MSO 103: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA

BLOCK I

Vision

To grow to be a leading centre for human resource development through distance, open and universal learning system.

Mission

To provide quality higher education at door step through barrierless, flexible and open learning mode in conformity with national priority and societal need.

Objective

- To offer degree, diploma, certificate level programme of study through distance learning in various emerging subjects across the disciplines.

- To offer job oriented and vocational programmes in flexible terms in the line of the national and regional level demand of manpower.

- To offer various programmes under lifelong learning contributing to the local and regional level requirements and as per the need of the society at large.

- To undertake various research and academic activities for furtherance of distance education in the region.

- To contribute to conserve and promote cultural heritage, literature, traditional knowledge and environment conducting short programmes, workshops, seminars and research in interdisciplinary field.

MSO 103: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

TEZPUR UNIVERSITY (A CENTRAL UNIVRESITY)

TEZPUR, ASSAM-784028

INDIA

MSO-103: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA

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BLOCK I

MODULE I: INTRODUCING INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

UNIT 1: INTRODUCING INDIAN SOCIOLOGY: INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

UNIT 2: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA: TEXT VIEW AND FIELD VIEW IN INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

MODULE II: PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIOLOGY-I

UNIT 3: APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF INDIAN SOCIETY: INDIGENISATION OF SOCIOLOGY

UNIT 4 : INDOLOGICAL /TEXTUAL (G.S.GHURYE, LOUIS DUMONT)

UNIT 5: STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALISM (M.N. SRINIVAS, S.C. DUBE)

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course will introduce the learners to the sociological approaches to understand Indian society. Sociology emerged in the West and therefore, the sociological approaches of the West expanded to other parts of the globe. However, many Indian scholars began to realise that there are various social aspects that are peculiar to Indian society which needto be studied through Indian perspectives as against the Western approaches that had been universally applied to. This led to the emergence of Indian sociology.In this course the learners will be introduced to the concepts like class, caste, gender, race, religion and language, and their significance in the study of the Indian society. The course also discusses the changes that have taken place in the social structure, cultural values and institutions in India. Further, the course addresses the important processes of social change and nation building in contemporary India.

. The course is divided in to four Modules, each consisting of multiple units. This has been done to discuss the major concepts more elaborately and, in a learner-friendly way.

Module I gives an introduction to Indian sociology. This module has two units. **Unit 1** deals with the social and intellectual traditions and institutional growth in Indian sociology. **Unit 2** discusses the concept of text view and field view in Indian sociology.

Module II is about perspectives on Indian sociology and it is divided into three units. **Unit 3** is about indigenisation of sociology which is an important approach to the study of Indian society. Many Indian scholars have questioned the relevance of the universal applicability of Western sociological approaches and methods and therefore pleaded for the adoption of new approaches and methods which are applicable in Indian context, leading to indigenisation of sociology. **Unit 4** will further elaborate the textual or Indological approach introduced in Unit 2. The Unit will discuss two eminent scholars, G.S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont and their contribution towards Indological or textual perspective. **Unit 5** will

help the learners to understand another important approach in Indian Sociology, that is structural-functionalism. The unit will discuss two other eminent sociologists—M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dubey who have adopted structural-functionalist approach to the study of Indian society.

Module III is a continuation of the perspectives on Indian Sociology discussed in Module II. The module is divided into four units. **Unit 6** will introduce the learners to Marxist perspective on Indian sociology and in this regard, they will get introduced to Indian sociologists like D.P Mukerji, A.R Desai and Ramkrishna Mukerjee who have tried to analyse Indian society with the help of Marxist approach. **Unit 7** will cover the Civilizational perspectives on Indian Sociology focusing on the works of N.K. Bose and Surajit Sinha. Another important perspective on Indian Sociology—Subaltern perspective will be discussed in **Unit 8** which will cover the works of B.R. Ambedkar and David Hardiman. **Unit 9** discusses the feminist perspective focusing on the works of Uma Chakravarty and Sharmila Rege.

Module IV is about the various dimensions of sociology of India. There are five units in this module. **Unit 10** deals with groups and social structure. Here, categories like caste, class, tribe and religion will be discussed. **Unit 11**, on the other hand will discuss social institutions like family, kinship and marriage in the context of Indian society. In **Unit 12**, the learners will be introduced to the social changes that were seen in modern India owing to the emergence of processes like Sanskritisation, Westernisation and Modernisation. The changes in terms of the agrarian structure of Indian society as well as the impact of Urbanisation on it will be discussed in **Unit 13**. Lastly, **Unit 14** will deal with the concept Nation and Nation Building in India.

The complete course is divided into two Blocks.**Block I** contains Module I and II. **Block II** will have Module III and IV.

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MODULE I: INTRODUCING INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

UNIT 1: INTRODUCING INDIAN SOCIOLOGY: INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit, you will be introduced to a general overview of the historical and contemporary development of sociology in India. In addition, the unit will discuss in detail about the factors behind the emergence of sociology in India as well as the intellectual tradition of Indian Sociology.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the development of Sociology in India and its growth;
- Explain the intellectual tradition of Sociology in India.

1.3 INTELLECTUAL TRADITION AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

Sociology is a relatively young discipline. Although its roots can be traced back to about three or four centuries ago, it was only in the nineteenth century that it started assuming its present role as a science of society in the sense of a systematic study of all societies in space and time. However, we are not concerned here with tracing the development of sociology and social anthropology in the West and shall merely confine ourselves to a few general historical statements. Broadly, the intellectual climate in Western Europe, which itself was closely linked with the political, economic and other forces of the day, favoured the development of the discipline (Srinivas, 1973).

In India, sociology is a comparatively late entrant into the academic world. But its origin can be traced back to the days when the British colonial power realised that the knowledge of Indian social life and culture was an essential requirement for the maintenance of its dominance (Pathy, 1976:20-21). Since then, it has made phenomenal growth and, in the process, has shownsufficient competence to adapt itself to shifts in the socio- political structure. Sociology in India has tried to answer questions relevant to the discipline by locating itself in the particular context of the Indian society. In this manner it is contributing to universal sociological knowledge from the bottom upwards, as it were, instead of presuming a universal view from the findings and generalizations appropriate to one particular society or to a set of similar societies e.g. the "American" society or the "Western" societies (Mukherjee, 1973).

M.N Srinivas also viewed that the origins of sociology in India goes back to the days when British officials discovered that knowledge of Indian culture and social institutions was essential for the smooth functioning of government. In 1769, Harry Verelst, the Governor of Bengal and Bihar realized the need, and stressed the importance of collecting information regarding the leading families and their customs in his directives to revenue

supervisors. Since then many British officials and missionaries had made serious efforts to collect and record information regarding the life and culture of their Indian subjects (Srinivas, 1973). It is therefore evident that Sociology as a discipline is not very old in India. However, despite of its recent emergence it has undergone a considerable expansion. Before independence sociology was confined only to a few university departments. It began in a modest way in the years between the two World Wars. Indian sociologists like Radhakamal Mukherjee, G. S. Ghurye, D. P. Mukerji were pioneers of the discipline (Beteille, 1973). A widespread need for sociological research was felt only with India's independence, and with the launching of a programme of planned development (Srinivas, 1966). In recent times, many Indian universities have separate departments of sociology, and besides, there are research institutions where sociology has an important place. It is very important for every student of sociology to know both the intellectual tradition and the institutional growth of the discipline. Before discussing the intellectual tradition, this chapter will give a brief sketch of the historical development of the discipline in India.

Ramkrishna Mukherjee has distinguished three stages in the historical development of Indian sociology as follows:

i) Proto-professional stage of sociology prior to the twentieth century.

ii) Professional stage of descriptive and explanatory sociology in the first half of the present century.

iii) Currently needed stage of diagnostic sociology.

On the other hand, some other scholars have distinguished the development of Sociology in India as follows:

i)   1773-1900 A.D., when their foundations were laid;

ii)   1901-1950 A.D., when they became professionalized (pre-independence years)

iii)   the post-Independence years, when a complex of forces including the under taking of planned development by the

government, the increased exposure of Indian scholars to the work of their foreign colleagues, and the availability of funds, resulted in considerable research activity (Srinivas 1973). This period can be again sub divided into the following phases:

a) Developments in the Seventies
b) Perspectives in the Eighties
c) Imperatives in the Nineties

iv) Sociological Research in India (Nagla, 2008)

However, we can understand the development of sociology in India with the help of different stages as discussed below.

