

**MASTER OF ARTS
SOCIOLOGY
CENTRE FOR OPEN AND
DISTANCE LEARNING
(CODL)**



**MSO 103: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA
BLOCK II**

**CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING
TEZPUR UNIVERSITY (A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)
TEZPUR, ASSAM - 784028
INDIA**

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MSO 103: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA



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INDIA

MSO-103: SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA

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BLOCK II

MODULE III: PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIOLOGY-II

UNIT 6: MARXIST PERSPECTIVES
(D.P.MUKHERJEE, A. R. DESAI, R.K. MUKHERJEE)

UNIT 7: CIVILIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES
(N.K.BOSE, SURAJIT SINHA)

UNIT 8: SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVE
(B.R. AMBEDKAR, DAVID HARDIMAN)

UNIT 9: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE
(UMA CHAKRAVARTY, SHARMILA REGE)

MODULE IV: VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA

UNIT 10: GROUPS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE:
CASTE, CLASS, TRIBE, RELIGION

UNIT 11: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: FAMILY, KINSHIP
AND MARRIAGE

UNIT 12: SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN INDIA:
SANSKRITISATION, WESTERNISATION AND
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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This Block comprises of Modules **III** and **IV** of MSO 103: Sociology of India. **Module III** deals with the second part of the perspectives on Indian Sociology. The module is divided into four units. **Unit 6** is about the Marxist perspectives and will introduce the learners to three Indian sociologists who have used Marxist perspective—D.P. Mukerji, A. R. Desai, and Ramkrishna Mukherjee. Civilizational perspectives will be covered in **Unit 7** which will discuss two other Indian sociologists—N.K. Bose and Surajit Sinha. Another important perspective in sociology of India has been the subaltern perspective which is discussed in **Unit 8** focusing on the contributions and works of B. R. Ambedkar and David Hardiman. **Unit 9** deals with feminist perspective and it focuses 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.

MODULE III: PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIOLOGY-II

UNIT 6: MARXIST PERSPECTIVES (D. P. MUKERJI, A. R. DESAI, RAMKRISHNA MUKHERJEE)

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 6.1. Introduction
- 6.2. Objectives
- 6.3 D.P. Mukerji: An Introduction
 - 6.3.1 Methodology
 - 6.3.2 D. P. Mukerji and His works
- 6.4 A.R. Desai: An Introduction
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 - 6.4.2 A. R. Desai and His Works
- 6.5 Ramkrishna Mukherjee: An Introduction
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- 6.6 Summing Up
- 6.7 Questions
- 6.8 Recommended Readings and References

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Marxist approach to sociology began to gain ground during the latter part of the 20th century. The advocates of Marxist approach in sociology have been very critical of structural-functionalism. They are of the view that functionalists are conservative, focus more on the functions of traditional factors like caste, religion and kinship, thereby ignoring the role of class, and the forces of change (Srinivas, 1987). Therefore, Indian sociologists like D.P. Mukerji, A.R. Desai have tried to analyse Indian society with the help of Marxist theory.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss about the contributions of a few scholars who have applied the Marxist approach to study Indian society;
- Discuss the relevance of Marxian approach to study Indian society.

6.3 D. P. MUKERJI: AN INTRODUCTION

Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji was born on 5th October 1894 in West Bengal in a middle-class family and died in 1961. He completed his M.A in Economics and History from Calcutta University and went to England for his further studies. Even though he started his career in Bangabasi College, he later joined Lucknow University as a lecturer in economics and sociology. He also served as a visiting professor of sociology at the International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. He was a Marxist but preferred the title Marxologist, i.e., a social scientist of Marxism. He analysed Indian society from Marxian perspective of dialectical materialism (Nagla, 2008)

6.3.1. Methodology

D. P. Mukerji was one among the founding fathers of Sociology in India who followed Marxism as a method of analysis. He was profoundly interested in studying Indian social reality rooted in Indian tradition. At the same time, he was also interested in analysing the forces of modernity and the aspects of Indian tradition so as to change the Indian society for the wellbeing of the masses. His dialectical analysis of Indian history suggested that tradition and modernity, colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism are dialectically interacting with each other in contemporary India. He attempted a dialectical analysis of the encounter between Indian

tradition and modernity which set free many forces of cultural incongruity during colonial era (Nagla, 2008: 187-188).

6.3.2 D.P. Mukerji and his Works:

D.P. Mukerji wrote almost nineteen books in his lifetime of which ten are in Bengali and nine in English. Some of his major works are as follows:

- i) *Basic Concepts in Sociology* (1932)
- ii) *Personality and the Social Sciences* (1924)
- iii) *Modern Indian Culture* (1942)
- iv) *Problems of Indian Youth* (1942)
- v) *Diversities* (1958)

D. P. Mukerji's work on tradition and modernity helps us in understanding these two bipolar concepts. He argues that there is a dialectical relation between India's tradition and modernity. In addition, he tries to show through his work the importance of traditions in understanding of Indian society. According to him, the primary task of a sociologist is to grasp the exact nature of those forces which uphold a particular society over the time. Therefore, he emphasizes that sociologists of India must comprehend the nature of tradition, which have preserved Indian society for a very long period. But sociology is not a defence of status quo. Mukerji emphasizes that "sociology should ultimately show the way out of the social system by analysing the process of transformation" (Nagla, 2008: 198). His sociological analysis of Indian society demonstrates that Indian society is changing without disintegrating. Therefore, according to him, the study of Indian social system demands for a different approach to sociology because of its tradition and its particular patterns of economic and technological changes in culture and symbols that follows thereafter (ibid).

D. P Mukerji has used the concept of tradition for the first time in his book *Modern Indian Culture: A Sociological Study*. This book centres on the concept of cultural fusion which is the key to the history of India. In it, he recognises that the Hindu-Muslim cultural amalgamation was the weakest at the cognitive levels but can be observed in terms of shared economic interests, art and literature. He does not regard the partition of the sub-continent as more than an incident of geopolitics (Nagla, 2008: 195).

Mukerji has expressed some doubts over the usefulness of Marxist approach in the analysis of Indian social phenomenon which are as follows:

- i) The focus of Marxism is on class and the Marxists analyse everything in terms of class conflict. But in Indian society, caste is a peculiar institution that has been more prominent than class. New class relations have only started to emerge and are not yet fully developed.
- ii) Many of the Marxists are almost unaware of the socio-economic history of India.
- iii) the way economic pressure works is not that of mechanical force moving dead matter. Traditions have immense power of opposition. Change of mode of production may overwhelm this opposition.

6.4 A. R. DESAI: AN INTRODUCTION

Akshay Ramanlal Desai was born on 16th April, 1915 in Gujrat and died on 12 November, 1994 at Baroda in Gujrat. In the initial part of his life he was very much influenced by his father. He also participated in the students' movements in Baroda, Surat and Bombay. He obtained his Ph.D. degree from Bombay University under the guidance of G.S. Ghurye. After completing his study, he joined Bombay University to become the head of the department.

6.4.1 Methodology

A.R Desai is one among Indian sociologists to have applied dialectical-historical method in sociological studies. The works of K. Marx and F. Engels had greatly influenced him to introduce Marxist approach to empirical investigations. He applied Marxist methods in his study of Indian social structure and processes.

He believes the leading approaches/perspectives which shaped the sociological studies have been non-Marxist and those perspectives have regarded Marxist approach as dogmatic, value biased, lacking objectivity and value neutrality. But he considers Marxist approach as useful for conducting research on Indian society.

According to A.R Desai, Marxist approach helps to comprehend the social reality with the means of production, the techno-economic division of labour involved in operating the instruments of production and social relations of production or what are more specifically characterized as property relations. Property relation is considered as critical in Marxist approach. The reason is that property relations shape the purpose, nature, control, direction, and objectives underlying the production. In addition, property relation provides the guideline regarding the share of people or who shall obtain how much and on what basis (Desai, 1986: 203-206).

