ones, and in Congo, with tribal ones.* Thus, when we talk of India we are talking mainly of religion based oppositions.

SHADES OF COMMUNALISM

T K Oommen has offered six types of communalism in India; assimilationist, welfarist, retreatist, retaliatory, separatist and secessionist. *Assimilationist communalism* is one in which smaller religious groups are assimilated or integrated into a larger religious group. Such communalism claims that many of the Scheduled Tribes and religions like Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists are essentially Hindus and they should be covered by the personal laws like the Hindu Marriage Act. *Welfarist communalism* aims at the welfare by improving living standard of a particular community. Missionary organisations fall into this category. *Retreatist communalism* is the one in which a small religious community keeps itself away from politics and mainstream social life to create a niche space for itself. For example, Bahai community forbids its members from participating in political activities. *Retaliatory communalism* is based on vengeance and aims at taking avenge for the historical wrongs done the members of the community. It attempts to harm, hurt, and injure the members of other religious communities, most of the communal conflicts of the recent times like Godhara and Muzzaffarnagar fall under this category. *Separatist communalism* is one in which one community wants to maintain its cultural specificity and demands a separate territorial state within the country. Jharkhand Movement was one such example. Lastly, *secessionist communalism* is one in which a religious community wants a separate political identity and demands an independent state. Khalistan Movement is one such example.

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Communalism is more about politics, and less about religion. A communalist may or may not be a devout person, and devout believers may or may not be communalists. However, all communalists do believe in a political identity based on religion. One of the characteristic features of communalism is its claim that religious identity overrides everything else. Whether one is poor or rich, whatever one's occupation is high or low, irrespective of the caste or political beliefs, one has, it is religion alone that counts. According to Bipan Chandra, religion is not the core feature of communalism. It is just used as a mask the non-religious social needs, aspirations and conflicts. It is used a convenient vehicle of mass mobilisation. Apart from the vested interests and power considerations, ecology of a particular area also plays a role in spreading of communal ideas. Some localities are more prone to communal violence than the other localities. This, perhaps, explains the recurring incidences of communal flare-ups in certain areas of UP, Kerala, etc.

The interpretation of history is done for the purpose of mobilisation in a communal setup. Further, the protagonists of communalism dole out a particularistic view of history and take care to point out that a community is identified with common sufferings and goals as a whole. The exclusiveness of the community is stressed vis-à-vis other communities, and it is therefore, considered logical to fight for community's rights in a literal way.

Communalism thrives on hatred and hinders social change. It diverts attention from real issues to other emotionally charged issues. It leads to communal riots and conflicts which end up in indiscriminate violence, killings, rapes and plundering.

India has had a history of communal riots from pre-Independence times, invariably, as a result of the divide-and-rule policy adopted by the colonial rulers. But colonial policies alone are not responsible for the growth of communalism in India, as communal conflicts occurred even before them and after them as well. Communalism in India can be conceptualised to have developed through three stages, each stage providing its own definition of communalism and each merging into the next stage –

I. Communalism started to develop during the last quarter of the 19th Century when early communal views led to the notion that in India, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians form distinct communities.

II. Communalism entered a second stage in the beginning of the 20th Century, when communalists argued that many of the economic and political interests of the followers of different religions diverge and are sometimes opposite because of their following different religions.

III. Communalists of the third stage argued that the secular interests of the followers of different religions were not only different, but mutually totally antagonistic. What was good for Hindus was bad for Muslims and vice versa.

For ages, there existed different religious communities, however, communal tensions among them are quite recent ones. Partition of India witnessed one of the biggest communal genocides in the history of humanity, in which, more than five lakh people lost their lives and millions were displaced. Recent communal outbreaks include communal riots post Operation Bluestar and killing of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984, Bombay Riots following demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992, Godhra Riots in 2002 and Muzzafarnagar Riots in 2013.

To tackle the issue, elaborate measures have been provided in the Constitution of India and secularism is adopted as one of the goals of Indian state. An active role is also played by autonomous bodies

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like *National Human Rights Commission of India* and *National Commission for Minorities* to protect the interests of vulnerable groups. Ground-level work is being carried out by Non-governmental organisations as well. National Integration Council has also been set up and active steps are taken by government to stem any such incidents beforehand. Apart from these steps, there is also an urgent need to decommunalise the history education in India and undo the damage done by the colonial rulers. History textbooks are replete with spurious figures which misrepresent Indian society. Instead, we must learn to recognise our unbroken history of composite culture which thrives on diversity.

Religious Revivalism

Religious revivalism has been dealt in detail in the first part of this book. Here is a quick recap of the basic idea and some more details in context of the Indian society. Religious revivalism can be explained as a phenomenon which includes growth of the religious institutions, revival and spread of belief systems, increase in number of believers and so on. All this is marked by the increasing importance of religion in civic life.

Some sociologists view religion in contrasting terms with the modernity. Their proposition is that as we become modern, we become less religious as rational beliefs are often in contradiction with the religious beliefs. A corollary of this proposition is that religion and secularism also form a binary opposite pair. But across the world, this hypothesis has been found untrue and there are trends of religious revivalism in different forms.