1.3.1. Proto-professional stage (1773-1900 A.D., when their foundations were laid)

According to Mukherjee the first stage can be considered as "proto-professional" because it characterizes the period of data collection, description, and explanation which are of sociological importance but not yet used for the consolidation of a distinct branch of knowledge. In this period, sociology was submerged in the governmental reports and surveys on the life of the people and in the papers and monographs on the same subject but under the label of antiquity or Indology, and later of economic or "social" studies. Two distinct demands dominated this stage: (i) the requirement of the State Polity to learn about the people for an efficient governance, and (ii) the desire of the Social Polity to know about itself. It is utmost important to mention that both were prevalent from remote periods in India's history. Here we can cite the example of Kautilya (c. 300-400 B.C.) who advised the king to collect data about the country and the people. Kautilya's treatise Arthasastra contains a substantial amount of aforesaid information. In addition, a well-known treatise of this kind, written during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) is Abul Fazl's Ain-i-Akbari (Mukherjee, 1973). The British realized the same need as felt by the previous rulers. Therefore, with the consolidation of their power, firstly in Bengal, Governor Harry Verelst asked the revenue supervisors in 1769 to

collect information on the leading Indian families and their customs which has been already mentioned in the previous sections.

The procedure was later extended by the East India Company (and afterwards by the British Imperial Government) to all classes of people in India, and thus resulted in the collection of a wealth of sociological data as contained in the British Parliamentary papers and reports, etc. However, during that period, the Indian social polity found a new interest to learn about itself. "Confronted by the disturbing scene of what seemed superior social organization as well as superior material culture, Indian thinkers began to look at their own family, law, education, and religion in ways different from those sanctioned by century-old tradition. This outlook ultimately, brought to the forefront of the Indian society by persons, like, Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), Swami Dayanand Saraswati, (1824-1883), Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901), Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), led to the collection and collation of new empirical data as well as documentary evidence and to reinterpretation of India's religions and ethic, customs and institutions, etc., which are of no less sociological relevance (Mukherjee, 1973).

It is important to mention some important incidents like for example, Rammohan Roy is reported to have had collected data on the widows who were burnt on their husband's pyre, while he reinterpreted Hinduism in the light of universalism in religion and wrote on the utility of English education as a gateway to the Western knowledge in science. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) not only adduced evidence from scriptures in favour of widow marriage and against polygyny but also collected empirical data on child widows and supplied statistics to support his statement thatpolygyny was prevalent in the 1860-s among the Bengali Kulin Brahmins (Vidya Sagar, 1972: II. 201-208).

Therefore, the initial development of sociology in India was closely linked with the Indian Renaissance. Raja Rammohan Roy is considered to be the most prominent figure of Indian Renaissance. However, this trend was not

lost in late years. And the role of the national movement for independence was also considered to be significant for the growth of Indian sociology in the 19th and 20th centuries, as stated by the founders of professional sociology in India, like, Brojendra Nath Seal, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Radhakamal Mukherjee. Also, there are evidences to indicate that one of the by-products of the mass movement of the 1920s, led by Gandhi, was to stimulate the interest of the social scientists in "village studies" (Patel 1952: 1; Mukherjee, 1965: 169-173), And, since India's independence (1947), national issues have markedly influenced sociological research on India, as is evident from the published literature. According to Mukherjee Indian sociology has been geared to the task of answering the "Indian question" in different contexts—colonial or otherwise, etc. from the beginning to date (ibid).

1.3.2 Professional Stage or Sociology in Pre-Independence India (1901-1950 A.D.)

The emergence of Sociology in India dates to 1914 when, the Government of India gave a grant to the University of Bombay for starting the teaching of sociology, and a course of lectures in sociology and economics was offered to post-graduate students in the same year. Later in 1919, a department of sociology and civics was founded under the leadership of Patrick Geddes who was succeeded as head of the department, in I924, by G. S. Ghurye. Under Ghurye's leadership, Bombay became the leading centre for sociology, especially research, in the country. The establishment of this department was a landmark in the development of sociology in India. Sociology was at first a part of the M.A. course along with economics, and only in the late 1930s, a full, eight-paper M.A. course in sociology was introduced. It was followed by the introduction of Sociology in several other Universities of the country in the subsequent years.

Lucknow was another centre of sociology and anthropology. In 1921, a combined department of economics and sociology was started by the University with Radhakamal Mukherjee as professor and head. He was

joined a year later by D. P. Mukherjee and in 1928 by D. N. Majumdar who was appointed to a lectureship on "primitive economy". These three men with their endeavour made Lucknow an influential centre of teaching and research in sociology and anthropology (Srinivas and Panini, 1973). In Lucknow, sociology had only a minor place in the curriculum and until the 1940s there was no separate paper in the subject in the B.A. degree and only one paper in the M.A. degree. In Bombay, sociology had from the outset a more important place and made some advances; there were four sociology papers in the M.A. degree, and after 1924 it became possible to take the degree entirely in sociology by submitting a thesis. However, later changes established sociology as an independent subject for both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The University of Bombay became, in fact, the centre of sociological studies in India, and it was there that many of the older generation of university teachers received their first training (Bottomore, 1962).

Therefore, it can be mentioned that the Indian sociology attained a professional character when the University of Bombay started a post-graduate course in economics and sociology in 1914, the University of Calcutta began to teach sociology to the post-graduate students from 1917, and an undergraduate course in sociology was introduced in Mysore University in 1917. The students produced in these centres, especially in Bombay and Calcutta, headed new centres of sociological study and research in Lucknow, Poona, Baroda, Delhi, etc.; and the latter centres (especially the Lucknow centre) accelerated the professionalization of sociology in India. In the first half of the present century, however, teaching of sociology in India was either linked with economics or social anthropology, or it had a strong antecedence of idealistic philosophy (Mukherjee, 1973).

It is very important to mention here about the major professional body of sociologists in India i.e., Indian Sociological Society which consists of membership of more than 3,200, drawn from all parts of the country. It was

established in 1951 in Bombay with the initiative of Govind Sadashiv Ghurye, the then Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Bombay (now University of Mumbai). The Society started the journal *Sociological Bulletin* in 1952 and during the first decade or so of their existence both the Society and its journal were nurtured in the Department by the meticulous efforts of Ghurye. In 2011, both the Indian Sociological Society and the Sociological Bulletin has successfully completed sixty years of their existence (Jayram, 2013).

1.3.3 Sociology in Post-Independence India

The institutionalisation and professionalisation of sociology in India can be clearly divided into two phases—before 1950 and after. In the pre-1950 phase, there were only a few centres of study in sociology besides Bombay, Calcutta and Lucknow. The actual phase of expansion of sociology began in 1952 (Dhanagare, 1993: 45). Several factors have contributed towards the rapid growth of the discipline during this period. We can mention about the interest of the central government to promote social science research through a formal organization established for the purpose (Nagla, 2008). Dhanagare viewed that the policy makers of independent India pursued objectives of economic regeneration and social development, and they recognized the role of the social sciences in attaining the objectives of national reconstruction and development. Since the policy makers rightly viewed education and development as inter-related, various branches of social sciences assumed importance and received impetus after 1950 (Dhanagare, 1993:45). In addition, the Government of India had officially undertaken programme of plan development. Its five-year plan started in 1952 and sociology and social anthropology were seen as a source of possible expertise on 'social aspects of development, its determinants and consequences'. The need to study the impact of development programmes on different sections of society, and for programme evaluation was so enormous that it created a considerable increase in the demand for trained personnel in sociology and social anthropology (Srinivas and Panini,1973).

Therefore, the growing needs of planners and administrators on one hand, and the realization of increasing importance of social science research in the planning process on the other hand,created opportunities for research projects. However, the rising importance of social science research also resulted in the establishment of research institutes. The development of research activity also meant the enlargement of employment opportunities at all levels (Nagla, 2008).

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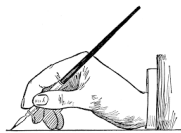
1. Name three Indian Sociologists.

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2. What are the three stages in the historical development of Indian Sociology as given by Ramkrishna Mukherjee?

3.Who is considered to be the most prominent figure in Indian Renaissance?

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4. Mention one factor which have contributed to the growth of Sociology in India during Post independent era.

1.4 INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

Now coming to the intellectual tradition of Indian sociology we can say that, like most other social sciences in India, sociology is very much influenced by Western philosophical and social scientific traditions. Therefore, some scholars have challenged the borrowed theoretical and methodological assumptions. However, in recent time three main trends of thought can be distinguished about Indian sociology:

  i)Social- anthropological

  ii) Philosophical

  iii) Influence of western sociology

The first may be called the Social anthropology, which developed more vigorously than sociology before I947, and it has been a major intellectual influence in the expansion of sociology. There are of course several reasons for this influence. Many of the social institutions and social problems of India which call for sociological investigation can very usefully be studied by anthropological methods and in terms of anthropological concepts. It would be pertinent to mention about the study of caste and joint- family thoroughly in a single village. The findings of such studies may contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena in a wider context. A recent review of studies of caste in India, by M. N. Srinivas and others shows very well how the thorough investigation of caste in the village has led to revision of some earlier conceptions of the caste system (Bottomore, 1962). The anthropological field-studies in various institutions have led to the pulling down book-view and revision of some earlier misapprehension.