6.4.2 A.R. Desai and His Work

Desai wrote many books in his lifetime on various themes like village structure, transformation of Indian society, social background of Indian nationalism, etc. Some of his major works are as follows:

- i) *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism (1948)*
- ii) *Rural Sociology in India (1969)*
- iii) *Slums and Urbanization in India (1970)*
- iv) *State and Society in India (1975)*

- v) *Peasant Struggle in India (1979)*
- vi) *Rural India in Transition (1979)*
- vii) *India's Path of Development (1984)*

Desai argues that the Marxist approach which takes property relations as one important factor to define the nature of society will definitely help the Indian scholars to allocate the type of society, the nature of class of the state and the specificity of the path of development along with its implications (Desai, 1986: 205-206).

Analysing the thirty years of development that has taken place in India during the post independent period, Desai pointed towards some of the major trends such as: i) It is evident from the GNP and per capita income that India has remained one of the poorest countries in the world, ii) population of India remained poor and not free from the most acute form of inequality, iii) accumulation of income in the hands of upper circles, iv) expansion small-scale industries with high capital that too at the cost of handicraft industries of the rural areas and rural artisan class, v) increase of unemployment, vi) new education opportunities were accessible only to rich sections. These are only few among those which have been pointed out by Desai. According to him, these developments undoubtedly disclose the fact that the state has taken up property norms of capitalist society as the axis of development. And therefore Desai put forth the question: can these vital trends be elucidated in appropriate way without the help of Marxist approach?

According to Desai, Marxist approach considers that in order to understand the nature of changes that have been taking place in the country, we need to focus on the type of property relations prevailing in the Indian society. However, this approach does not imply reducing each and every incident into economic factor nor does it reject the autonomy, or the prevalence of distinct institutional and normative features peculiar to a particular society. For example, it does not

disagree with the necessity of understanding institutions like caste system, linguistic groups, religious groups, etc. which form conspicuous features of the Indian society. On the contrary, Marxist approach takes into consideration their importance and the way they are transforming in the larger context of the type of society which is being evolved and understand them in the context of underlying over-all property relations and norms inherent therein which influence the entire socio-economic formation (Desai 1986; 211).

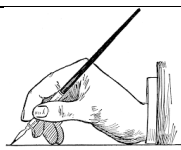
Desai is of the view that the Marxist approach will not only help in understanding industrial relations as management-labour relations but also as capital-labour relations. At the same time the Marxist approach will help us understand the dynamics of rural, urban, educational and other developments better as it will assist the exploration of these phenomena in the larger context of the social framework which is being created by the State shaping development on the capitalist path. This approach will also help to find out reasons behind institutions generating higher knowledge products and sponsored finance shaped by the state, pursuing a path of capitalist development which does not allow those paradigms and approaches to be studied which may expose the myth about state as welfare neutral state and disclose it to be basically a capitalist state (Desai, 1986: 211-212).

Desai has applied Marxist approach to study some important phenomena such as 'nationalism' in India during British period and peasant struggle in India. His book *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism* has set the trend not only in its Marxist orientation but for the way in which it cross fertilized sociology with history. Desai has applied the dialectical approach to look into the causes of the emergence of India's nationalism. According to him, India's nationalism is the outcome of the material conditions created by the British colonialism. The British were responsible for developing new economic relations by introducing industrialisation and modernisation.

This economic relationship is predominantly responsible as a stabilising factor in the continuity of traditional institutions in India, which would undergo change as these relations would change.

He applied historical materialism for understanding the transformation in Indian society. He explained how national consciousness emerged through qualitative change in Indian society. He has examined the usefulness of Marxian approach to Indian society and its reality.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Name two books written by A.R. Desai.

.....

.....

2. What according to A.R. Desai is the main cause for the emergence of nationalism in India?

.....

.....

3. Name one major work of D.P Mukerji.

.....

6.5 RAMKRISHNA MUKHERJEE: AN INTRODUCTION

Ramkrishna Mukherjee was born in Calcutta in 1919. He got his education from Calcutta University. After completing M.Sc. in 1941 he went to Cambridge to pursue his research. After completing his PhD he moved to London to become social officer to his Majesty's Social Survey, London. He started his career in teaching as a guest professor in Berlin. After coming back to India, he joined as a Research Professor at the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta in 1957 and offered his service till 1979. Mukherjee was a member of Indian Council for Social

Science Research and advisor to many institutions. He also got elected as the President, Indian Sociological Society. It is important to mention here that his research work was not confined to India; it includes Bangladesh, U.K, France, Germany, Sweden Turkey, Czechoslovakia and Uganda.

6.5.1 Methodology

Ramkrishna Mukherjee mainly focused on dialectical model for the study of Indian society. In addition, he applied systematic and inductive method. He prefers to call his approach ‘inductive inferential’ which is unbiased to the type of propositions, Marxist or non-Marxist, that one selects to experiment and verify. According to him, the role of history and dialectics in the sociological thinking and research stops at the level of formulation of proposition (Mukherjee 1970, 1975)

6.5.2 Ramkrishna Mukherjee and his works

Mukherjee worked extensively on family, rural society and problems of acculturation. He wrote quite a good number of books and more than hundred research papers for journals. His major works includes:

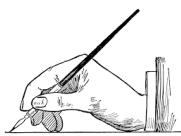
- i) *The Problems of Uganda (1956)*
- ii) *The Dynamics of a Rural Society (1957)*
- iii) *The Sociologists and Social Change in India Today (1965)*
- iv) *Six Villages of Bengal (1971)*
- v) *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company (1958)*
- vi) *Social Indicators (1975)*
- vii) *Family and Planning in India (1976)*
- viii) *West Bengal Family Structure 1946:1966 (1977)*

Mukherjee was interested in the agrarian social structure for which he has given priority to the agrarian class structure, class relations and agrarian social change while conducting sample survey at the Indian Statistical institute. With the help of dialectical model, he has made both historical and empirical studies. His book *The Rise and Fall of*

British East India company (1958) depicts the economic and social history of the institutionalisation of colonialism in India. In his book *The Dynamics of Rural Society* (1957), Mukherjee studies social and economic transformation in a number of villages with the help of change in the structure of social classes. According to him, it is important to grapple the organic character of Indian society for understanding of its social processes. While studying rural society, Mukherjee makes use of statistical data to generate conceptual categories of class structure in the villages.

Apart from these works he tried to look into the development of sociology and anthropology in India. He viewed that development of Sociology and Social Anthropology in India cannot be tried without examining the overlapping of various theoretical, methodological and ideological influences on the growth of these twin disciplines.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Name two major works of Ramkrishna Mukherjee.

2. Define Inductive Method

6.6 SUMMING UP

In this Unit, we have learned about the concept Marxist approach and how it has been applied to the study the Indian society. Unlike

structural-functionalist approach, it emphasises the force of change and the role of class while studying Indian society. Scholars like A.R Desai, D.P Mukerji, Ramkrishna Mukherjee, etc. applied Marxist approach in order to analyse the Indian society. According to A. R Desai, it is important to study the property relations in the Indian society with the help of the Marxist approach. It also helps us to know about the industrial relations in India during the post independent period. In addition, the Marxist approach helps to comprehend the real social picture with the help of the prevailing mode of production which consists of forces of production and the relations of production. Property relation is considered as vital in the Marxist approach.

Glossary:

- **Historical Materialism:** A term used by Karl Marx to his theory of society and history. 'Historical' involves the examination of how a particular form of society had come into being, and the specific historical context within which apparently universal or eternal social forms -state, religion, market, were located.
- **Inductive Method:** Induction begins from particular observations from which empirical generalisations are made. These generalisations then form the basis for theory building.
- **Empirical:** The term empirical refers to an intimate relationship to sensory experience, observation, or experiment. Sometimes the term is contrasted with abstract or theoretical enquiry.

6.7 QUESTIONS

1. Define Marxist approach. Discuss the relevance of the Marxist approach in studying Indian society.
2. What is the central idea of D.P Mukerji in understanding Indian society? How does he interpret the encounter between tradition and modernity in India?