In this context, religious revivalism can be traced back to the colonial period. Some revivalist movements like Arya Samaj, Akali Movement and Ahmadiyya Movement clubbed religious agenda with the social reform agenda. Another reason for religious revivalism in India was the growth of nationalism as an anti-dote of colonialism. Many nationalists found religion as the convenient basis for the mobilisation of masses against the British. Birth and growth of parties like Muslim League, Akali Dal and Hindu Mahasabha is an example of this trend. Religious festivals like *Ganesh Chaturthi* were widely used by leaders like Tilak to mobilise public opinion against the British.

Birth and growth of the ideology of secularism are also regarded as a contributing factor towards the birth of the religious revivalism in India. Secularism was viewed as detrimental to the traditional religious beliefs and institutions and as a result, they resorted to religious revivalism as a counter-strategy to check penetration of secular beliefs in the realm of the religion. Growth of ideological institutions like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) can be attributed to this factor as they attempt to glorify and revive the past traditions in wake of modernising forces.

Growth of media and communication has also played its own role. Means of communication have helped in spreading of religious ideas equally. Misrepresentation of violent incidents and giving them a communal colour has also helped in fanning of religious sentiments. Other factors that contribute towards the growth of religion are poverty, inequality and injustice. People search for solace in religious institutions. Recent growth of cultic organisations like *Dera Sachha Sauda* is also a reflection of this trend.

Another important factor for the growth of religion was the mixing of religion with politics. Politicians found religion as an easy handle to win votes and elections. Minority and majority politics is a result of

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this trend. Parties like Muslim League in Kerala, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab are some of the examples of the religion based parties recognised by the Election Commission. According to Vishal Arora, in his article *Religion and Politics in India, 2009*, trends of religion and politics mixing can be traced to the British era when the British pitted one religious community against the other. In Independent India, communal riots, temple politics, etc. reinforced the politics based religious revivalism. More recently, the revivalist forces are a result of the growth of right wing politics. Electoral victory of the BJP by a majority in the 16th Lok Sabha elections, victory of Donald Trump in the US Presidential election in 2016 are examples of this trend.

One perturbing feature of the revivalist forces is that they are also strengthening the fundamentalist forces in the process. Often religious texts are taken at their face value and the spirit behind them is given a pass. Growth of fundamentalist groups like Islamic State and their affiliate organisations throughout the world is an example of such deviations.

Illiteracy and Disparities in Education

At the time of independence, there were more than 82 per cent people who were illiterate, today, as per the 2011 Census, the figure has been reduced to 25 per cent. But this figure is still lower than the global average. Illiteracy in rural areas, among women, among older people and in certain states is still high. Further, being literate doesn't mean being educated in India. Literacy is defined in basic functional terms and is not equivalent to having adequate educational skills.

Historically, education in India has not been all-inclusive in its approach. Even Vedas were prohibited for women and lower castes for a long time. Equality of educational opportunity demands that all pupils be exposed to the same opportunities, same curriculum in similar schools through equal inputs. While equality of opportunity to basic primary education is theoretically realised to some extent by introducing Right to Education in 2009, equality in outcome or achievement is more challenging.

Inequalities in education are a reflection of the wider social stratification in the society. It is almost always that those who receive poor education are from poor families. Like strata in society, there are also strata of schools. As pupils gain different education in different schools, there are disparities in education. According to Avijit Pathak, in his *Social Implications of Schooling, 2002*, 'schooling *intensifies the existing divide between the elite and the masses*'. Children going to privileged schools learn to be confident while children deprived of that may learn to feel the opposite. Some even do not get education of any kind. According to a report of Pratichi Trust titled *The Pratichi Education Report, 2002*, educational attainment levels also depend on economic and cultural factors. According to the report, children of SCs and STs do not attend schools during harvest season as they have to help their parents in cultivation of crops. Gender and caste discrimination impinges upon the chances of education and girls are often forced to contribute to household chores and school is a distinct second priority among the poor. Enrolment of girls in higher education is also highly skewed.

The inequalities in the literacy rate are especially important in developing country like India because they tend to reproduce inequality across generations. Illiterate parents are at a severe disadvantage in ensuring that their children are well educated, thus perpetuating existing inequalities.

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Disparities in education can be observed along various dimensions –

I. *Regional disparities* – According to 2011 Census, there are still 25 per cent illiterate people in India and this situation is even worse in states like Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan, etc. Some states like Kerala have achieved almost universal literacy, others are still struggling.

II. *Rural-urban disparities* – Quality of education in rural and urban, private and public schools varies greatly. Literacy levels are also lower in villages as compared to urban areas.

III. *Gender based disparity* – Further, disparity is also reflected in literacy levels along the lines of gender. Literacy disparity among male and females is almost 20 per cent as per 2011 Census.

IV. *Disparity on the basis of caste* – Cultural reproduction takes place in school education also. Generally, public schools which are now notorious for substandard education are attended by children from lower castes.

V. *Ethnicity and education disparities* – Schools are also mired by ethnocentric environment. Stereotypes are promoted often unwittingly. Poor educational attainments of tribal people highlight this point.

VI. *Imbalance between primary and higher education* – Educational system in developing countries is still under colonial influence and it is generally top heavy with more focus on higher education with a neglected primary education.

VII. *Education and employability disparity* – While we have been able to overcome illiteracy to some extent, quality education is still elusive. As per a 2005 NASSCOM-McKinsey report, almost 70 per cent of engineers are un-employable. Similarly, Yashpal Committee also rued over the sorry state of affairs in higher education.