The second trend of thought is philosophical. A group of sociologists at the University of Lucknow influenced by the work of D.P Mukherji, took an interest in logical and methodological problems. They are very much critical about sociological positivism and scientism. They attempted to develop a sociological theory which would be rooted in India's social

history and closely related with traditional social thought (Bottomore, 1962; Ahmed, 1966) However, it would be wrong to assume them to be close-minded in outlook. They were very much aware of Western sociology and philosophy. In some respect their views resemble those of 19th century German critic of positive sociology, Wilhelm Dilthey. Rather than going for a revision of the logic and methods of sociology, they seemed to involve in interpretation of the moral and religious principles which underlie social order (Ahmed, 1966). The principal value that may be attributed to the work which was being done in Lucknow is that it will encourage new and better study in the field of historical studies which is somewhat untouched (ibid).

The third trend of Indian sociology is directly attributable to the influence of recent Western sociology, particularly American Sociology. So far, it represents not so much a coherent body of thought as a general attitude of approval towards field research involving quantitative methods and towards scientific procedure involving the formulation and testing of hypotheses. The increasing acquaintance with modern technique of research has coincided with the modern demands of public bodies for factual information in many areas of life. At present Indian sociologists are well prepared to conduct large-scale comparative studies. In addition, sociological methods of investigation have attained a recognized place along with anthropological methods (Bottomore, 1962).

Although all these three trends of thought have developed independently, they have not been exclusive. Nor the advocates of one thought inhibited research in other conceptual frameworks.

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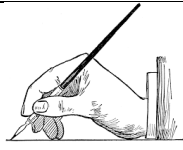
1. What are the three main trends of thought about Indian Sociology?

1.5 SUMMING UP

This Unit introduces learners with the background which enabled the discipline of sociology to develop in India. In addition to the history of development of the discipline which have been divided into three different phases, we have learnt how the necessity of the knowledge of Indian society for the colonial administrator to rule their subject has set the ground for development of society. The importance of the subject was also realised by the government of India for which Sociology gained popularity in the post-independent era. The unit also throws light on the trajectory of intellectual background of Indian sociology. It is well known to us that sociology emerged in the West. Many scholars from Western societies have interpreted Indian society with methods which emerged in West. Therefore, this Unit briefly discussed about mainly three traditions which have influenced Sociology in India, i.e. social anthropological, philosophical and Western sociology and helped us to know about the intellectual tradition of Indian Sociology.

1.6 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the colonial legacy in the emergence of Sociology in India.

2. Trace the historical origin of Sociology in India and discuss the forces which have contributed towards its emergence in India.

3. Discuss about the various stages of development of Sociology in India

1.7 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA: TEXT VIEW AND FIELD VIEW IN INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Objectives

2.3 Book View

2.4 Field View

2.5 Summing Up

2.6. Questions

2.7 Recommended Readings and References

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In unit, 1 we have learnt about the development of sociology in India. It also important for the students of Sociology to know about the two important approaches to study Indian society, i.e. book view and field view. Therefore, this unit will discuss in detail about the development of thesetwo approaches and their relevance in studying Indian society.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you are expected to:

- Describe book-view and field-view;
- Explain the relevance of book view and field view.

2.3 BOOK VIEW

This is one important approach to studyIndian society. Textview or book view refers to the study of the Indian society by interpretation of ancient texts such as Vedas, *Puranas*, *Manusmriti*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* etc. This text-based approach is also known as Indology. Indology assumes that historically, Indian society and culture are unique. This uniqueness or specificity of Indian social realities could be understood only with the help of ancient 'texts'. Therefore, Indologists use the literature of ancient Indian society such as ancient history, epics, religious manuscripts and texts etc.to study the social institutions of India. Apart from Sanskrit scholars and Indologist, many sociologists have extensively used traditional texts to study Indian society. Therefore, it is known as "textual view" or "textual perspective" of social phenomenon (Nagla, 2008). Indology in the tradition of Max Muller is commonly understood as a discipline that studies traditional Indian society, mostly Hindu ideology, values, institutions, and cultural norms and practices through careful examination of classical sacred texts.

Stop and read

Indology deals with the interpretation of classical ancient literature of ancient Indian society texts. (Vedas, Puranas, Manusmriti)

Louis Dumont and Pocock has discussed about the importance of studying classical texts for a sociologist to understand the Indian society. They viewed that Sociology of India lies at the point of confluence of sociology and Indology (Dumont and Pocock, 1959). In Indian sociology and social anthropology, G.S. Ghurye and many other scholars have extensively contributed to the Indological studies by interpretingancient Indian texts. Indological studies also received considerable motivation from the efforts

made by British scholars and officials. It is also important to mention here that the British officials and scholars wanted to become more familiar with the life and culture of Indians for which they tried to interpret ancient literature. In the early days of British rule in India, Sanskrit pandits and Arabic scholars were employed to assist British judges to decide cases related to religious practices, customs and laws. In the year 1776, a treatise on Hindu law in English was preparedwith the support of Pandits for the convenience of British judges (Kapadia,1954: xi). Thus, the Indological perspective has been playing a dominant role in understanding the Indian social institutions since colonial times to the present time.

Indological approach has also been the hallmark of several sociologists. They have raised their voice against the acceptance and use of theoretical and methodological orientation of the Western countries. These scholars have emphasized the role of traditions and groups rather than individual as the basis of social relations, and religion, ethics and philosophy as the basis of social organization. The use and popularity of Indological approach during the early formative years of Indian Sociology and Social Anthropology is evident from the works of S.K.Ketkar, B.N. Seal and B.K. Sarkar. Louis Dumont and G.S Ghurye, Iravati Karve, K.M. Kapadia, P.H. Prabhu have tried to explore Hindu Social institutions with the help of religious texts or through the analysis of contemporary practices (Nagla, 2008: 69).

Stop and Read

The studies based on texts have been conducted by many scholars such as Inden and Nicholas (1972), Marriot(1979), Pocock (1985).

It is very important to mention here especially about G.S Ghurye, who drawing on his initial training as a Sanskritist made a successful attempt in the synthesis of Indological and sociological perspective. This constitutes his most important contribution to Indian sociology. His work *Caste and*

Race in India (1932) skilfully combined his historical, anthropological and sociological approaches. Ghurye demonstrated through the textual evidences, the dynamism of caste system and also pointed towards some important characteristics of caste system.

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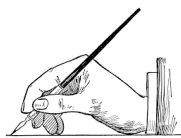
1. What is Indology?

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2. Name two scholars who have used the Indological perspective in sociology.

2.4 FIELD VIEW

Field view in common parlance refers to the study of any phenomenon with the help of collecting data from the concerned field with the help of intensive field work, Beteille viewed that field view is actually an orientation to the experiences of people, with their inner tensions and contradictions which one seeks to understand and interpret (1997). This approach has become very popular in India during 1950-1960 when Social Anthropology took up the study of Indian villages with the help of field work. It has replaced the dominant book view developed by Indologists from classical Hindu texts (Jodhka, 1998). It is very important to mention about M.N. Srinivas who has made a great contribution to the post-

independent Indian intellectual landscape by emphasizing on fieldwork. He has criticized 'bookview' and advocated in its place fieldview of society. He contends that bookview gives a distorted picture of society, dwelling on the ideals of the past from which present practice and indeed present ideals departed considerably (Beteille, 1996: 2002).

Srinivas, Beteille and many of the founders of the Department of Sociology of the University of Delhi pleaded for fieldwork as an integral part of sociological and anthropological engagement. In the words of Beteille, "Sociology and social anthropology are empirical disciplines which will languish in the absence of a deep respect for facts and close attention to their observation and description" (Beteille, 1996: 247). With the help of fieldwork, we can understand a society in a better way. Fieldwork provides more clear and correct view abut India than "book view" which has been provided by the Indologist after interpreting the classical texts. Book view is partial because it based on the ancient texts written by elite upper caste Hindus. The field view really helps to know the real picture of the Indian society. It is important to mention here that the introduction of fieldwork tradition has helped people to know that Indian villages were not isolated and were not self-sufficient. During British rule India was portrayed as a land of village republics.Writer like James Mill, Charles Metcalfe, etc. viewed Indian villages as little republics and self-sufficient. But the fieldwork tradition which became popular during 1970 has helped to know that Indian villages were not self-sufficient, and it is difficult to consider them as little republics.Apart from Mill and Metcalfe, many other British officials and writers like Abbe Dubois, Herbert Risley, Hamilton, William Jones and others hold a different view on Indian villages as their studies are based on book view of the Indian society.They heavily relied on the scriptures, Sanskritic texts to understand society. Therefore, they consider Indian villages as static, less prone to change as caste is a rigid system and it is closed, villages are self-sufficient, they have everything for their subsistence and they do not have to rely on wider society. However, the village studies conducted during 1950s provided a different kind of picture

of Indian villages. It is important to have a clear picture of Indian villages which has been one of the core categories through which India has been imagined and imaged in the modern times. The village has often been seen as an final signifier of "authentic native life", a place where one could see the "real" India and develop an understanding of the way in which local people arrange their social relationships and belief systems (Jodhka, 1998). As Beteille has pointed out, "the village was not merely a place where people lived; it had a design in which were reflected the basic values of Indian civilisation" (Beteille, 1980: 108). M.N Srinivas viewed that a closer look at the village reveals several loopholes in self-sufficiency. Even a basic commodity like salt was not produced in most villages, many spices come from outside. Sugarcane was not grown in all villages. Scholar like M.N. Srinivas, Andre Beteille, Iravati Karve, carried their first-hand fieldwork in a single village and focused on the structure of social relationships, institutional patterns, beliefs and value systems of rural India. The publication of these studies marked a new chapter in the history of Indian social science. These studies for the first time showed the relevance of fieldwork-based understanding of Indian society which came to be known as the field view of Indian society which is dissimilar to the then dominant book view of Indian society.