6.8 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 7: CIVILIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES (N.K. BOSE, SURAJIT SINHA)

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Objectives
- 7.3 N.K. Bose: Introduction
 - 7.3.1 Major Works
 - 7.3.2 Methodology
 - 7.3.3 Contribution
- 7.4 Surajit Sinha: Introduction
 - 7.4.1 Major Works
 - 7.4.2 Methodology
 - 7.4.3 Contribution
- 7.5 Summing Up
- 7.6 Questions
- 7.7 Recommended Readings and References

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Civilization perspective tries to understand a society by analysing its civilization (Nagla, 2016:339). As a perspective it undertakes to study Great as well as Little tradition, i.e. it studies about the tribal, rural and also urban societies. It tries to study these societies by analysing classical and medieval texts, administrative records, caste, village (Nagla, 2016:339). According to this perspective, a social system and a nation can be understood by a historical-civilizational framework. This perspective has been used by scholars like N.K. Bose and Surajit Sinha to understand Indian society. By using this perspective, the scholars tried “to explore the historicity, continuity and inter-linkage of various structures in India” (Nagla, 2016:340). In the discussion ahead, we will

be dealing with two major scholars associated with this perspective – N.K. Bose and Surajit Sinha.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the main assumptions of civilizational perspective;
- Discuss the contribution of N.K. Bose;
- Discuss the contribution of Surajit Sinha.

7.3 N.K. BOSE: INTRODUCTION

Nirmal Kumar Bose (1901-1972) was born at Kolkata on 22nd January 1901. Although he is known for his anthropological works, he first studied Geology. He completed his masters in Anthropology from the University of Calcutta in 1924. After completion of his studies, he taught for some time in the Department of Anthropology, the University of Calcutta and also was a Reader in Human Geography in the Department of Geography. He also happened to be a visiting professor in many of the universities like the University of California, Berkley and Chicago. From 1959 to 1964 he was Director of the Anthropological Survey of India. He was awarded Annandale Gold Medal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for his contribution in the field of Anthropology. Beside the academic achievements, he was an activist in India's Independence Movement which had a profound impact on his literary works. He was also a recipient of Padma Shri award in 1966 (Nagla, 2016:341-342).

7.3.1 Major Works

N.K. Bose wrote extensively in both English and Bengali. Bose emphasised the study of not only Hindu social structure but also of the life of the tribal people. In fact, he tried to study the culture and society of India as a whole, covering simple societies of the Juang tribes of

Orissa to the complex metropolitan city of Calcutta (Nagla, 2016:343). He had a deep interest in studying the material culture of the people of India and also in the architectural structure. Some of his major anthropological works include: *Canons of Orissan Architecture* (1932), *Hindu Samajer Garan* (1949, in Bengali), *Cultural Anthropology* (1961), *Peasant life in India: A study in Indian Unity and Diversity* (1961), *Culture and Society in India* (1967), *Problems of National Integration* (1967), *The Structure of Hindu Society* (1975) (Nagla, 2016:343).

7.3.2 Methodology

N.K. Bose, in order to study Indian civilization and culture, adopted the historical and inductive method. He conducted extensive fieldwork on the tribal communities of India and to be precise he even learned their vernacular language. In order to understand Hindu civilization in a comprehensive way, he combined three approaches --ethnography, Indology and social history in one single framework (Nagla, 2016:343-344).

7.3.3 Contribution

Bose presented his civilization perspective about Indian society in his *The Structure of Indian Society*. It deals with three major aspects: ethnography, Indology and social history. In the first section, he has discussed his field studies made among tribal communities. The second part deals with the 'theory and practice of Hindu life' on the basis of the ancient text. The third part discusses the social history of Indian society (Nagla, 2016: 344).

In his ethnographic studies, Bose tried to understand the 'co-existence and inter-penetration of two modes of social organization', i.e. 'Brahminic' and 'Tribal'. On the basis of ethnographic studies among the tribal communities of Orissa and Chhota Nagpur, Bose tried to analyse the nature of the tribal communities and their relationship with the wider communities. For the purpose, he took both marginal tribes

like Juang and also large and technologically advanced tribes of Chhota Nagpur. In his fieldwork among the Juangs, he found the influence of Brahminic civilization on the day to day practices, rituals and ceremonies of Juang tribes. But Bose found that although Juangs are considered as a non-Aryan community within the Hindu fold, they have a sharp distinction from the Hindu caste-based society with its division of labour. They have their own distinct language, marriage rituals, funeral customs and beef eating. On the other hand, large and technologically advanced tribes the tribes of Chhota Nagpur, that is Oraons and Mundas although living a life of pure Hindu, Oraons could resist the Hindu domination on them. In this fieldwork, he also found the assimilation of Hindu castes like Ahirs, Lohars and Midhas with Oraons and Mundas. Through his fieldwork, Bose was interested in finding the theory behind the pattern of culture (Nagla, 2016:345).

Bose tried to understand the design and structure of Hindu society by looking at the ancient Hindu texts like the epics of the Ramayana, the Smritis and also the Buddhist texts. He tried to understand the Varna system, particularly the then existing hierarchies among the communities and also the monarchical duties as laid in the texts. Bose also studied the traditional village and city life based on the ancient texts like Vatsyayana. He found that traditional Indian villages were relatively a “self-sufficient unit” as they used to produce most of the commodities consumed by them (Nagla, 2016:346-347). Along with texts, he also emphasised the study of arts, products of arts and artefacts as a source in understanding civilization (Nagla, 348).

Bose has also tried to analyse the process of social change in the Indian society. He observed significant changes in different aspects of Indian society and the Hindu social organization. Muslim rule brought changes in the material aspects in the city life. Buddhism and Bhakti movement brought changes in the religious aspects without bringing significant changes in the social order and in the organization of production

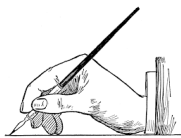
(Nagla, 2016:346-347). British rule has been another significant source for bringing changes in the structure of Hindu society. Bose used census data to show the weakening relationship between caste and traditional occupation for some communities like the Sinhas of Raipur as a result of British rule. He further held that economic factor has been both a source of stability and change in Indian society. He analysed the mode of livelihood among the tribal communities to show the influence of caste Hindus, especially in their agricultural skill. He found a continuous interaction between tribal and non-tribal people which is visible in the productive system (Nagla, 2016:347).

Bose through his extensive studies also looked into the unity and diversity aspects of Indian civilization. In the study of the material culture, he found that although the regions or states of India are separated in terms of language, there is a similarity in their material culture. He found a link of unity in spite of differences in the cultural zone. He held that traditional caste system has in fact led to uniformity among geographically and ecologically distinguishable regions. Another source of uniformity has been the traditional cultural media which enabled to have certain “common intellectual and emotional elements of civilization” through diffusion of “thoughts and feelings of artists and saints of India” (Nagla, 2016: 350). He also tried to understand the existing unity in Indian society by analysing the process of tribal absorption into the Hindu caste system. Through his fieldwork among tribal communities like the Juangs, he found that there exist many similarities between tribal communities and the peasant communities as they share a similar economic system (Nagla, 2016:352).

Bose was an anthropologist and an ethnologist. One of the significant contributions of Bose was that he made use of both civilization and cultural framework in understanding Indian society. But while looking for unity, Bose was criticised for undermining the diversity and

plurality of Indian society. He was labelled as a sectarian anthropologist for over emphasising the integrations of tribal absorption into Hindu caste society. That is why his theoretical analysis was considered as weak. But his contribution to the field of anthropology is undeniable (Nagla, 2016:352-353).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Mention two Indian thinkers associated with the civilizational perspective.

2. Name two major works of N.K. Bose.

7.4 SURAJIT SINHA: AN INTRODUCTION

Surajit Sinha, an Indian Anthropologist was another advocate of the civilizational perspective. Sinha was born in Bengal presidency under the British rule in the year 1926 and died in the year 2002 at Shanti Niketan, West Bengal. Like Bose, Sinha started his education in Physics then shifted to geology and then finally to anthropology. He got his PhD degree in anthropology from the North-western University, the United States. In his career, he worked both as an administrator and an academician. He was also the Vice-chancellor of Vishwa-Bharti University. He was the Deputy Director of Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta and also a professor in the department of anthropology at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.

7.4.1 Methodology

Surajit Sinha, like Bose, did an extensive fieldwork among the tribal communities of India. He did his fieldwork among the tribes of West Bengal and Bihar, especially among the Bhumij tribe. His area of interest includes tribal transformation in India especially in central India where he conducted extensive fieldwork. Influenced by Robert Redfield's folk-peasant continuum, Sinha also looked into the tribe-caste continuum in the Indian context (Nagla, 2016:356).