VIII. *Dropout rates* – Due to prevailing disparity, dropout rates in government schools are still very high. According to a 2016 report of UNESCO, 47 million children in India drop out before they reach class ten

One of the major causes of this disparity is poverty and deprivation. Prevailing social inequalities lead to unequal access to education. Our patriarchal social structure also deters female child from venturing out. Male-female ratio deteriorates as girl child progresses from lower classes to higher classes. Infrastructure is also a big hurdle. Absence of nearby schools also deters parents from sending their girls to schools. According to NGO Pratham's report, absence of toilet facilities in schools is also a big cause for girls' dropout. Further, lack of local content also makes it difficult for students to grasp well.

However, over the years, India has also made significant improvements in this direction, especially in direction of gross enrolment. Right to Education, 2009 is a significant move in this direction and now there is almost 100 per cent enrolment at primary education. 99 per cent of villages now have a primary school within one km now after the enactment of Right to Education. All children up to class 8th are provided free books now. Mid-Day Meal scheme has also helped towards improving retention and attendance in schools. Government is also going ahead with decentralisation of education, and institutes of higher education like IITs, IIMs and AIIMS are being opened in tier two cities as well.

To address the issue of disparity and illiteracy, the root causes must be addressed first. Gender bias, poverty, infrastructure, etc. must be addressed on war footage. Further, education should be pupil

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friendly. Information technology can be used to make classrooms more interactive and pupil-friendly. It can also help in spreading quality education in even far flung areas. Curricula should be so redesigned as to evoke curiosity, promote inquisitiveness and help pupils explore their potential and interests as the true education is the one which liberates.

Question Bank

1. Economic development is not same as human development. Evaluate this statement in light of the various human development indicators across the states of India.
2. What are the new forms of inequalities that have emerged in the post-liberalisation India?
3. What is the linkage between poverty, deprivation and inequality?
4. Poverty and deprivation are the biggest challenges in the social transformation of India. Comment.
5. Make a sociological analysis of the growth of left wing extremism in India with special focus on the developmental deficit in these regions.
6. *Nirbhaya* Rape Incident was just a reflection of the rising trend of violence against the women. Critically evaluate this statement.
7. What are the various legislative and policy measures which the Government of India has taken to ensure the safety and welfare of women in India?
8. Dowry is dehumanising as it puts a price on human beings and makes the marriage a materialistic business transaction which reduces woman as an object of trade. Comment.
9. What are the challenges faced by the working women in India? Do you agree that women have equal opportunities in the socio-economic fields?
10. Caste conflicts in India now operate at more subtle levels. Discuss.
11. Caste conflicts in India now happen among castes which share the same stratum in caste hierarchy. Explain this trend especially in the wake of the material benefits associated with the caste.
12. Evaluate the conflicts in the Northeastern region of India from an ethnic perspective. Also examine the underlying economic and political factors lying beneath these conflicts.
13. How identity politics have fuelled the communal debate in India? Are the minority and the majority politics adding fuel to the communal fire in India?
14. What are the socio-economic factors which are leading to the growth and sustenance of communalism in India?
15. Religious fundamentalism is a threat to secular fiber of Indian state. Discuss.
16. Discuss the various forms which religious revivalism is taking in India?
17. How has poor state support in India affected the education sector? To what extent the private players have been able to fill the gap created by lack of governmental funding.
18. Unequal education is the weakest link in the India's developmental story. Comment.
19. What are the causes of educational inequalities in India? What are the consequences of educational inequality?

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Subject Index

A

Absolute Mobility, p. 159
Action Systems, p. 10
Activity Theory, p. 500
Ad Dharmis, p. 475
Advanced Communism, p. 73
Affective affinity, p. 234
Affective Neutrality, p. 114
Affective Social Action, pp. 98–99
Age Stratification Theory, p. 500
Agents of Social Change, pp. 264–266
  Agitation, p. 199
  Agrarian Classes, pp. 318, 366–376
  British India, pp. 367–368
  Lenin's Framework, p. 370
  Post-Independence India, pp. 367–371
  Pre-British India, pp. 366–367
Agrarian Social Structure, pp. 314–319, 366–376
Agricultural Labour Force, p. 425
Agriculture, pp. 421–423
  changing mode of production in Indian, pp. 421–423
Alienation, pp. 74–78
Almond, Gabriel, p. 227
Alternate Hypothesis, p. 61
Altruistic suicide, p. 91
Ambedkar, B R, p. 226
Ancient Slave Mode of Production, p. 72
Animism, pp. 215–216
Anomic Division of Labour, p. 88
Anomic suicide, p. 92
Antagonistic Cooperation, p. 69
Anthropology, pp. 15–16
Arranged Marriage, p. 246
Asiatic Mode of Production, p. 72
Atkinson, J M, p. 93
Authority, pp. 101–103, 175
  charismatic authority, p. 102
  legal rational authority, p. 102
  traditional authority, p. 102

B

Baviskar, B S, p. 415
Becker, Howard, p. 220
Bell, Norman, p. 237
Benston, Margaret, p. 237
Berger, Peter, pp. 17, 26
Bernard, Jessie, p. 251
Berreman, G D, p. 133
Beteille, Andre, p. 308
Bethune Society, p. 274
Bhakti Movements, p. 459
Bhoodan, p. 316
Biographical or Life History Research, p. 56
Blau, Peter, p. 182
Blood Relations, p. 233
Bondage, p. 423
Bonded Labour, pp. 423–424
Bottomore, T B, pp. 7, 175
Bourdieu, Pierre, p. 13
British India, pp. 367–368
  agrarian classes in, pp. 367–368
Broken Men Theory, p. 324
Brother-sister Relationship, p. 240
Brown, J Francis, p. 266
Brown, Radcliffe, p. 14
Bruce, Steve, p. 217
Bureaucracy, pp. 103–104, 181–183