The field- view is very important to have an in-depth knowledge of a social phenomenon. In many of our centres of sociological learning, there is not much training worthy of the name either in statistical method or fieldwork. In the Department of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics and at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University — two of our premier centres of sociological teaching and research — students now begin their empirical research and ethnographic fieldwork only when they reach the doctoral level. Students here, even in their post-M.A. M.Phil. research, do not do fieldwork. With such a 'solid preparation in and for fieldwork', then, it should be no surprise that the tradition of empirical research is weak in India (Beteille, 1996). However, the reason

for this weakness is not the invasion of the barbarians or the proponents of cultural studies and deconstruction as some scholars (cf. Guha, 2003) might suggest, but our own lack of training in and commitment to fieldwork and the nurturance of habits of empirical research. In recent times, this approach has become very popular among the sociologists.

We are indebted to Srinivas and Beteille for emphasizing fieldwork in Indian intellectual engagement, but is it a question of either theoretical engagement or fieldwork? As Srinivas writes in his autobiographical reflections, *Itineraries of an Indian Social Anthropologist,* that while proceeding to do fieldwork among the Coorgs in South India, he wanted to write on theories of society taking some Indian traditions of thought as his point of departure but he could not proceed on this because of the threat of lack of fellowship for such a work from his mentor G. S. Ghurye:

> While the field study of Coorgs in their forested mountains had its appeal for me, I was troubled by the fact that I was becoming a chronicler of customs and not the theoretician of society which I wanted to be... I thought I should take up a 'theoretical subject' for my Ph.D. I went to the late Professor M. Hiriyana in Mysore whose understanding of Indian philosophy was profound and asked him whether a person who did not have a knowledge of Sanskrit could make a study of how the relation between individual and society was formulated in Indian thought. Hiriyana said I could undertake such a study but the project was nipped in the bud by Ghurye who told me that no fellowship would be forthcoming if I chose a theme which did not involve

fieldwork. Ghurye took a dim view of my hankering after 'theory'. I was bitter with Ghurye at that time but, in retrospect, I cannot help being thankful to him for being firm about the fellowship being available for fieldwork only (Srinivas, 1989a: 190-191)

What happened to this desire for theory in Srinivas in his subsequent years? If there is a disdain for theoretical engagement in Indian sociology and anthropology, could it be linked to such foundational experiences? Indian sociology and anthropology began with a dualism between bookview and fieldview but, as Srinivas tells us, there was a part in him which wanted to be a theoretician of society. Beteille, pointing towards the importance of both book view and field view in sociology, writes nearly sixty years after this foundational experience of Srinivas in his own autobiographical epilogue, "Perhaps it was a mistake to have presented the bookview and fieldview as if they stood in complete mutual opposition. A comprehensive scheme for the understanding the Indian society and culture must find a place for the bookview as well as the field view" (Beteille, 1996: 247).

Therefore, it is evident from the above discussion that both field-view and book- view are very important in sociology and any kind of sociological research.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

2.5 SUMMING UP

In this unit, we have learned about two important approaches, i.e. the bookview and the field view in Indian sociology. Book view is the study of Indian society with the help of interpretation of ancient texts. It was one dominant perspective during the time of colonial and post-colonial era. However, the book view is not free of criticisms. Proponents of field view believe book view always gives a distorted picture of Indian society. Therefore, scholars like M.N Srinivas have popularised the field view tradition in India. One of his books *The Field Worker and the Field* gives us a comprehensive understanding of filed view and its applicability in studying social phenomenon.

2.6 QUESTIONS

1. Distinguish between book view and field view.

2. "Book–view gave a distorted picture of society". Explain.

2.7 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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MODULE II: PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIOLOGY-I

UNIT 3: APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF INDIAN SOCIETY: INDIGENISATION OF SOCIOLOGY

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous module we have learnt about the development of Sociology in India. We know that Sociology emerged in West and it has expanded to other parts of the globe. The Asian scholars have also adopted the methods and perspective which have emerged in West. Many scholars however, have questioned the relevance of the universal applicability of those Western approaches and methods. It must be mentioned that many Indian scholars have also expressed doubt regarding the applicability and relevance of the theories and methods which have been borrowed from West and they have pleaded for the adoption of new approaches and methods which are applicable in Indian context which ultimately aroused the question of indigenisation. In this unit we will deal with that concept of indigenisation of sociology and the reason behind the Indianisation of sociology.

It is very well-known fact that Indian society is diverse and simultaneously it is overburdened with many social problems. Scholars have therefore tried to understand and analyse the society, its problems, social processes and

social reality from different perspectives. This module in the following unit will try to throw light on different approaches/perspectives to study the Indian society.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the various approaches to study Indian society;
- Explain the need of indigenisation of Sociology;
- Distinguish between Sociology in India, Sociology of India and Sociology for India.

3.3 INDIGENISATION OF SOCIOLOGY

3.3.1 Meaning of Indigenisation

Before beginning our discussion on indigenisation of Sociology it is very important for you to get introducedto three important concepts: i) Sociology in India ii) Sociology of India and iii) Sociology for India. Sociology in India deals with the professional activities of sociologists mainly related to the teaching of sociology in India. Sociology of India refers to the approaches to the study of Indian society. It encompasses the researches carried out in India e.g., caste, kinship, village studies in India. Sociology for India is the kind of modification made in the approach to study social system in India. It mainly emphasizes on emancipation and contextualization (indigenisation or Indianization of sociology).

Let us now discuss about indigenisation. In common parlance the word indigenisation refers to the act of making something more native; transformation of ideas to suit a local culture. Therefore, the indigenisation of Social Science or Sociology refers to the changes brought to the discipline to suit the local situation. One inescapable crisis in social sciences in Asia is associated with indigenisation. As we have already

mentioned that the native scholars have raised their voice against the use of borrowed methods and campaigned for the use of native or indigenous techniques of research. And this tone for indigenization, however takes different form and also gives importance to different aspects in different countries. The question of indigenisation has been also discussed in quite a lot of national and international meetings. The movement of indigenisation gained momentum in the first part of the 1970s.In Asia, the concern was expressed at the first Asian Conference on Teaching and Research in Social Sciences organized in 1973 in Shimla. The concern for indigenization was also shown by the Conference of National Social Science Councils. The demand for indigenisation is an invitation to re-examine the very structure of social science in general, and sociology in particular, to evolve suitable strategies for their promotion in challenging situation of modern times. The concern for indigenisation has soon made it necessary to examine carefully all its implications. The basic element through which Western sociology has made itself acceptable to the world of deprived is the mask of value neutrality and objectivity. The mainstream Indian sociologist follows the dictates of 19th century positivism and believed in objectivity and value neutral sociology.

The alienating character of sociology in India is manifested in the fact that it is used most often as instrument of domination and tyranny rather than as a pursuit for liberation. So, there arose the need for indigenization. In its extreme formulation it appears almost like a revolt against the dominance of Western concepts, theories and methodologies which were described as irrelevant and unsuitable in Asian context. Many scholars criticized the quality of work done by foreigners of their society on one hand, and blind imitation of foreign models by local scholars who had been trained abroad, on the other hand. It is argued that there is considerable misrepresentation of reality in the writings of outsiders, seeing it with different cultural lens. They are unable to go beyond surface and detect deeper meanings. It is also important to mention here that the call for indigenisation has addressed different aspects as it means different things to different people. According

to Atal, some of the positive aspects of indigenisation emphasised by the proponents are as follows:

i) Indigenisation is an appeal for self-awareness and rejection of borrowed consciousness. It always gives importance to the need of an inside view. Its proponents wish to promote thoughtful analysis of own society by indigenous scholarsin order to replace the trend of knowing via West.

ii) It advocates the desirability for alternative perspectives on human societies with a view to making the social sciences less parochial and enriching them.

iii) It draws attention to historical and cultural specificities and argue for the redefinition of focus with a view to developing dynamic perspective on national problems (Atal, 2003).