7.4.2 Major Works

Some of his major works includes articles like "Tribe-Caste and Tribe-Peasant Continuum in Central India (1965), "State formation and Rajput myth in Tribal Central India" (1962) and "Bhumij-Kshatriya Social Movement in South Manbhum" (1959)

7.4.3 Contribution

Surajit Sinha proposed for the model of the tribe-caste continuum, Bhumij-Kshatriya continuum and Tribal-Rajput continuum to look into tribe-caste interaction in the Indian context. To understand the continuum he also studied tribe, caste and peasant society as a distinct society. In his studies of tribal society, Sinha found that the tribal society is characterised by ecological, demographic, economic and political isolation from other communities which fosters a strong sense of group sentiments among them. He also found them as homogenous and unstratified groups, the existence of "a value system of equality, the closeness of human, nature and the supernatural world; lack of systematization of ideas, and a sophisticated stratum of culture, ethical religion and puritanical asceticism" (Nagla, 2016:356-357). In contrast to Tribes, he found caste to be "heterogeneous and stratified" having "multi-ethnic residence in the local community and inter-ethnic groups and stratified land tenure and ranked and interdependent interaction with other ethnic groups" (Nagla, 2016:357). Peasant village is described by him as a territorial community of the multi-caste groups. It

represents a heterogeneous cultural system having an internal division of caste and class (Nagla, 2016:357).

Sinha's major contribution is his concept of the tribe-caste continuum and tribe-peasant continuum. Through these concepts, he tried to explain the process of integration of tribes into a traditional civilization of India. For the purpose he looked into isolated tribes like the Hill Maria of Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, then in Madhya Pradesh. Sinha found that the Hill Marias live as an isolated clan. They live a communal life, where they regard their agricultural product as their combined labour. Although they depend on the weekly market for few items, to a large extent they are economically self-sufficient (Nagla, 2016:358). As a result, they hardly come into contact with outsiders. They are unstratified in terms of landholding and religious status (Nagla, 2016:359). Their interactions in terms of marriage, kinship and ritual ties are restricted to their own ethnic area. However, the influence of Hindu religion practised in Peasant village can be seen in the Maria religion such as the worship of ancestral spirit and mother goddess; abstract belief on supreme god; use of ritual objects like red powder, peacock feather and such other. Sinha studied another tribal community that is Bhumij of Barabhum (Nagla, 2016:360). Unlike the Hill Marias, he found the process of Hinduization was much more intense among the Bhumij. The Bhumij live in the dense and ethnically heterogeneous area. There were various aspects where Sinha observed the influence of Hindu caste system on the Bhumij. Like the Hindu caste system, Bhumij are also stratified into different spheres. There exist differentials in landholding creating various ranks of people on the basis of landholding like, landowners, landless labourers, poor cultivators, substantial cultivators and the village headman who occupy maximum amount of land (Nagla, 2016:361). Along with it, he found that the Bhumij are also stratified into socio-ritually defined marriage classes. At the lowest strata lie the Nichu and Patit. Next to them are the Nagadi class who employs 'degraded' Brahmins but consume liquor

and non-veg. The Ataishey, are the next who also employ degraded Brahmins but do not consume chicken and liquor. At the top are the Rajput Kshatriyas (Nagla, 2016:362).

Sinha also found a high level of interaction between Bhumij and the neighbouring caste groups. He held that it is the geographical location of Bhumij that has enabled them to live in close proximity to the number of ethnic groups and to participate in the inter-ethnic interactions. Such participation is more visible in the regional caste system where the Bhumij can access the services of Brahmins, Vaishnava, barber and washer man caste and also Dom and midwives. Caste members also participate with the Bhumij in ceremonial friendship, festivals, sharecropping and market (Nagla, 2016:362).

Sinha also observed the aspiration among the Bhumij to get into Hindu caste system. Bhumij got involve into social mobility movement in order to get the recognition of Rajput Kshatriyas. They also tried to create a socio-cultural distance from the various ethnic groups living in the region. Again, in the religious sphere, they seem to assign a higher status to the worship of Hindu gods and goddesses like Shiva, Durga, Kali than their traditional goddesses such as their mountain god, hill god, god of sacred grove/forest. He also observed that under the influence of Vaishnava sadhus a few literate Bhumij also seem to be reflecting on the Hindu Ideological concepts from the ancient texts. During the reformist mobility movement, they also restricted some of the practices considered as derogatory by the upper caste Hindus, like premarital sex for the women, mixed dancing and drinking by the Bhumij and adopted some of the customs and practices of the caste system such as hierarchical relationship between headman and commoners, between male-female, restrictions in freedom for women (Nagla, 2016:363-364).

Thus, Sinha through his concepts of the tribe-caste continuum and tribe-peasant continuum described the ongoing process of inter-

penetration of two civilizations, ‘tribal’ and the caste Hindu society on the basis of their level of interaction with other communities and geographical location.

7.5 SUMMING UP

From the above discussion, it can be understood that civilizational perspective in Indian context focused on different societies including, tribal society, rural and urban society. The perspective emphasised more on empirical research as it is visible from the work of the two main proponents of this perspective—N.K. Bose and Surajit Sinha. Both of the scholars emphasised civilization and cultural framework to understand the Indian society. Both of them observed the co-existence and inter-penetration of tribal society and caste Hindu society. Surajit Sinha specifically tried to explain the process by his model of the tribe-caste continuum and tribe-peasant continuum.

7.6 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss N.K. Bose’s contribution to the civilization perspective.
2. Illustrate Surajit Sinha’s analysis of tribe-caste continuum in Indian society.

7.7 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 8: SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVE

(B.R. AMBEDKAR, DAVID HARDIMAN)

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Objectives
- 8.3 B.R. Ambedkar: An Introduction
 - 8.3.1 Methodology
 - 8.3.2 Ambedkar and His Works
- 8.4 David Hardiman: An Introduction
 - 8.4.1 Methodology
 - 8.4.2 Hardiman and His Works
- 8.5 Summing Up
- 8.6 Questions
- 8.7 Recommended Readings and References

8.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the Oxford dictionary the word ‘subaltern’ stands for the general attribute of subordination, which is expressed in terms of gender, age, class, caste, etc. In other words, it refers to ‘view from below’.

This is an important approach to the study of tribal and peasant movement enunciated by Ranajit Guha and his historian colleagues. This approach seeks to restore a balance by highlighting the role of politics of the common as against the elite politics. Believer of this approach argues that the elitist historiography has always overstated the role, the elite has played in building the Indian nationalism, but failed to acknowledge the contribution made by the masses on their own, independently of elite. It may be noted that throughout the colonial period in India, along with the presence of elite politics, there also

existed another sphere of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups but were subaltern classes (Dhanagare, 1993: 131).

The core idea of Subaltern historiography is to reconstruct '*the other history*', i.e. history of the politics and movements of the masses and their attempts to create their own history (Dhanagare, 1993: 132). This perspective emphasizes not to view peasant or tribal insurgents simply as 'object' of history but to treat them as makers of their own history. The main proponents of the approach in India are Ranajit Guha, B.R Ambedkar and David Hardiman.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Describe subaltern approach and explain its importance in Indian context;
- Discuss Ambedkar's contribution to improve the conditions of the Dalits;
- Discuss some important works of David Hardiman and his contributions.

8.3 B.R. AMBEDKAR: AN INTRODUCTION

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14th April 1891 in a small town near Indore and died on 6th December 1956. His family was from Mahar caste, which is one among the ex-untouchable castes in Maharashtra. After completing his schooling in Maharashtra, he got admitted to Elphinstone College in Bombay. He got Gayakwad Scholarship for his study in college with which he got admission in Columbia University, USA and did his MA from USA in 1915. After completing masters, he continued his study and got a PhD in 1917. He was the first Indian among the ex-untouchables who got higher education abroad. He is a well-known figure in India basically for his

devotion towards the upliftment of Dalit class (downtrodden/depressed class). It is pertinent to mention here that the word 'Dalit' encompasses those who are designated in administrative parlance as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Even though initially, Ambedkar focused on the issues related to Hindu social order and the problems faced by the ex-untouchables, later on, he also began to focus on several other issues related to nation-building and socio-economic reconstruction of modern India. Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is referred to as the father of Indian Constitution. He was not only a scholar par excellence and a philosopher, but was also an emancipator, a visionary, and a true nationalist. To secure human rights to the Dalits, Ambedkar led several social movements thereby becoming a symbol of struggle for social justice. The struggle he led for securing human rights and his role as an emancipator of the downtrodden gave him international recognition as a liberator of humanity from injustice, social and economic.