C

Capitalistic Mode of Production, p. 73
Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 2009, p. 50
Case Study, p. 50
Caste Conflicts, pp. 514–515
Caste System, pp. 319, 320–350
  Andre Beteille's Perspective on, pp. 330–332
  Dipankar Gupta's Perspective on, pp. 332–333
  features of, pp. 333–335
  G S Ghurye's perspective on, pp. 324–325
  historical insight into, p. 322

Scanned by CamScanner

Caste System (*Contd.*)
Louis Dumont's Perspective on, pp. 328–330
M N Srinivas' perspective on, pp. 326–330
origin theories, pp. 323–324
state and non-state steps towards abolition of, pp. 340–350
Causal Pluralist Methods, p. 98
Causation, p. 28
Charismatic Authority, p. 102
Charismatic Personalities, p. 296
Charon, Joel M, p. 35
Child Labour, pp. 442–444
Child Mortality, pp. 504–505
Chipko Movement, p. 479
Citizenship, pp. 192–193, 449
Civic Religion, pp. 226, 229
Civil Marriage, p. 245
Civil Society, pp. 194–197
Clan Nomenclature, p. 392
Clash of Civilisations, p. 228
Class
and society, pp. 78–82
Marx on, p. 145
social stratification of, pp. 146–147
Weber on, p. 145
Class Consciousness, p. 81
Class Inequality and Political Order, pp. 1972, 80, 150
Class Polarisation, p. 78
Class Struggle Theory, pp. 80, 259
Classical Elite Theory, pp. 177–180
Classical Indology, p. 277
Closeness, p. 233
Cluster Sampling, p. 59
Coleman, James, p. 134
Collective Action, p. 198
Collective Effervescence, p. 94
Colonial Rule, p. 294
impact on Indian society, p. 294
protests and movements during, pp. 302–304
social reforms during, pp. 305–306
Colour Theory, p. 324
Combined Movements, p. 480
Commodity Fetishism, p. 76
Common Sense, pp. 16–18
Communalism, pp. 229–230, 297, 518–520
Community Development Program, pp. 412–414
Community Specific Rules Based Marriages, p. 247
Comparative Method, p. 44
Comparative Reliability, p. 62
Comte, Auguste, p. 25
Concept of Hegemony, p. 67
Conflict Perspective, pp. 67–68
Conformist, p. 119
Conformity and Deviance or Merton's Strain Theory, pp. 118–121
Conjugal Relations, p. 239
Content Analysis, pp. 50–51
Convenience Sampling or Accidental Sampling, p. 59
Conversation Analysis, p. 39
Cooperative Farming, p. 317
Cooperative Movement, p. 412
Cooperatives, pp. 414–416
Correlation, p. 28
Cross Sectional Design, p. 43
Cultural Integration, p. 361
Cultural Lag, p. 259
Cultural Revolt, p. 297
Cultural System, p. 111
Cybernetic Hierarchy of Control, p. 112
Cyclical Theories of Social Change, pp. 260–261

D

Dahrendorf, Ralf, p. 67
Dalit Movements, pp. 468–478
Dalits, p. 140
Dark Ages, p. 4
Das Capital, 1867, p. 76
Das, Veena, p. 252
Data Collection, pp. 46–64
Dawson, Andrew, p. 218
Decentralisation of Power, pp. 451–455
Deduction, p. 43
Democracy, pp. 193–194, 449
Denomination, p. 220

Scanned by CamScanner

Dependency Culture, pp. 137, 262
Dependency Ratio, p. 501
Dependency Theory, p. 138
Deprivation, pp. 141, 511–512
Derrida, Jacques, p. 11
Desacrilisation, p. 224
Desai, A R, pp. 298, 312, 290–292
Descent, pp. 248–249, 379
Descriptive Research Design, pp. 42–43
Development and Dependency, pp. 262–264
Devi Dichotomy, p. 252
Deviance, p. 118
Dialectical Materialism, p. 69
Differentiation, p. 132
Diffuseness, p. 114
Direct Benefit Transfer, p. 417
Discovering Suicide, 1978, p. 93
Disengagement Theory, p. 500
Disparities in Education, pp. 521–523
Displacement, pp. 509–511
Divine Origin of Caste, p. 323
Division of Labour, pp. 86–89
Divorce, p. 240
Dominant Caste, pp. 327–328
Draw a Person Task, p. 51
Drought Prone Areas Program, p. 412
Dube, S C, pp. 312, 356
Durkheim, Emile, p. 82
Duverger, Maurice, p. 184
Dynamic Density, p. 87