We can also understand the concept in three different ways as pointed out by Krishna Kumar:

a) Structural indigenisation: It refers to the institutional and organizational capabilities of a nation for production and diffusion of social science knowledge.
b) Substantive indigenisation: The essential premise in case of substantive indigenisation is that the main thrust of these disciplines in a country should be on its own society, people, and economic and political institutions.
c) Theoretic indigenization: It indicates a condition in which the social scientists of a nation are engaged in building distinctive, conceptual frameworks and meta theories which reflect their world views, social and cultural experiences and perceived goals.

The word indigenisation is generally preferred to endogenous development. Endogenous development refers to the development generated from within and orthogenetically and which is free from any kind of external influence. Indigenisation however honestly alludes to outside contact by emphasising

the need for indigenisation of the exogenous elements to suit local requirements.

The question of indigenisation has become a matter of concern all over the globe. According to Atal (2003), in Asian context, indigenisation has been followed along with the four fronts as mentioned below:

i) Teaching in national language and use of local materials: Several countries of the region are taking initiative to introduce the regional language as the medium of instructions at higher levels of learning. But it is important to mention hereone important issue. The introduction of regional language as the medium of instruction requires the production of literature in that language. Because if the students are asked to consult the writings of foreign language it would not be possible for them to analyse and understand.

ii) Research by insiders: Another important step towards the process of indigenisation is the promotion of research by locals.

iii) Determination of research priorities: In addition to the above-mentioned steps, promotion of research on the areas regarded as nationally significant is also going on as a part of the indigenisation project.

iv) Theoretical and methodological reorientation: This is developing very slowly. Voices has been raised against the dominance of Western or alien theories and their incompatibility. But the development of indigenous theories and methodologies are not in progress for the replacement.

It has been already mentioned that the concern for indigenisation has become very popular in different parts of the world. In India, three key concerns have provided the conditions for the call for indigenisation. First,

as a part of nationalist agenda, many scholars of India during the period of 1940s and 1950s reviewed the alien writings on India to detect colonial design and conspiracy to look down upon Indian civilization and culture. Many popular theories like structural functionalism were even seen as a part and parcel of Western agenda to maintain hierarchical relations. Questions were also raised regarding the relevance of Western methodology of research and limitations of outsiders to understand internal structure.

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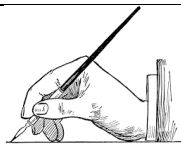
1. Distinguish between Sociology in India and Sociology of India.

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2. Mention two reasons behind the quest for indigenisation of sociology.

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3. Define structural indigenisation.

3.3.2 Indigenisation of Sociology in India:

It has already been mentioned in the previous section that the social sciences are largely Western oriented. Social science gained popularity in non-Western countries without any alteration of their Western orientation.

The situation of social science in India is not different from the other parts of the world as the Indian scholars were very much influenced by the Western scholars and many of them had taken training abroad and tried to apply their knowledge in Indian context. Even after independence, there was not any significant change in academic culture of India. Social science and sociology retained link with the high learning centres of the West. The blind imitation of Western methodology led to distortion of perspective and falsification of generalization.The growth of sociology also remained stunted as the native sociology operated within parameters set by others and could not see the challenges and opportunities inherent in their own social situation. The result of its imitative research was doubtfulbecause of their inappropriate conceptual and methodological foundation. Thus, the strong argument for the Indianisation of Sociology is not born out of xenophobia. Indianisation aimed at a redefinition of focus and purposive efforts to develop a dynamic perspective on national problems and critical issues of public and society.

The debate in the fifties and sixties was whether sociology in India should have a universal character or it should be unique in nature owing to the uniqueness of Indian society. The question in fact, appeared in books and journals. There was also division among the scholars regarding the issue of indigenisation. A large section of them realised that it should be a part of general sociological theory, and there should be combination of the general with the specific. Let us have a look at the views of some eminent sociologists. A. R Desai who advocates the orthodox Marxist approach as the most appropriate approach for understanding Indian society and state. G.S Ghurye, R. N Saxena and A.K Saran emphasized on traditional perspective. M.N Srinivas and his followers found British structural functionalism as the most relevant approach to study Indian society. Yogendra Singh on the other hand, remained stuck to positivist empirical approach and suggested for a general and specific dimension in regard to sociology in India. In the subsequent units, we will discuss in detail how

the sociologists adopt different approach and studied several aspects of Indian society.

3.4 SUMMING UP

The concern for indigenisation of sociology also demands for the examinations of its implications. Even if the concept of indigenisation has become very popular, there is also lack of harmony on its desirability. There were only a few takers of the concept indigenisation. The quest for indigenisation became slower in due course of time. Simultaneously, there was an increase of interdisciplinary research and perspectives like post modernism and post structuralism emerged which also emphasized on decentralization and diversity. In such a situation, it seems indigenisation has no ground. The time has come to encourage Indianization. As a response to neo-colonial sociological hegemonism, Indianisation has been promoted by a variety of mechanism. The major stream of debate on sociology for India stresses the distinctiveness of Indian Sociology owing to the unique tradition of India based on hierarchy and holism as against the Western principles of hierarchy and holism.

Glossary:
- Dominant Caste: A caste group owning a large amount of land, has high numerical strength, high place in caste hierarchy, Western education, job in administrationand urban source of income. However, among all these attributes numerical strength, economic and political power are important attributes for a caste group to become dominant in an area.   - Sanskritization: It is a Process in which those belonging to a lower caste group imitate the rituals and customs of higher caste group to uplift their status in local hierarchy. This process is very slow and sometimes it takes two three generation to change the status. It is a change in the system not of the system.

- Westernisation: It refers to the changes which occurred during British Period. Both Sanskritization and westernisation helped each other.
- Varna: It is a reference category.It is not functional unit of Indian Social Structure. It is a classificatory device. In it, several jatis with similar ascribed ritual status are clustered together.

3.5 QUESTIONS

1. Define indigenisation. Why the question of indigenisation has become popular among Indian scholars?

2. Discuss the different types of indigenisation as put forth by Krishna Kumar.

3. Discuss the need of indigenisation of Sociology.

3.6 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 4: INDOLOGICAL/TEXTUAL (G. S. GHURYE, LOUIS DUMONT)

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We have already discussed in the unit 2 of Module I about the book view or Indology and its importance in studying Indian society. In this unit, we will discuss two eminent scholars G. S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont for their contribution towards Indological or textual perspective. They have studied Indian society, focusing on several important social institutions, with the help of Indological perspective. Let us now learn in detail about their contribution towards Indian sociology.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you are expected to:

- Explain the ideas of G.S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont;
- Discuss in brief about their methodology and contribution to Sociology of India;
- Discuss about their views on caste system.

4.3 G. S. GHURYE: AN INTRODUCTION

Govinda Shadashiva Ghurye was born on 12[th]December, 1893 in a Brahmin family in Maharashtra and died in 1984 at the age of 91 in Bombay. He is known as the 'father of Indian sociology', the 'doyen of Indian sociologists' for his contribution to Indian sociology. He almost single-handedly managed to build the first generation of Indian sociologists. He played a leading role in establishing the Indian Sociological Society in 1952 and its flagship journal*Sociological Bulletin*. His range of interest was encyclopaedic. He was greatly interested in world civilization and particularly in the Hindu civilization. His focus was on the Indo-Aryan civilization and its evolution in India. Ghurye tried to focus on various important aspects of Indo-Aryan civilization like evolution of caste, family structure, and its relationship with Indo-European family structure, evolution of religious consciousness. He was not only concerned with past evolution but also with the contemporary problems of his time. His work *The Burning Cauldron of the North East India* is one best example for his interest in contemporary issues. According to him, the duty of a sociologist is to explore the social history of the past (Dhanagare, 1993).

4.3.1 Ghurye and His works

As has been already mentioned, Ghurye's range of interest is very wide. Therefore, his writings have enormous diversity of themes and perspectives. Ghurye has approximately thirty publications to his credit

besides a few articles. It is important to mention here that five of his books were published before 1950, Some of his important works are as follows:

i) *Caste and Race in India*(1932)

ii) *Culture and Society* (1947)

iii) *Indian Sadhus* (1953)

iv) *Bharatanatyam and its Costumes* (1958)

v) *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture* (1955)

vi) *Cities and Civilization*(1962)

vii) *Gods and Men* (1962)

viii) *Anatomy of Rural- Urban Community* (1962)

ix) *Scheduled Tribes* (first published as *The Aborigines So-called and their Future)*(1943),1959,1963)

x) *Religious Consciousness* (1965)

xi) *Indian Acculturation* (1977)

We can divide Ghurye's whole range of works into some broad themes. S. K. Pramanick has divided his works into the six broad themes.

i) Caste

ii) Tribes

iii) Kinship, family and marriage

iv) Culture, civilization, and the historical role of cities

v) Religion

vi) Sociology of conflict and integration.