8.3.1 Methodology

Ambedkar adopted a different approach by collecting sample data. He also took help of election studies where he focused mainly on the constituencies reserved for Scheduled caste. In his doctoral studies, he relied both on official documents and archives.

Stop and Read:

Subaltern History:

The history of the people's politics and movement and their attempts to make their own history.

8.3.2 Ambedkar and His Works:

Ambedkar wrote many books mainly focusing on the conditions of the Dalits. His major works are as follows:

i) *Untouchables, Who are They?*

ii) *Who were the Shudras?*

iii) *States and Minorities*

iv) *Emancipation of the Untouchables*

v) *Annihilation of Caste*

Ambedkar views that the subaltern communities which have been discriminated for centuries identify themselves as Dalits. According to him, the Dalits are compelled to lead a life marked by suppression, exploitation and marginalization by the upper caste Brahmanical ideology. He questioned the dominant Brahmanical ideology of the elite and endeavoured to construct the history and genealogy of the subaltern groups of Indian society. He strived for the freedom of the Dalits by advocating an egalitarian social order. According to him, the structure of Hinduism was marked by hierarchy where the Dalits were pushed to the bottom and therefore, creation of an egalitarian social order within the fold of Hinduism was not possible. In this context, he opined that the battle of the downtrodden to acquire equal position in the society was their own which they themselves had to fight. They could not afford to sit back and wait for someone else to redress their grievances. They must assert their cause and move ahead with a mantra- *educate, organize and agitate*, which he gave to them. (Nagla, 2008).

‘Graded Inequality’, the key term coined by Ambedkar is the most sociological concept which lies at the base of his theoretical interpretation and construction of Hindu social system. In his major work *The Annihilation of Caste*, he raised several questions in relation to caste and argues that “*caste system is not simply division of labour. It*

is also division of labourers". Though division of labour forms an inevitable feature of a civilized society, but in no civilized society, such division is marked by an unnatural division of labour into watertight compartments. The Caste System cannot be considered merely as a mechanism of division of labour rather, it is also a hierarchical arrangement where people are graded one above the other. This feature is peculiar to India and in no other country, one can find such a division of labour accompanied by this gradation of labourers. The division of labour which has been established by the Caste System is not based on individual preference. The belief of predestination marks this system and one cannot exercise one's choice in it. According to Ambedkar, Caste System cannot lead to economic efficiency. Neither can it improve the race. The only thing that it has done is that it has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus.

Ambedkar is of the view that Brahminic Hinduism and caste are interrelated, and each reinforces the other. Both are instrumental in creating a social setup where the downtrodden section is discriminated. According to Ambedkar, the roots this oppressive nature of the Indian society that discriminates against the downtrodden can be traced to the sacred Shastras. He is of the view that the Shastras and Smritis are not the embodiment of religion, but they contain rules that serve to deny the ex-untouchables equal status in the society and to deprive them of even their basic needs. Therefore, he did not hesitate to say that the religion should be destroyed where there is discrimination against its own people. Ambedkar is against the *chaturvarna* system since it is an impediment to human development and serves to divide the society and its people. (Ambedkar, 1936).

Stop and Read:

Ambedkar's views on caste system

1. Caste has a deplorable effect on the ethics of the Hindus
2. We need to reject the Shastras to destroy Caste
3. It is impossible to reform Caste System internally
4. Caste destroys public spirit, public opinion, and public charity
5. Caste is an impediment to nation building
6. The higher castes keep the lower castes down
7. Caste acts as an impediment to the creation of trust and fellow-feeling among the Hindus

Ambedkar's Aim: Dalit Liberation.

Ranajit Guha was one most influential figure in subaltern studies. He wrote *Elementary aspects of Insurgency in colonial India* which has significantly contributed to the subaltern perspective.

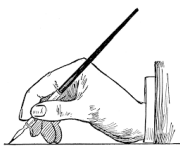
Further, Ambedkar viewed that caste had no scientific basis. It destroyed the concept of ethics and morality. Therefore, it is necessary to destroy the religious notion upon which caste is founded.

For the emancipation of the Dalits, Ambedkar also formulated his own distinct Indian nationalism. He believed that the dominant discourse of nationalism that was led by M.K. Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jawaharlal Nehru, and B.G. Tilak was basically Hindu nationalism which failed to encompass the aspirations of the Dalits. His concept of nationalism, therefore, articulated the national perceptions and aspiration of the Dalits. He incorporated in it the subaltern philosophy of Jyotiba Phule. Popularly known as 'Dalit Bhujan Samaj', Ambedkar's concept of nationalism, began to create an anti-Hindu and anti-Brahmanical discourse of Indian Nationalism which aimed at

establishing a society free of caste, class and thereby, discrimination on the grounds of birth and occupation. (Nagla, 2008).

According to Ambedkar, political empowerment was crucial for the socio-economic development of the untouchables for which he strongly demanded a separate electorate for untouchables in the Second Round Table Conference in 1932.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Name two thinkers who have applied subaltern perspective to the study of Indian society.

2. Name one major work of B.R. Ambedkar.

3. What was Ambedkar's view on Caste System?

8.4 DAVID HARDIMAN: AN INTRODUCTION

David Hardiman was born in Pakistan in October 1947. He grew up in England and completed his graduation from the London School of Economics in 1970 and received his D.Phil. in South Asian History from the University of Sussex. Hardiman was a historian and he specialised in the history of Modern India. But Hardiman was

sociologically sensitive which is evident from his works. He has contributed towards subaltern perspective and was a member of Subaltern Studies Group. Since 1960s he focused mainly on South Asian History and spent more than a decade in India by concentrating on the effects of colonial rule on rural society. In addition, he focused on local power structure where money lenders exert their dominance on the peasantry and how the Bhil peasants of Eastern Gujarat allowed the Shahukars (who finance the operation of the annual agricultural cycle) to expropriate the lion's share of their crop each year, even though they were aware that their relationship was not economically reciprocal. He examined in detail about the Indian nationalist movement at the local level in Gujarat. He also studied a movement of assertion by the Adivasis against liquor dealer.

8.4.1. Methodology

As already mentioned, David Hardiman was a Historian therefore, he relied mostly on archival information, government records and newspapers. However, in the context of subaltern studies, very often it was difficult to collect such resources as subaltern movements were virtually ignored by contemporary governments, newspapers and nationalists. Therefore, he was bound to rely on oral evidences. However, he mentioned that relying entirely on oral evidences makes the historical accuracy of anthropological accounts low. Hardiman tried to enhance archival material with information collected directly from the areas he studied for which he had to go to the villages and share the life of the village people often for prolonged periods. Furthermore, since his understanding of subaltern movements was mediated through anthropological and sociological theories, there were some misconceptions (Hardiman, 1987). The use anthropological methods helped him to learn a lot, but he felt the need for a more historical approach within anthropology which became evident in his writings.

8.4.2. Hardiman and his Works

Hardiman wrote many books and articles during his lifetime which were illustrative of the practice of subaltern studies. His involvement in the late 1970s with a group of historians studying history of subaltern groups in South Asia, led to publication of series of volume under the title *Subaltern Studies*. His major aim was to understand the relationship of domination and subordination in India. Focusing on his aim he published the following works:

- i) *The Quit India Movement in Gujrat (1980)*
- ii) *Peasants Nationalists of Gujrat: Kheda District, 1917-1934 (1981)*
- iii) *The Coming of Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India (1987)*
- iv) *Peasant Resistance in India: 1858-1914 (1992)*
- v) *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha (1994)*
- vi) *Feeding the Baniyas: Peasants and Usurers in Western India (1996)*
- vii) *Gandhi in his times and Ours (2003)*
- viii) *Histories for the Subordinated (2006)*
- ix) *Missionaries and their Medicine: A Christian modernity for Tribal India (2008).*

Hardiman studied the movement of assertion by Adivasis against liquor dealers who had been granted a monopoly right of supply by the British and who began to enrich themselves by exploiting the Adivasis. He has discussed in detail about the movement in his book *The Coming of Devi*. In the movement which took place in 1922-23, the *Devi* was supposed to have come from a mountain to the east and the goddess was believed to have taken possession of spirit mediums, who then commanded the people to give up liquor and boycott the dealers. In the adjoining areas, the goddess was supposed to have commanded her

devotees to put a stop to witchcraft, and in some cases, to give their allegiance to Gandhi. Hardiman traces the complicated story of the origin and transformation of *Devi*, from a traditional small pox goddess to a force of social reform. The Devi movement of South Gujrat had many features in common with Adivasi movement in other parts of India during the late nineteen and early twenty centuries. The Devi movement was led by the tribal communities themselves and spread over a large region thereby involving a significant number of people which was actually an effort of reforming themselves, a rebellion against the domination of liquor vendors. The word *Devi* was able to bring a change in their consciousness thereby leading to the much-needed political mobilization among the Adivasis. Unfortunately, this movement did not lead to the total liberation of the Adivasis. Soon, there emerged elites among the Adivasis who began to replace the Parsee liquor dealers in dominating the Adivasis. (Nagla, 2008).