E

Ecological Validity, p. 63
Economic and Political Manuscripts, 1844, p. 75
Economic Development, p. 167
social determinants of, p. 167
Economic Infrastructure, p. 71
Economic Reductioinism, p. 71
Economic Sociology, p. 12
Economics, pp. 11–13
Education in Post-Welfare Society, 2005, p. 268
Egoistic Suicide, p. 91
Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1912, p. 93
Elwin, Verrier, p. 361
Endogamy, pp. 246, 391
Enlightenment, p. 6
Entitlements, pp. 390–391
Environmental Decay, p. 435
Environmental Movements, pp. 478–480
Environmental Problems, pp. 509–511
Equality, pp. 133–135
Estate system, p. 133
Ethnic Conflicts, pp. 515–518
Ethnic Movement, p. 480
Ethnicity, pp. 152–153, 480–484
social stratification of, pp. 152–153
Ethnography, pp. 47–49
Ethnomethodology, pp. 38–40
Etzioni, Amitai, p. 181
Evaluation, p. 132
Evolutionary View of Social Change, p. 261
Exclusion, pp. 139–141
Exogamy, pp. 246, 391
Experimental Research Design, p. 43
Exploratory Research Design, p. 42
External Validity, p. 62
Externalities, p. 12

F

Fact, pp. 28–32
Family, pp. 233–243, 381–385
isolated nuclear family of Parsons, p. 243
types and forms of, p. 242
Family Planning, pp. 497–499
Farmers Movements, pp. 459–463
Fatalistic suicide, pp. 92–93
Feminist Economics, p. 12
Feudalistic Mode of Production, pp. 72–73
Feyerbend, J F, p. 24
Field Study, pp. 467–49
Fletcher, Ronald, p. 235
Focus Group Technique, pp. 49–50
Footloose Labour, p. 425
Forced Division of Labour, pp. 88–89
Forces of Production, pp. 70–71
Formal or Legal Equality, p. 135
Formal Organisation of Work, pp. 168–169
Formulation of Ideal Types, p. 100

Scanned by CamScanner

Foucault, Michel, p. 11
Frank, Andre Gunder, p. 138
Frankfurt School of Germany, p. 67
French Revolution, p. 8
Functionalism, pp. 66–67
Fundamentalism, pp. 229–230

G

Galanter, Marc, p. 469
Gandhi, Mahatma, p. 263
Garfinkel, Harold, p. 33
Gender, pp. 148–150
  social stratification of, p. 150
  Gender Budgeting, pp. 12s
Generation Gap, pp. 123, 223
Gesture, p. 124
Ghost Theory or Dreams Theory of Spencer, p. 212
Ghurye, G S, pp. 278–280, 324–325
Globalisation, p. 204
Goode, William, p. 253
Gotra panchayats, p. 454
Gouldner, Alvin, p. 182
Gramdan, p. 316
Grand Functional Theories, p. 117
Great Tradition, pp. 402–403
Green Revolution, pp. 268, 412
Gupta, Dipankar, p. 310
Guru-shishya Parampara, p. 300

H

Haralambos, Michael, p. 139
Hart, Nicky, p. 253
Hawthorne Studies, p. 169
Hedgewar, K B, p. 230
Hierarchy, pp. 135–136
Historic Analysis or Documentary Research, p. 56
Historical Materialism, pp. 68–71
History, p. 14
Holmstrom, M, p. 437
Homestead Rights, p. 317
Horizontal Mobility, p. 158
Household, pp. 243–244
Hypergamy, p. 246
Hypogamy, p. 246
Hypothesis, pp. 60–62

I

I and Me, pp. 127–129
Ideal Types, pp. 99–101
Identity Movements, pp. 480–484
Ideographic research, p. 22
Ideology, p. 197
Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, p. 6
Illiteracy, pp. 521–523
Incest Taboo, p. 245
Indian Nationalism, pp. 187–189, 295–305
  A R Desai's idea of, p. 298
  social background of, pp. 295–298
  in India, p. 188
  Indian Society, pp. 275–292
Indian Tradition, pp. 298–302
  modernisation of, pp. 298–302
  Yogendra Singh on, pp. 301–302
Indian Village, pp. 308–314
  colonial idea of, p. 309
  M N Srinivas on, p. 282
  study of, pp. 310–314
Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY), p. 499
Individual Mobility, pp. 158–159
Indology, pp. 276–280
  classical indology, p. 277
  modern indology, p. 277
  of G S Ghurye, pp. 278–280
Induction, p. 43
Industrial Class Structure, pp. 372–373
Industrialisation, p. 240
Inequalities, pp. 133–135, 511–512
Infant Mortality, pp. 504–505
Informal Bureaucracy, p. 182
Informal Organisation of Work, pp. 169–170
Informal Sector, pp. 440–442
Innovator, p. 119
Institutional Social Facts, p. 85
Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), p. 499

Scanned by CamScanner

Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), p. 499
Integrated Rural Development, p. 412
Integrated Watershed Development Program for Watershed Management, p. 412
Intellectual Function, p. 210
Interest Groups, pp. 183–185
Inter-Generational Mobility, p. 158
Internal Validity, p. 62
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), pp. 468–473
Interpretivist Sociology, p. 33
Inter-State Regionalism, p. 453
Interview, pp. 52–53
  limitations of, pp. 52–53
  structured interviews, p. 52
  unstructured interviews, p. 52
  Intimacy, p. 233
Intra-Generational Mobility, p. 158
Intra-State Regionalism, p. 453
Invisible Religion, p. 225
Iron Cage of Rationality, p. 107
ISKCON, p. 220
Isolated Nuclear Family of Parsons, p. 243

J

Jagirdari, p. 315
Jajmani system, p. 274
Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY), p.499
Jha, Vivekananda, p. 338
Johnson, Harry, p. 233
Johnson, Lyndon, p. 266
Joint Families, pp. 44, 318