4.3.2 Methodology

According to G. S Ghurye, the task of Sociologists is to explore the social history. He observed a striking similarity between history and sociology. Ghurye was initiated to sociology through the reading of Westermarck's *History of marriage*. He was very much influenced by Rivers, Haddon and others and realized that India has many facts to tell the world about its early social institutions and their development. Therefore, for Ghurye, Indology was inevitable for doing Sociology in India. We cannot deny the

fact that when a Sociologist engaged in analysis of the evolution and growth of social institutions in India, s/he is bound to draw heavily on Indological materials. It must be mentioned here that it has become possible for Ghurye to analyse ancient texts because of his knowledge of Sanskrit literature. He was also of the opinion that whosoever was interested to do sociology in India, must have ample knowledge of Sanskrit literature which would help in the interpretations of ancient Indian texts written in Sanskrit(Dhanagare, 1993). Even after receiving training under W.H R.Rivers at Cambridge and his acceptance of structural functional approach, Ghurye did not strictly conform to the functionalist tradition when interpreting the institutions of Indian society. He emphasized on fieldwork even if he was an armchair sociologist (Srinivas and Panini, 1973).

Ghurye was not disinclined to the fieldwork tradition which is evident from his monograph on the *Mahadev Kolis* and another important work *Sex Habits of Middle Class People in Bombay* both of which are based on fieldwork. Ghurye was a practitioner of 'theoretical pluralism'and was interested in inductive empirical exercise. He tried to depict Indian social reality by primarily using Indological approach. He has also used historical and comparative methods.

4.3.3 Ghurye and His Major Contributions

Let us begin the discussion with Ghurye's *Caste and Race in India*where he hasskilfully combined historical, anthropological and sociological approaches. In it, he focuses on historical origin of caste and its geographical spread. In addition, he tries to explore its contemporary features, including changes brought about by the British rule in caste system. He has discussed about the characteristics of the caste system as well as its changing nature in independent India. He has noticed the growth of caste patriotism and the transformation of caste into a community. He focuses on the dynamism of caste system through textual evidences. With

the help of ancient text, he tries to show that in the early part of Christian era the positions of Vaishyas and Shudras got interchanged with the latter getting a higher position than the former. In his study of caste and kinship, Ghurye emphasizes two important points:

- The kin and caste networks in India had parallels in some other societies also.
- The kinship and caste in India served in the past as integrative framework (Nagla, 2008).

Ghurye also wrote on the Tribes of India in his book *Scheduled Caste*. He believed that most of the tribes have been Hinduised after a long contact with Hindus. Therefore, it is useless to look for a separate identity of the tribes. He considered the tribes as the 'backward Hindus'. Here, we must mention about the popular debate between Verrier Elwin and Ghurye where the latter supported the assimilation of the Tribes into Hindu caste, but the former supported their isolation in order to protect their own culture. Ghurye opined that a grand historical process of merger between two communities was completed and tribes can be considered as 'backward caste Hindus' (ibid).

4.3.4 Ghurye's View on Caste System

Ghurye examined the caste system from cultural as well as structural points of view. Hindu society is governed by ideal patterns of caste. He has pointed towards the following six structural features of caste system:

1. **Segmental Division:**

   The segmental division of society is understood as its division or compartmentalization into a number of castes. Ghurye sees castes as groups or segments with a well-developed life of their own, the membership of which is acquired by birth. The status of a person is determined by the position occupied in the caste hierarchy. Each caste provides a centre of its own regarding rules and regulations. The caste panchayat is the governing body of a caste. Some of the subjects dealt with by the panchayats are :i) eating, drinking or having similar

dealings with a caste or sub-caste, ii) keeping women of another caste as concubine, iii) adultery with a married woman, iv) fornication, v) refusal to fulfil a promise of marriage, vi) refusing to send a wife to her husband when old enough, etc.

2. Hierarchy:

The castes or groups are arranged in terms of a hierarchy (the ordering of the groups on a continuous scale such that the elements of a whole are ranked in a relation to whole). Hierarchy is a scheme, which arranges castes in terms of higher or superior and lower or inferior positions in relation to another. However, it must be mentioned that the relative ranking of the caste groups differs from place to place. But the common observation throughout India is that the Brahmans occupies the highest position and the ex-untouchables occupies the lowest position. (Ghurye, 1991).

3. Restriction on Feeding and Social Sphere/ The Principle of Purity and Pollution:

This attribute reflects the separation or distance between castes. Thereare minute rules as to what sort of food or drink can be accepted by a person based on the caste to which s/he belongs. Such kind of rules allude to the existence of the concept of purity and pollution. But there is great diversity in this matter. In India, castes can be divided into five groups: first, the twice born castes; second, those from whose hands the twice born can take *pukka* food; third, those castes from whose hands the twice born cannot take any kind of food; last comes all those castes whose touch pollutes any orthodox Hindu. Let us clarify here the concept of *Pukka* food and *kachcha* food. The food which is cooked in ghee is called *pukka* food and the food cooked in water is called *kachcha* food.

4. Civil and Religious Disabilities:

Separation of individual castes or groups of castes in a village is the most obvious mark of civil privileges and disabilities, and it has prevailed in more or less definite form all over India. As a result of hierarchical division, rights and obligations are unequally shared by different sections of the society. The speech, dress, and customs of the high castes could not be copied by the lower castes. Doing so would mean going against the governing rule of the society.

5. Restrictions in the Choice of Occupation:

Every caste or a group of allied castes considered some of the callings as its hereditary occupation. Since distinction was made between the different occupations as clean and unclean or pure and impure, status of a caste in society is determined by the hereditary occupations.

6. Restrictions on Marriage:

Most of the caste groups are further divided into a number of sub-groups. Every group has rules regarding marriage. Most of the time the members of such groups are forbidden to marry persons outside their groups. This practice is very dominant in a caste society. Therefore, it can be said that caste is an endogamous group. (Ghurye,1991).

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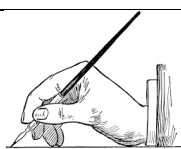
1. Name two major works of G. S. Ghurye.

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2. Name three characteristic features of caste system as put forth by Ghurye.

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3. What is Segmental Division of Society?

What do you mean by endogamous group?

4.4 LOUIS DUMONT: AN INTRODUCTION

Louis Dumont, the French Sociologist was born in 1911 and died in 1998. Dumont is an eminent figure in the field of Sociology. He is regarded as an Indologist as well as a structuralist.Dumont's academic career began in the mid-1930s under the guidance of Marcel Mauss who was a leading sociologist and Sanskritist. It was Dumont who first brought high sociological theory to bear on the caste system, focusing on its empirical specifics. He also gave technical meaning to hierarchy. (Gupta, 1999). Dumont's study of Indian society is very much influenced by the history and culture of society. While studying the two types of societies, *Homo Hierarchicus* (characterized by hierarchy) and *Homo Aequalis* (egalitarian society), he uses the concept of holism and individualism.

4.4.1 Dumont and His Major Works

Dumont has written on various aspects such as caste, Hinduism, kinship, and social as well as political movements of India. Some of his major works are as follows:

i)*La Tarasque (1951)*

ii) *Hierarchy and Marriage Alliance in South India (1957)*

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

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

v) Homo aequalis (1977).

Dumont in his work *Homo Hierarchicus*, tries to give structuralist analysis of caste, and incidentally, of Indian culture, society, and civilization (Srinivas, 1987: 137). Dumont has introduced the notions of 'system' and 'structure'. He defines caste as "a system of ideas and values, a formal, comprehensible, rational system, a system in the intellectual sense of the term" (Dumont, 1970: 35).

4.4.2 Methodology

Dumont was an Indologist for which he emphasized on interpretation of texts. However, it is also important to mention here that he has applied the method of structuralism to his study of caste system and applied the concept of holism in Indian society which refers to a type of structure where different units form an organic whole. It is important to mention here that the concept of holism is related to hierarchy and a holistic society is defined basically as hierarchical one. The concept of hierarchy refers to the idea of subordination, transcendence and interdependence. Nagla has pointed towards the four main elements of Dumont's methodology. These are:

i) ideology and structure

ii) dialectic transformational relationship and comparison

iii) Indological and structural approach

iv) cognitive historical approach (Nagla, 2008: 117).