In the history of the Devi movement Hardiman followed what he considered to be a more genuinely socialist course, that is to write a history of the Adivasis in which they are the subjects and not objects. This study and all other studies which form a part of the wider *Subaltern Studies* project, aim at understanding the consciousness that influenced the subaltern classes to take political actions all by themselves without any initiative from the elite. (Hardiman, 1987).

Hardiman's another work entitled *Feeding the Baniyas* is very important as it throws light on the powers exercised by the usurers over the subaltern classes in rural India. Hardiman tried to see how the usurers managed to exercise power over the centuries and how the classes whom they exploited related to them and resisted them. According to Hardiman the explanation of such kind of relationship in purely economic terms is not adequate. This is hegemonic power that Baniyas have been able to exercise over their clients. Hardiman also focused upon the integration of a small agrarian class society with a larger

capitalist economy. He tried to explore the deep meanings involved in the relationship between the villager and money lenders. In addition, this work also explores how state extended support to usurers as well as how Baniyas exerted a power that was both economic and ideological.

Hardiman initially confined his work to Gujrat, but in the course of investigations, the project expanded to include other parts of western India. He included Rajasthan in his work as it was the heartland of the Marwari Baniyas—a critical group for any study of usury (Hardiman, 1987).

8.5 SUMMING UP

Scholars associated with subaltern studies have unearthed the incapacity of the nationalist and elite historiography to incorporate the voices of the weak into the project of history writing. B.R Ambedkar is one among them who emphasizes on the importance of the active role of the downtrodden section in their fight against the exploitation which they have been facing for centuries. According to Ambedkar, the downtrodden should come forward to alleviate their grievances. Like Ambedkar, Hardiman also focuses on the conditions of the exploited groups in rural India. In his study of Devi movement, he has provided an additional perspective into the changing world of the villagers as they tried to cope with the changes in the wider society around them.

8.6 QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by Subaltern approach? How does Ambedkar view the Indian caste system?
2. Discuss Hardiman's contribution to subaltern perspective.

8.7 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 9: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE (UMA CHAKRAVARTY, SHARMILA REGE)

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Objectives

9.3 Definition

9.4 Historical Roots of Feminism

9.5 Different Stages of Feminism

9.5.1 Typologies of Feminism

9.6 Feminism in the Indian Context

9.7 Summing Up

9.8 Questions

9.9 Recommended Readings and References

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In sociological lexicon, feminism as a body of knowledge took to the centre stage as it aims to critically view all forms of knowledge which have been produced from the male point of view and from dominant positions of caste, class and race in the society. A general definition might state that it is the belief that women, purely and simply because they are women, are treated inequitably within a society which is organized to prioritize male viewpoints and concerns. Within this patriarchal paradigm, women become everything men are not (or do not want to be seen to be): where men are regarded as strong, women are weak; where men are rational, they are emotional; where men are

active, they are passive; and so on. Under this rationale, which aligns them everywhere with negativity, women are denied equal access to the world of public concerns as well as of cultural representation. To put simply, feminism seeks to change this situation. Therefore, as a theory, it historically began in the nineteenth century, with the need to highlight these unequal conditions of women and to comprehend how unequal gender status came into being. As a movement, which began with the fight for equal rights and opportunities for women in all spheres, social, political and economic, later went on to endorse the same for all gender categories. Feminism, thus, became the prime factor which propelled the rise of women's and gender studies as a separate disciplinary field to challenge the androcentrism and patriarchy which have subverted all gender but men. When speaking of the term "patriarchy", it refers to the relations of power prevalent in the society which subordinates women's voice, interests and choices to that of men. Primarily, hinging on the biological sexual difference between men and women, these power dynamics are explicit are explicitly present in all domains of private and public space, be it the sexual division of labour within the institution of marriage or in the wider socio-political realms wherein women have been readily denied visibility. The word Feminism is relatively new appearing only in the 1890s in English from French and the earliest examples of it have been carrying negative meanings. Significantly, as a concept feminism has had Western roots and over the decades has extended all over the world. In the context of India, feminism found expression in the form of women's movements to fight injustices of the patriarchal institutions of family, marriage and other dominant power structures and most importantly in the legal domain, as a crusader of violence against women. In this unit, we will try to understand feminism in the Indian context, trying to delineate its trajectory of development to see how Indian feminism stands apart from Western feminism, given that the social realities in India are determined by the overbearing influence

of complexities engendered by the phenomenon of caste. This unit will, therefore, try to analyse linkages between caste-based gender subordination and how the feminist movement in India highlights these intricacies and upholds the need to challenge these disparities.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Define Feminism-etymologically as well as theoretically in social sciences;
- Describe the historical evolution of feminism worldwide, explaining the roots of it;
- Explain the different stages of feminist movements;
- Juxtapose the Western models of feminism and the Indian counterpart;
- Trace the trajectory of developments in the Indian context vis a vis feminism.

9.3 DEFINITION OF FEMINISM

What is feminism? Who is a feminist? How do we understand feminism across national boundaries? Across cultures? Across centuries? These questions and their corollaries are raised every day, both here and abroad, by activists in the contemporary women's movement, by scholars, in the press, and in informal conversation. Everyone seems to have different answers, and every answer is infused with a political and emotional charge (Offen, 1988). Etymologically speaking, the term feminism appeared as *feminisme* in France in the 1890s, getting popularized subsequently worldwide. In 1913, Rebecca West writes that people call her a feminist when she expresses her sentiments different from a doormat or a prostitute. Although agreeing on a generic definition which could be employed across cultures and contexts is difficult, yet, to put it simply, feminism could be defined as

the belief in the social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. Although largely originating in the West, feminism is manifested worldwide and is represented by various institutions committed to acting on behalf of women's rights and interests (Burkett & Brunell). Thus, feminism as a theory recognizes the disparities and inequality in the society, how they decide upon the social roles and relations in the society and how power relations get structured hinging upon these. This, therefore, foregrounds the need to contest and question the existing social structures which continue to subjugate one section of the society in favour of the dominant other.

9.4 HISTORICAL ROOTS OF FEMINISM

The impulse of feminism has its roots in Europe particularly in early modern England when some European women began to speak out for themselves within the religious framework. Women who had been cordoned off in convents especially the unmarried ones began to develop their talent to read and write, cultivate their skills and develop the talent for organization. (Walters, 2005). Hildegard of Bingen, who was born at the end of the 11th century and became a nun, and later the abbess, of a small Rhineland convent, has long been known as a remarkable and impressive writer; recently, her great musical talent has been rediscovered and celebrated. Attempts were made to communicate women's understanding of God by gratifying the motherly and womanly experiences while speaking with motherly tenderness about infant Jesus. However, within the religious realm, women had to struggle to contest the negative representations of women. For instance, how Eve is held accountable for the fall of the humankind at the hands of the Satan as the woman who lured the virtuous Adam to eat the apple and bring in the ruin of the Paradise. A few women found the confidence to defy these scriptural prohibitions. Some offered dissenting interpretations of Genesis, arguing that Adam was, after all, as much to blame for the Fall as Eve. Gradually, from the 1500-1700,