K

Karma and Transmigration Theory, p. 323
Khap Panchayat, p. 454
Kibbutz, p. 149
Kinship, pp. 378–394
  bonds, p. 238
  patterns, pp. 292–294
  regional variations in, pp. 391–394
  terminology, p. 392
  types of, pp. 380–381
Kisan Sabha, p. 303
Kumarappa, J C, p. 415

L

Labour, pp. 171–172
Land Holdings, p. 317
Land Records, p. 317
Land Reforms, pp. 241, 314
Land Tenure System, p. 314
Latent and Manifest Functions, p. 177
Latent functions, p. 117
Law of the Three Stages, p. 257
Le Suicide, 1897, p. 90
Leach, Edmund, p. 237
Legal Rational Authority, p. 102
Lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender (LGBT) community, p. 140
Lineage, pp. 233, 248, 379
Linear Theories of Social Change, pp. 257–259
Lister, Ruth, p. 139
Little Tradition, pp. 402–403
Livability Index, p. 435
Lottery or Simple Random Sampling, p. 57
Love Marriage, pp. 240, 246
Lundberg, George, p. 22

M

Mahalwari System, p. 315
Malthusian Hypothesis, p. 490
Manifest function, p. 117
Mann, Michael, p. 175
Mannheim, Karl, p. 181
Marriage, pp. 244–254, 386–387
Marriage Taboos, p. 247
Marriott, McKim, p. 403
Marumakkathayam or Tharawad Family, p. 379
Marx, Karl, pp. 68–82
Marxist Sociology, in India, pp. 288–290
Marxist View of Religion, pp. 214–215
Material Deprivation, p. 141
McDonaldization of Society, 1993, p. 107

Scanned by CamScanner

Mead, G H, pp. 35, 129
Measurement Validity or Construct Validity, p. 63
Merton, Robert, pp. 115, 141
Michles, Robert, p. 183
Middle Class, pp. 297, 375–377
Middle Range Theories, pp. 117–118
Migration, p. 319
Millenarian Movement, p. 205
Mind, p. 124
Mixed Economy, pp. 403–405
MNREGS for rural employment, p. 412
Mode of Production, pp. 72–74
  Ancient Slave Mode of Production, p. 72
  Capitalistic Mode of Production, p. 73
  Feudalistic Mode of Production, pp. 72–73
  Primitive Communism, p. 72
  Modern Indology, p. 277
Modern Industry, in India, pp. 428–431
Modern Sociological Thought, p. 6
Modernity, p. 5
Monism, pp. 216–217
Monogamy, p. 246
Moore, Wilbert, p. 257
Moral Agent, p. 267
Motivational Orientation, p. 109
Multivariate Analysis, p. 90
Murdock, George Peter, p. 234
Murray, Charles, p. 262

N

Narain, Iqbal, p. 453
Nation, pp. 187–189, 449
Nation State, p. 191
National Extension Services, p. 412
National Population Policy, pp. 2000, 498
National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), p. 499
Nations without State, p. 191
Naturism or Nature Myth Theory, pp. 223–215
Neill, James, p. 247
New Age Movements, p. 218
New Middle Class, p. 375
New Religious Movements, p. 218
New Social Movements, pp. 204–205
Nirbhya Case, p. 508
Nomothetic approach, p. 22
Non-Governmental Movements, p. 467
Non-Institutional Social Facts, p. 85
Non-Participant Observation, p. 49
Non-Positivist Methodologies, pp. 27, 32–40
  Ethnomethodology, pp. 38–40
  Interpretivist Sociology, p. 33
  Phenomenology, p. 34
  Symbolic Interactionism, pp. 35–37
Non-Probability Sampling, pp. 59–60
  convenience sampling or accidental sampling, p. 59
  purposive sampling, p. 59
  Northern Backward Class Movement, pp. 471–473

O

Objectivity, pp. 28–32
Occupational Theory, p. 323
Old Middle Class, p. 375
Old Social Movements, pp. 204–205
Open and Closed Systems, pp. 154–155
Operation Barga, p. 317
Organic Evolution, p. 7
Organismic Analogy, p. 21
Organismic System or Biological System or Behavioural System, p. 110
Over-urbanisation, p. 435
Ownership Patterns, p. 239

P

Panchayati Raj Institutions, p. 412
Panel Research Design or Longitudinal Research, p. 43
Parental Roles, p. 240
Parent-child Relationships, p. 240
Parkin, Frank, pp. 80, 150
Parochialisation, p. 403
Parsons, Talcott, p. 11
Parsons' Evolutionary Structural Functional Theory of Religion, p. 214
Participant Observation, pp. 47–49
Particularistic Achievement Pattern, p. 115
Particularistic Ascription Pattern, p. 115