4.4.3 Dumont's View on Caste System

Dumont was the first ideologist to give a theoretical account of caste system where he was mostly concerned with the ideology of the caste system. He viewed that the ideology of caste system in India is purely religious and this religious outlook determines the situation. In addition to ideology and structure, the concept of hierarchy has a fundamental place in Dumont's study of caste system (Nagla, 2008: 117). Dumont's concept of hierarchy is very much related to the religion which is again based on the concept of purity and pollution. According to him, hierarchy is purely a matter of religious value and in modern time hierarchy has become social stratification. He viewed that "hierarchy is a ladder of command in which the lower rungs are encompassed in the higher ones in regular succession" (Dumont, 1970: 65). Dumont considers hierarchy as one essential element for proper functioning of any society and a common value system is not possible without a social hierarchy.

According to Dumont, caste system segregates the entire Indian society into a large number of hereditary groups. These groups can be distinguished from one another and linked todifferent attributes. These are as follows:

i) **Gradation of status or hierarchy**: According to Dumont "hierarchy is a ladder of command in which the lower rungs are encompassed in the higher ones in regular succession" (ibid). That means it arranges the caste groups as comparatively superior or inferior to one another. The position of each caste group is dependent on the positions of the other caste groups. For example, the Brahmin's position has no meaning if we do not compare it with that of the Kshatriyas; in absence of such comparison, it will not be apparent that the Brahmin has ritual superiority.

ii) **Division of Labour**: The caste system is marked by specialisation and interdependence of the constituent groups. Each caste group is traditionally associated with an occupation from which its members can depart only within certain limit. Specialisation necessitates separation between these groups,but it is oriented towards the whole, which must be repeatedly emphasised. As such, it links the division of labour with hierarchy (ibid: 92-95).

iii) **Separation**: A member of a caste group always has obligation to marry within the group, which is known as endogamy. The regulation of marriage is actually an expression of the principle of separation. By prohibiting marriage outside the group and prescribing marriage within the group, one caste separates itself from another, contact and commensality between persons belonging to different groups are forbidden. At certain level of segmentation, the caste prescribes endogamy and thus ensures its own reproduction (Dumont, 1970: 109).

According to Dumont, in order to have a clear understanding of India, the study of the caste system is very crucial. The study of caste systemalso forms a significant aspect of general sociology. He emphasised on the classical texts to understand the ideology of caste. He advocated the use of an Indological and structuralist approach to the study of caste system and village social structure in India. Dumont in his *Homo Hierarchicus*, has built up a model of Indian civilisation based on non-competitive ritual hierarchical system.

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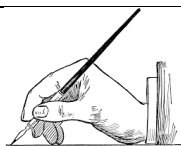
1. Name two major works of Dumont.

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2. What are the chief elements of Dumont's methodology?

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3. What do you mean by gradation of status?
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4.5 SUMMING UP

Ghurye was an Indologist and one of the first sociologists to have utilised literature in sociological studies. Ghurye with his knowledge of Sanskrit literature, extensively quoted from ancient texts to throw light on social and cultural institutions of Indian society. Dumont, another eminent figure in Indian sociology used both Indological and structural approach and identified the structural principles of caste system based on the history and culture of Indian society, which according to him, holds the key to understanding the caste system in Indian society.

4.6 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the features of caste system as put forth by Ghurye.
2. Discuss the views of Dumont on caste system. Do you think that his concept division of labour is applicable in present context?
3. Define caste and discuss its characteristics.
4. Distinguish between *kachcha* food and *Pukka* food.
5. Caste system segregates the entire Indian society into some hereditary groups. Explain.

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UNIT 5: STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALISM (M.N. SRINIVAS, S.C. DUBE

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Let us begin with a brief introduction on structural functionalist approach. Modern Sociological theory is very much influenced by the functionalist analysis. The early functionalists have borrowed heavily from biological sciences and drew an analogy between society and organism like human body. In this regard, they argued that in order to know clearly about any organ in the body, such as heart, we need to understand its relation to the other organs and its rolein the maintenance of the whole organism. As the functionalists consider society as a self-regulating system of interconnected parts with structured social relationships and observable regularities, understanding of any part of society requires an analysis of its relationship to other parts. The functional approach to sociology is actually an attempt to comprehend social phenomenon in terms of its connection to some system (Abraham,1982).

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and B. Malinowski elaborated and codified functionalism as the basis of anthropological and sociological thinking. Radcliffe-Brown chose social structure as the unit of analysis and sought to explain numerous interpersonal relationships (Abraham, 1982). The structural-functionalist perspective relies more on the fieldwork tradition to know the social reality so that it can also be understood as 'contextual' or 'field view' perspective of the social phenomenon. The main followers of this perspective in India are M.N Srinivas, S.C Dube, McKim Marriot, I.P Desai, D.N Majumder and others.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, you are expected to:

- Describe structural –functional approach;
- Explain how Srinivas and Dube have applied structural-functionalist approach to study Indian society;
- Describe their contribution to sociology of India.

5.3 M. N. SRINIVAS: AN INTRODUCTION

Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas was born on 16[th]November, 1916 in Mysore in a Brahmin family and died in 1999 at the age of 83 at Bangalore. He achieved M.A, LLB. and Ph.D. from Bombay and D. Phil. from Oxford. He was a student of G.S. Ghurye in Bombay University. He has contributed significantly as a researcher as well as an institutional builder. He must be given credit for setting up the department of Sociology at M.S University, Baroda. He has also contributed a lot for the setting up of the Department of Sociology at Delhi University (Nagla, 2008).

5.3.1 Methodology

M.N Srinivas has introduced the tradition of macro-sociological generalization on micro- anthropological insight and of giving a sociological sweep and perspective to anthropological investigation of

small scale communities (Joshi, 2000). He was very much influenced by Radcliffe-Brown's idea of structure. Radcliffe-Brown was his teacher at Oxford. M.N Srinivas is credited to have initiated a new line of structural-functional analysis in sociological and social anthropological research in India. Srinivas did not rely on Western textbooks or indigenous ancient textsto know about his countrymen,rather he tried to know themthrough direct observation, field experience and field study. Srinivas is of the view that there are two basic concepts to understand our society—book view and field view. We have already discussed about these concepts in Unit 2 of Module one. Book view which is also known as Indology is not acceptable to Srinivas for which he emphasized on Field view. Srinivas believes that knowledge about Indian society can be gained through fieldwork. So, he emphasized on intensive fieldworkand wrote many books on the basis of the field data. According to him, book view gives a distorted picture of any phenomenon. His fieldwork has helped us in revealing many facts about Indian society. After completing his fieldwork in Coorg and Rampura, he has come up with many new concepts like Sanskritisation, dominant caste, etc.

It must be mentioned that the fieldworker faces many difficulties during a fieldwork. His book *The Fieldworker and the Field* gives a detailed description of the problems which a fieldworker faces in making a study in rural India.

5.3.2 M. N. Srinivas and His works

Srinivas has focused on many important aspects of India society like religion, culture, village community and social change, etc. By applying structural-functional approach he has studied Indian society as a 'totality' (Patel, 1998). He has conducted his intensive field study in Coorg and Rampura and wrote extensively on the following themes:

i)   Dominant caste

ii)   Social Change

iii)   Religion and society

iv)   Caste

Some of his major works on the above-mentioned themes are as follows:

i) *Marriage and Family in Mysore (1942)*

ii) *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India (1952)*

iii) *India's Village (1955)*

iv) *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays (1962)*

v) *Social Change in Modern India (1966)*

vi) *The Remembered Village (1976)*

vii) *India: Social Structure (1980)*

viii) *The Dominant Caste and Other Essays (1992)*

ix) *The Fieldworker and the Field (1979)*

x) *Village, Caste, Gender and Method (1996)*

xi) *Indian Society through Personal Writings*

Besides all these, he has also written many other books and essays. His important work*Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* is based on the intensive fieldwork where Srinivas has focused on social and religious lives of the Coorgs. By explaining theinteraction in ritual context of different castes of the Coorgs, he describes the concept of functional unity. After conducting his fieldwork on the Coorgs, he has formulated the concept Brahminisation to refer to the process where the lower caste people imitate the lifestyle and rituals of Brahmins. However, he has soon replaced Brahminisation with Sanskritisation.

In his book *The Remembered Village,* Srinivas has written about the structure of caste system in Rampura village. He discusses the caste system by dividing the entire population on the basis of occupation. While doing so, he sees its link with agriculture. He analyses the practices of various

castes in relation to their occupation (Srinivas, 1976). He is therefore of the view that each caste is dependent on the other thereby leading to an organic integration of each caste with others.They are related with each other in a functional perspective as elaborated by Radcliffe Brown. He has also coined the concept of 'dominant caste' after studying the Rampura village. The concept of dominant caste has been used to the study of power relation at the village level. He had defined dominant caste with the help of six attributes which are accordingly: i) large amount of land, ii) numerical strength of numbers, iii) high place in the local hierarchy, iv) Western education, v) job in administration,and vi) urban source of income. However, it is important to mention here that out of these six attributes of dominant caste, the following three are important i) numerical strength, ii) economic power, and iii) political power.