feminist fervour began to grow by leaps and bounds until the rise of secular feminism in the early eighteenth century with the pathbreaking work of Mary Wollstonecraft whose *Vindication of the rights of woman*, 1792, speaks volumes about how the women in her period were denied full realization of their potential in society. Wollstonecraft argues that true freedom necessitates equality of the sexes; claims that intellect, or reason, is superior to emotion, or passion; seeks to persuade women to acquire strength of mind and body; and aims to convince women that what had traditionally been regarded as soft, “womanly” virtues are synonymous with weakness. Wollstonecraft advocates education as the key for women to achieve a sense of self-respect and a new self-image that can enable them to live to their full capabilities. The work attacks Enlightenment thinkers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau who, even while espousing the revolutionary notion that men should not have power over each other, denied women the basic rights claimed for men. This struggle was seen to continue through the early nineteenth century finding articulation through many works say, in 1843, a married woman, Marion Reid, had published in Edinburgh *A Plea for Women*, which has been described, rightly, as the most thorough and effective statement by a woman since Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication*, who attacks her contemporaries for claiming a “women’s sphere”, catering to the universally hailed womanly traits-celebrating husband abiding, child caring women as virtuous that this entails renunciation of a women’s self itself which Reid considered as problematic. Works of this nature challenged even Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication* because despite her evocation of a “revolution in female manners,” Wollstonecraft never transcends the preconceptions of the traditional “virtuous” female roles of wife, mother, and daughter (Eisenstein, 1981). Thus, feminist dissent continued to acquire new meanings and direction up until the twentieth-century feminist movements which out rightly started with a blatant attack on patriarchy upholding equal civil and voting rights for

women. So, feminism as an ideology which found a conduit of dissidence through contesting the religion-scriptural realm later expanded to all domains-social, political, economic.

9.5 DIFFERENT STAGES OF FEMINISM

Feminist scholarship has categorized the trajectory of feminist development into three stages popularly known as the three waves of feminism. The first wave of feminism which centred on claiming voting rights for women spanned through the 19th century to early 20th century. The second wave of feminism of the 1960s centred around women right to legal and social equality. While the third wave of feminism which began in the 1990s extrapolates the failures of the first and the second waves, addressing the issues which they apparently overlooked.

To elaborate on this, beginning in the 1840s, the first wave of feminism started against the backdrop of slavery in America and the leaders drew an analogy between the oppression of women and that of the African American community. The outcry was for equal voting rights for women as men and is marked by two historical events-The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 held in New York which was the first ever women's rights event and in 1920, the 19th Amendment which eventually gave voting rights to women. The Second wave of feminism beginning in the 1960s, focused on women's liberation and took a departure from the first wave by upholding collective liberation of women different from the previous form which was concerned more with gaining rights for women within a structure and sought individual liberation and thus, was reformist than revolutionary. It emerged as a critique of an earlier stage of feminism's attempt to enter traditionally male spheres as this was seen as denigrating women's natural inclinations by attempting to make women more like men. The third wave is believed to emerge in the 1990s in an economically and culturally diverse social milieu and was more inclusive than the

preceding ones as it incorporated the issues of women of colour, many genders, class and ethnic identities which were missing earlier, when it was more concerning the issues of upper-class white women. Moving on, some argue that now we are living in the age of post-feminism, a body of feminist theory critiquing feminism of the 60s, 70s and 80s, and by 2000s, many argue the waves had died down and in need of new meanings and direction altogether. Very generally speaking, the postfeminist debate tends to crystallize around issues of victimization, autonomy and responsibility. Because it is critical of any definition of women as victims who are unable to control their own lives, it is inclined to be unwilling to condemn pornography. The term 'post-feminism' itself originated from within the media in the early 1980s and has always tended to be used in this context as indicative of joyous liberation from the ideological shackles of a hopelessly outdated feminist movement. Ann Brooks in *Post feminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms* (1997), avers that post-feminism replaces dualism with diversity, consensus with variety, and thus 'establish[es] a dynamic and vigorous area of intellectual debate, shaping the issues and intellectual climate that has characterized the move from modernity to postmodernity in the contemporary world'.

9.5.1 Typologies of Feminism

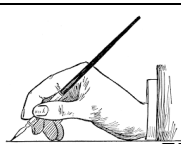
Before delineating the types of feminism, one needs to apprehend that any feminist ideology is but a manifestation of the political leanings of the period in which it evolved. Therefore, corresponding to every phase of the feminist movement, emerged different typologies of feminism. Thus, to explicate further-

- Cultural feminism avers that women's location in and experience of most situations is different from that of men.
- Liberal Feminism espouses to establish that women's position in the society is not only different but also less privileged or unequal to that of men.

- Radical feminism asserts that women are oppressed, not just different from or unequal to but instead women are subordinated and abused by men.
- Marxist feminism considers capitalism as the principal source of women's oppression. Capitalism strengthens patriarchy by concentrating wealth and power in the hands of men. Moreover, capitalism depends on the free labour provided by women at home such as caring for the family, cleaning, etc.
- Socialist feminism goes on to say that women's experience of difference, inequality, oppression varies according to their social location within patriarchy

Thus, feminist theory develops a system of ideas about human life that features women as objects and subjects, doers and knowers. Feminist scholarship is primarily guided by four basic questions: And what about the women? Why is women's situation as it is? How can we change and improve the social world? What about differences among women? (Ritzer, 2011)

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Define Feminism.

2. What are the different types of Feminism?

3. What is Post-Feminism?

9.6 FEMINISM IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

Although oppression and subjugation of women is an issue of global concern, the west has however dominated the theoretical and practical aspects of the movements. The categorization of feminist history into different “waves” have always been organized around American and European experiences. Consequently, this has relegated the experiences of the non-western, non-European women to the margins. This therefore warranted the need for bringing the concerns from diverse cultural contexts into the feminist paradigm and thus, the rise of works post-colonial theorists like Gayatri Spivak, Chandana Talpade Mohanty, Uma Chakravarti, Sharmila Rege, Trinh T. Minha, amongst many others have led to increasing visibility of issues of women apart from the Western or European texts. Mohanty argues that ‘Western feminisms appropriate and “colonise” the constitutive complexities which characterize the lives of women in these countries’, thus ending up with a crudely reductive ‘notion of gender or sexual difference...which can be applied universally and cross-culturally’. Therefore, it becomes mandatory to draw a line of difference between Western feminism and feminism contouring the issues of non-Western contexts say the third world countries, for the lack of a better term, which have a long historical experience with colonialism. Like their feminist counterparts all over the world, feminists in India also seek gender equality in terms of the right to work for equal wages, the right to equal access to health and education, and equal political rights. However, what sets the Indian feminists apart is that they also have strongly fought against culture-specific issues within India's patriarchal society, such as inheritance laws and the practice of widow immolation known as Sati.

This section is, therefore, about the growth of feminism in India which is generally classified as belonging to the ‘third world’. Herein, patriarchy is so deeply ingrained within the many facets of Indian

culture that it stands in sharp contrast to the experiences of women in the Western world, where women's struggles for equal political and legal rights were conducted against the background of largely successful interventions within political, economic, social and military systems. Moreover, complexities and nuances introduced into economic and social life in India by the durability of the colonial culture and social phenomena like caste, have always had their impact on the nature and the direction of women's movements in India. The usage of the term 'feminism' in the Indian context was peripheral although its impact was being felt all over the country thus leading to the birth of the women's movement.