Scanned by CamScanner

Patriarchy, pp. 250–252, 390–391
Pattern Variables, pp. 114–115
Payne, Jude, p. 47
Peasant Movement, pp. 459–463
Personality System, p. 111
Phenomenology, p. 34
Pluralism, pp. 216–217
Pluralist Thesis of Power or Community Power Thesis, pp. 180–181
Political Awakening, p. 296
Political Economists, p. 69
Political Parties, pp. 185–186, 449
  functions of, p. 450
  Political Science, pp. 14–15
Political-Economy Theory, p. 500
Politics, pp. 448–456
Polygamy, p. 246
Popper, Karl, p. 21
Population Dynamics, pp. 486–506
Population Growth, pp. 490–497
Population Policy, pp. 497–499
Population Size, pp. 487–490
Positive Science of Society, p. 25
Positivism, pp. 25–27
  and its critique, pp. 25–27
  features of, p. 26
  Positivist Sociology, p. 7
Post Modernist Perspective on Social Change, pp. 261–262
Post Structuralism, p. 11
Post-Independence India, pp. 367–371
  agrarian classes in, pp. 367–371
Poverty, pp. 17, 136–139, 511–512
Poverty Alleviation Schemes, pp. 416–417
Power, pp. 175–177
  sociological theories of, pp. 175–177
Power Elite, pp. 175–177
Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna, p. 412
Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), p. 499
Praxis, p. 69
Pre-British India, pp. 366–367
  agrarian classes in, pp. 366–367
Preferential Marriage, pp. 246–247, 392
Pressure Group, pp. 183–185, 449
Primitive Communism, p. 72
Probability Sampling, pp. 57–59
Progressive Taxation, p. 135
Projective Techniques, pp. 51–52
Protest, pp. 198–199
Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism, p. 14
Protestant Ethics, pp. 104–107
Psychological Behaviourism, p. 123
Psychological Theories or Emotional Theories, p. 213
Psychology, pp. 13–14
Pure Environmental Movements, p. 479
Purposive Sampling, p. 59

Q

Qualitative Research Methods, pp. 44–46
Quantitative Research Methods, pp. 44–46
Quasi Participant Observation, p. 49
Questionnaire, pp. 53–54
Quota Sampling, p. 59

R

Race, pp. 150–152
  social stratification of, pp. 150–152
Racial Stratification, p. 151
Racial Theory, p. 323
Ranking, p. 132
Rebellion, p. 120
Redfield, Robert, p. 402
Redistribution of Land, p. 318
Reference Group, pp. 121–123
Reflexivity, p. 125
Reformist, p. 297
Regionalism, pp. 451–455
Relations of Production, p. 69
Relative Mobility, p. 159
Reliability, p. 62
Religion, pp. 93–96, 209–230, 396–399
  and society, pp. 93–96
  religious communities in India, pp. 397–398
Religious Minorities, pp. 398–399
  problems of, pp. 398–399
Religious Revivalism, pp. 226, 520–521
Re-marriage, p. 247
Renaissance, p. 4

Scanned by CamScanner

Report Writing, p. 47
Reproductive Health, pp. 504–505
Research Methodology, p. 24
Research Methods, pp. 41–64
  quantitative and qualitative, pp. 44–46
  significance of, pp. 42–44
  techniques of data collection, pp. 46–64
Researching Society and Culture, 2012, p. 50
Retreatist, p. 120
Revivalism, pp. 228, 297
Revolution, pp. 206–207
Rewarding, p. 132
Ritualist, pp. 119–120
Ritualistic Marriage, p. 245
Role Theory, p. 500
Rorschach Inkblot Test, p. 51
Rules of Distinction, p. 85
Rules of Explanation, p. 85
Rules of Relations, p. 239
Rural Development, pp. 411–412
  approaches for, p. 411
  programs of, pp. 411–412
Rural Inequalities, p. 318
Rural Labour, pp. 423–425
  migration of, pp. 424–426
  problems of, pp. 423–425
Rural-urban Divide, p. 436
Ryotwari System, p. 315

S

Sacks, Harvey, p. 39
Sampling, p. 57
cluster sampling, p. 59
  lottery or simple random sampling, p. 57
  stratified sampling, p. 58
  systematic random sampling, p. 57
  Sampling Errors, p. 59
Sanskritisation, pp. 283–286
Satyashodhak Samaj, p. 476
Saunders, Peter, p. 135
Schedule, pp. 55–56
Schutz, Alfred, p. 34
Science of Society, p. 9
Scientific Method, p. 22
criticism of, pp. 23–24
  elements of, p. 23
  limitation of, p. 23
  Sects, pp. 218–221
Secularisation, pp. 455–456
Secularism, pp. 223–226
Self and Identity, pp. 123–125
Self-fulfilling Prophecy, p. 123
Self-Respect Movement, pp. 473, 477–478
Semiotics, p. 50
Semi-structured Questionnaire, p. 53
Semitic Tradition of Religion, p. 217
Sex, p. 233
Sex Ratio, pp. 502–504
Sexual Division of Labour, pp. 250–252, 390–391
Shah, A M, p. 221
Sharma, K L, p. 341
Significant Symbol, p. 124
Simon, Saint, p. 25
Singer, Milton, p. 403
Singh, Yogendra, pp. 275, 301–302
Slavery, p. 133
SNDP Movement, pp. 476–477
Snowball Sampling, p. 59
Social Action, pp. 10, 97–99, 108–109
Social and Cultural Dynamics, p. 14
Social and Political Elite, p. 451
Social Capital, p. 134
Social Change, pp. 210, 256
  and industrialization, pp. 167–168
  constitution, law and, pp. 405–406
  education and, pp. 266–268
  education and, pp. 406–408
  Green Revolution and, pp. 418–420
  science, technology and, pp. 266–268
  vision in India, pp. 401–408
Social Classes, pp. 365–376
Social Closure, p. 148
Social Control, pp. 112, 211
Social Dynamics, p. 25
Social Evolution, p. 9
Social Facts, pp. 10, 83–86