Above all, Srinivas dealt with the concept of social change in his book *Social Change in Modern India* (1966). In this book he has discussed about the process of social change mainly with the help two important concepts- Sanskritisation and Westernisation. According to him, of these two processes, Sanskritisation seems to have occurred throughout Indian history and is continuously occurring in the society. Sanskritisation is a process in which a 'low' Hindu caste or tribal or other group, imitates the custom, ritual, ideology and the way of life of a high, and frequently "twice born" caste to uplift its status in local caste hierarchy. This process of imitation results into some changes in the lifestyle of lower caste people. Generally, such changes help them to achieve a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that which has been traditionally ascribed to them by the local community. The lower caste people usually made such kind of claim over a period of time, in fact, a generation or two, before it is conceded (Srinivas, 1966).

Westernisation on the other hand, refers to the changes introduced during the British period to the Indian society and which still continuein independent India. Westernisation, like Sanskritisation is not restricted to

any particular segment of the Indian population. It may be noted that the achievement of independence accelerated the process of Westernisation (Srinivas, 1966). There are, however, some presuppositions in the process of both Sanskritisation and Westernisation, which do imply precedent or connected structural changes, such as improvement in economic position of the Sanskritising caste, superiority and dominance of the caste being emulated and the psychological dissatisfaction among the low castes from their own position in the caste hierarchy (ibid).

However, Sanskritisation brought changes within the framework of Indian tradition whereas Westernisation was a change resulting from the contact of British socio-economic and cultural innovations. Along with these concepts, Srinivas has added the concept of 'secularisation' to indicate the process of institutional innovation and ideological formulations after independence to deal with the question of religious and minority groups. However, he has been criticized for marginalising and alienating religious minorities in his venture for encouraging Sanskritisation. But Some scholars viewed that these concepts have been already used by Lyall and Risley. (Mukherjee, 1979: 50).

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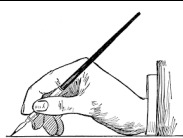
1. Who authored the Book,*The Fieldworker and the Field?*

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2. Mention two attributes of dominant caste.

5.4 S.C. DUBE: AN INTRODCUTION

Shyama Charan Dube was born on 25[th]July, 1922 in Madhya Pradesh and died in 1996 at the age of 73.He obtained Master's Degree from Nagpur University in Political Science. He conducted a research on a tribe known as Kamar (shifting cultivators) in Madhya Pradesh. He started his career as a teacher in Nagpur at Bishop College. Later he joined Osmania University. However, he quit Osmania to become Deputy Director of the Anthropological Survey of India in Nagpur. He was also Director at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla.

5.4.1 Methodology

S. C. Dube has applied positive deductive method to get insight into Indian social reality and advocated an interdisciplinary orientation. Dube has contributed significantly towards the study of internal village structure and organization, their ethos, worldview, life-ways and ways of thinking, etc. His work, *Indian Village* (1955) is the first full length account of village social structure where he deals with total study of Shamirpet in the region of Telangana of Andhra Pradesh. He has portrayed the social structure and social institutions of rural India in a very coherent way. His writings on *Indian Village* also served as a model of descriptive and explanatory account of many other macro-settings that came to be studied later.

5.4.2 S.C Dube and His Works

Dube has contributed towards a wide range of themes like tribe, modernisation, community development, management of change and tradition apart from his major focus on village India. He has written the following books by covering several aspects of Indian society.

1. *The Kamar, Indian Village (1955)*
2. *India's Changing Village (1958)*
3. *Institution Building for Community Development (1968)*
4. *Contemporary India and Its Modernization (1974)*

5. *Tribal Heritage of India (1977)*

6. *Understanding Society (1977)*

7. *Modernization and Development (1988)*

8. *Tradition and Development (1990)*

9. *Understanding Change (1990)*

10. *Indian Society (1990)*

Let us briefly discuss about some of his major works. In *Indian Village*, Dube has made important contribution in understanding the Indian society with the help of structural-functional perspective. Before writing *IndianVillage*, he has conducted extensive fieldwork at village Shamirpet, which is located 25 miles away from Hyderabad. He has focused on four important aspects of rural India: the social structure, the economic structure, the ritual structure, the web of family ties and the level of living. By studying social structure, he has identified six factors that contributed towards the status differentiation in the village community of Shamirpet: religion and caste, land ownership, wealth, position in government service and village organization, age, and distinctive personality traits. He also emphasises on the phenomenon like caste, inter-caste and inter-village organisation. In addition, he has thrown light on the manner in which the caste panchayat of the lower or menial castes worked as union to secure their employment and strengthen their bargaining power viz a viz the land owing dominant castes. His study has also helped to reveal the fact that in India, not even a single village is autonomous and independent; a village is always one unit in a wider social system. According to Dube, caste is a real structure that directs social relationships in an Indian village.

Dube's another important work is *Indian Society* (1990) where he deals with many important social elements like diversity and unity, varna and jati, family and kinship, patterns of urbanisation including the gender relations in Indian society. This book provides a clear understanding of Indian society. However, he has viewed that Indian society is old and

extremely complex. Dube also discusses how difficult it is to identify the earliest inhabitants of India. Speculations can be made about the autochthons of India on the basis of information provided by physical anthropology regarding the ethnic elements, i.e., the racial groups, in the population of India (Dube, 1990). It is important to mention here that very often students get confused with the classification of varna and jati. However, Dube has written extensively on caste and varna in his book *Indian Society* where he has clarified that in the Hindu social system, varna is only a reference category that serves as a classificatory device. It is not a functioning unit of social structure and only refers broadly to the ascribed status of jatis. In it, there are several jatis which are clustered together on the basis of similar ascribed ritual status. He has also discussed about the great diversity in the forms and functions of the family in Indian society. Dube has maintained that as an institution, family has been very strong in the village society. Family is considered as a group working with harmony, cohesion and cooperation. In addition, he has looked into the gender differences. In the Telangana village, Dube observed that women were isolated from the activities of public sphere and the husband was considered to be an authoritative figure whose will should be respected and obeyed by his wife and children.

In *Contemporary India and Its Modernization* (1974), Dube has explained diverse subjects like bureaucracy, leadership, education, planning, and secularism.

It is important to mention here that in *Contemporary India and Modernization,* Dube discusses about the obstacles of modernisation. He has identified several apparatuses for constructing a satisfactory national framework for modernisation. These are as follows:

1. The cohesive bond of society must be strengthenedand for that it is important to encourage consciously planned inter-regional and

inter-ethnic interdependence by secularising political and economic participation.

2. Social restraint and social discipline are important.

3. There should be a need for expertise in both policy making and implementation.

4. The reward system should be structured so that it promotes excellence of performance and holds back inefficiency and corruption.

Dube's another important work is *Modernization and Development* (1988) where he has divided the concept of development into four phases:

- First phase: In this initial stage, development is understood as economic development and economists give attention to economic growth.

- Second phase: In this phase, the connection between economic development and social change is recognized.

- Third phase: The third phase may be called relative and responsive. This phase is a result of a strong reaction to the inadequate paradigm of development and modernisation.

- Fourth phase: The fourth phase is known as reflexive phase where one must comprehend the world order and national order.

Apart from books on Indian villages Dube has written some papers on the village studies. These are accordingly:

i)   Thinking of Caste in Telangana Village

ii)   Dominant Caste and Village Leadership

iii)   The Restive Students: Strands and Themes in Contemporary Youth Culture

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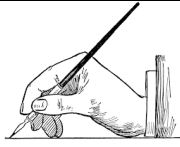
1. Name the village where Dube has conducted his field work.

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2. Name two books written by Dube.

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3. Who are the *Kamars?*

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4. What is the difference between jati and varna?

5.5 SUMMING UP

M.N Srinivas and S.C Dube are two eminent sociologists in India who have adopted structural-functionalist approach to study Indian Society. They have explored many unknown facts about Indian society by conducting field study in different villages. Srinivas's emphasis on 'field view' over 'book view' is a very important step in developing proper understanding of Indian social reality. He has studied Indian society and explored important concepts such as dominant caste, Sanskritisation and Westernisation, etc. Dube on the other hand has emphasized on the role of various social structures like social, economic and political in shaping the village. He has also thrown light on the interrelationship among the various elements of social structure. Attempt has also been made to examine the factors which are responsible for bringing change to the village Shamirpet.

5.6 QUESTIONS

1. Define Structural-Functionalism. Discuss about the contribution of one structural functionalist discussed in this Unit.
2. 'No Village in India is completely independent'. Discuss.
3. Discuss the importance of structural-functionalist approach to study Indian society.

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