Scanned by CamScanner

Social Mobility, pp. 153–154, 267
open and closed systems, pp. 154–155
sources and causes of, pp. 155–158
types of, pp. 158–159
Social Movements, pp. 199–203, 266, 455–484
globalisation and, p. 204
ideology and, pp. 203–204
leadership in, p. 203
Millenarian Movement, p. 205
old and new, pp. 204–205
nature of, p. 459
Social Regulation, p. 234
Social Research, p. 30
dilution of objectivity in, p. 30
Social Superstructure, p. 71
Social System, pp. 108, 111, 109–113
Social Transformation, pp. 508–523
Socialisation, p. 112
Socialistic Mode of Production, p. 73
Societalisation, p. 224
Sociological Theories of Religion, pp. 211–215
Sociological Theories of Social Change, pp. 257–263
Sociology
and Common Sense, pp. 16–18
and other social sciences, pp. 11–16
intellectual streams in, p. 7
modernity and social change in Europe and emergence of, pp. 4–9
science, scientific method and critique, pp. 21–24
scientific method in, p. 18
scope of subject of, pp. 9–11
Sociology of Religion, 2011, p. 218
Sorokin, Pitirim, p. 260
Southern Backward Class Movement, pp. 471–473
Specificity, p. 114
Spencer, Herbert, p. 21
Spengler, Oswald, p. 260
Spirit of Capitalism, pp. 104–107
Srinivas, M N, pp. 312, 282–283, 455
Stabilisation, p. 210
State, pp. 189–191
Status Groups, p. 148
social stratification of, p. 148
Stratification, pp. 142–146
theories of, pp. 142–146
Stratified Sampling, p. 58
Strauss, Murray, p. 237
Strong Religion, 2003, p. 227
Structural Functionalist Tradition, in Indian, pp. 281–283
Structural Mobility, pp. 158–159
Structural or Morphological Facts, p. 84
Structuration, p. 109
Structure Functionalist Theory of Social Change of Parsons, p. 261
Structured Interviews, p. 52
Suicide, pp. 90–93
Supra-State Regionalism, p. 453
Survey, pp. 54–55
Sustainability, pp. 509–511
Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna, p. 412
Symbolic Interactionism, pp. 35–37
Systematic Random Sampling, p. 57
Systems View of Change, p. 261

T

Talukdari, p. 315
Tautologies, p. 66
Tebhaga Movement, p. 303
Teleologies, p. 66
Temporal reliability, p. 62
Tenancy Reforms, pp. 316–317
The Practice of Social Research, 2009, p. 56
The Structure of Social Action, 1937, p. 110
Thematic Apperception Test (or TAT), p. 51
Tomlinson, Sally, p. 268
Tonkiss, Fran, p. 50
Tonnies, Ferdinand, p. 258
Traditional Authority, p. 102
Traditional Family Structure, p. 238
Traditional Social Action, p. 98
Triangulation Method, p. 46
Tribal Communities, pp. 352–363

Scanned by CamScanner

Tribal Ethnic Movements, p. 483
Tribal Groups, pp. 353–354
and caste, p. 355
autonomy and, pp. 360–363
colonial policies and, pp. 359–360
features of, pp. 353–354
fivefold classification of, p. 356
geographical spread of, pp. 357–359
Tribes and Religious Theory, p. 323
Turner, Jonathan, p. 113
Twain, Mark, p. 268

U

Underclass, p. 144
Uniform Civil Code, p. 397
Universal Functionalism, p. 116
Universal Immunisation Program (UIP), p. 499
Universalism, p. 114
Universalistic Achievement Pattern, p. 115
Universalistic Ascription Pattern, p. 115
Universality, p. 234
Universalization, p. 403
Unstructured Interviews, p. 52
Untouchability, pp. 335–340
among other religions, pp. 346–347
and class nexus, pp. 343–344
and politics, pp. 344–346
change and continuity, pp. 347–350
forms, pp. 335–337
mobility in, pp. 341–343
origin of, pp. 337–338
perspective of Ambedkar, pp. 339–340
perspective of Gandhi, pp. 338–339
Urban Areas, pp. 444–446
slums and deprivation in, pp. 444–446
Urban Class Structure, pp. 375–376
Urban Settlements, in India, pp. 431–436
growth of, pp. 431–436

V

Validity, pp. 62–64
ecological validity, p. 63
external validity, p. 62
internal validity, p. 62
measurement validity or construct validity, p. 63
Value Consensus, p. 108
Value Neutrality, p. 31
Value Orientation, p. 109
Value System, pp. 28–32, 163
Variable Analysis, p. 57
Variables, pp. 56–57
Vertical Mobility, p. 158
Violence against Women, pp. 512–514
Voluntaristic Theory of Social Action, p. 108

W

Walby, Sylvia, p. 250
Wallis, Roy, p. 221
Warner, W L., p. 148
Weber, Max, pp. 31, 97–107, 187–189
Wertrational Social Action, p. 99
Westernisation, pp. 286–288
White Revolution, p. 415
Wilson, Bryan, p. 218
Women's Movement, pp. 464–468
Work, pp. 162–163
Working Class, in India, pp. 437–440
World Systems Model, pp. 263–264
World Systems Theory, p. 264

Y

Yin, Robert K, p. 50

Z

Zamindari System, p. 314
Zweckrational Social Action, p. 99

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