Feminism in India thus acquired the embodiment of women's movement and the movements can be bifurcated into two phases - firstly, the phase before independence when the feminist fervour was mostly reformist meaning taking up women's issues like widow remarriage, Sati and all other social evils plaguing the country at that point of time followed by an intermediary temporal phase just before independence wherein women's issues got conflated with national issues under the ambit of the nationalist movement for freedom and secondly, the post-independence era which have continued the fight against the patriarchal institutions like caste, religion etc. to the present stage when the struggle has shifted to include the struggle to expose the workings of patriarchy within the realm of law, to redress violence against women within the domestic space as well as the public domain. The movements campaigned against rape, domestic violence, triple talaq, harassment at workplaces, dowry murders and many more, urging vehemently to extend rights and justice to women. As a movement that has challenged hegemonic notions of the 'Indian family', detractors have constructed Indian feminism as a distinctly western phenomenon. Therefore, Indian feminists have been forced to confront and combat claims of being 'westernised' both from the state and from sections of civil society, including by right-wing Hindu

fundamentalist forces as being alienated from the 'Indian' realities of family structures. (Gangoli, 2007)

When speaking of women's status and oppression in India, caste has an impinging role to play. As Uma Chakravarti states in *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens* (2003) that caste and gender are inextricably linked together shaping each other. As Chakravarti, points out women are considered as the gateway of the caste system. Being a repository of caste honour, she is subjected to patriarchal protection and violence at the same time. Violence against women is justified by this very nature of community honour. To quote Chakravarti, if we look at women today their lives are located at the intersection of class, caste and patriarchy. These structures all work to oppress them, as in the case of Dalit women, but most other women are in a way that they can be both subordinated and wield a degree of power. This is so especially if women belong to an upper caste and have access, through their menfolk, to economic resources and social power. It has a much wider reference to the relationship between caste and patriarchy, as well as women's material location in a complex structure which expects compliance from women and grants them some degree of power. The subordination of women and the control of female sexuality are crucial to the maintenance of the caste system, creating what feminist scholars have termed Brahmanical patriarchy especially through sustaining caste endogamy (Chakravarti, 2003).

Along similar lines, Sharmila Rege, renowned proponent of Dalit feminism in criticizing Brahmanical feminism, agrees on how caste produces graded violence on women but urged for the need of giving voice to those at the margins of India's history, the Dalits and women. (Rege, 2006). Developing a 'Dalit Standpoint Perspective', Rege has been crucial in opening feminist debates in India to questions of class, caste, religion and sexuality. A Dalit feminist standpoint acknowledges the significance of the experience of oppression and resistance among

Dalit women acquiring a perspective against an unjust order, but it does not celebrate oppressive traditions merely because they are practised by the oppressed. By directing attention to the cultural and material dimensions of the interface between gender and caste, the focus of a Dalit feminist standpoint is squarely placed on social relations, which convert difference into oppression. Such viewpoints to the failure of upper caste women to critically and systematically interrogate their situation of advantage. The structural and individual dimensions of caste are often 'invisible' from privileged positions and require a 'conscious' effort to problematize the complexly constituted social locations that women occupy. Consequently, in dealing with these complexities, feminist movements in India linked feminism with casteism and thus saw the rise anti-caste feminist movements like the League for Women Soldiers in Aurangabad.

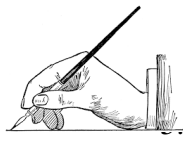
Moving on, the feminist movement which spanned from the 1920s pre-independence until recently saw a range of developments historically. India like the European and Western counterparts too witnessed the rise of feminism in the early twentieth century, but it gradually dwindled until the sudden upsurge of radical movements in the 1960s and 70s in the form of student uprisings, workers' agitations and peasant insurgencies to tribal, anti-caste and consumer action movements. These spanned a political spectrum from Gandhian-socialist (that is, a nonviolent protest based on explicitly moral values, over specific working or living conditions); to the far left the Maoists. The Gandhian-socialists initiated several of the first women's movements in post-Independence India. These included an anti-alcohol agitation in north India, a consumer action and anti-corruption agitation in western India, and a women's trade union, also in western India.

The imposition of Emergency in 1975, no doubt put a moratorium on these agitations yet ground for the formation of women's groups were laid during this phase itself, but their members were largely drawn from

the urban educated middle class, and their struggle did not seem to reflect the needs of the large, and poor, majority of Indian women. As a result, this highlighted the need for an analysis of class-based oppression of women thus further adding to the previous position which endorsed caste-based subordination of women. Thus, by 1980s, the feminist ferment saw an all-inclusive intersection of interests of anti-caste, working class, far left, tribal, thus taking forward the campaign against the oppression of women. Overtime Indian feminists joined different political parties and increased in numerical strength. An interest in women began to be shown by diverse groups and radical movements. The socialists had formed a women's organization in 1977. This was followed by the Communist Party of India galvanizing a women's front from the late fifties, to 1980-81 when the party agreed that women could again become an important constituency. The first attempt to organize women's trade unions had been made in 1972, when the Self-Employed Women's Association, a kind of Gandhian socialist union of women vendors, was formed in Ahmedabad expanding to all over India by the late seventies and eighties.

By 1980s, women's organization and movement got more localized with the representation and participation of working-class women who prioritized on mobilizing women in local neighbourhoods to campaign for better amenities like drainage, sanitation, drinking water facilities etc. So, the struggle which began by contesting patriarchal institutions like caste at the macro level gradually boiled down to more localized issues concerning women and thus feminist movement saw much fragmentation and branching out with time having acquired multiple meanings, objectives and direction.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Who wrote *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens*?

2. Write about the 'Dalit Standpoint Perspective' of Sharmila Rege.

9.7 SUMMING UP

This unit began by defining what feminism means. It then went on to delineate the growth of feminism in the West, speaking about the different waves of feminism and categorized the different types. It then differentiates Western Feminism from Indian Feminism and elaborates on feminism in the Indian context. Feminism today in India is more about inclusion and intersectionality, inclusive of diverse castes, classes, gender, religious minorities etc. which requires even deeper engagement and understanding. What one needs to note is that as long as disparities and inequalities, the struggle will continue, it will only gain new character and meanings.

9.8 QUESTIONS

1. Define feminism. Is feminism necessary? If yes, elaborate why?
2. What are the different types of feminism?
3. Juxtapose Western Feminism and Indian Feminism. Explain how both are different and similar.

4. How did feminism evolve in India? Trace its development and expansion.
5. Focusing on the views of Uma Chakravarty and Sharmila Rege, explain how caste and gender are related?

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MODULE IV: VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA

UNIT 10: GROUPS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: CASTE, CLASS, TRIBE, RELIGION

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Objectives

10.3 Social Stratification

10.3.1 Class

10.3.2 Caste

10.4 Types and Forms of Social Groups and Social Structure

10.4.1 Social Groups

10.4.1.1 Classification of Social Groups

10.4.1.2 Tribe

10.4.1.3 Religion

10.5 Summing Up

10.6 Questions

10.7 Recommended Readings and References

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings are social beings, they do not dwell in isolation but they are part of the larger human society. This said human society is not a homogenous entity rather it is fragmented. It has various segments and units which are formed on the basis of gender, age, wealth, occupation, power, religion. These segments and groups are either formed by a huge number (e.g. the citizens of a country like India which is the second populous country in the world) or small (e.g. the members of a nuclear family consisting of a married couple and an unmarried child or no child) of people.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit which, we will discuss and learn about social groups and social structures and also its associated components of it. As the unit clearly states the terms- caste, class, tribe and religion so the unit would focus mainly on these categories per se. You should note that the definition of class is not only based on economic dimension, rather it has other dimensions as well. But here in the text, the economic dimension is taken into account to explain *class* as a category. By the end of this Unit, it is expected that you will be able to:

- Discuss the types and forms of social groups and social structures;
- Describe the characteristics of social groups;
- Explain how a group or a structure is formed;
- Discuss the sociological significance of group formation.

10.3 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

In regard to social stratification, many scholars have put forward their theories and views. The sociologist Max Weber is one of the first scholars of the twentieth century who established the possible relations among power, prestige, and unequal access to resources. He suggested that social inequality tends to develop in a society when-

1. People have unequal resources which are considered valuable: natural resources, labour, money or knowledge.
2. People are entitled to different degrees of prestige, depending on criteria such as descent, wealth.
3. Some people enjoy more power, either physical or ideological (based on ideas or charisma) than their fellow mates.

Such differences among people are both the causes and characteristics of a stratified society (Hicks et. al, 1994). Basically, social stratification is a concept to distinguish individuals in a society where individuals are

differentiated according to their varied attributes. To understand social stratification, we would look at class and caste which are the forms of stratification. Here, the class is a stratification based on economic division whereas caste is a social stratification.

10.3.1 Class

Communities are socially stratified in various ways and class is one such form of stratification. A *class* can be described as a social stratified category within which individuals or units come fall. The striking feature of class formation is the inequality in terms of resources accessibility of individuals. There are two divisions of class based on how one qualifies to be a member of a particular class- namely, *ascribed* (the membership to this category of class is attained by an individual at its birth) and *attained* (the membership to this category can be achieved during one's lifetime).

The influential scholar of the nineteenth century Karl Marx¹ came up with his dichotomous view of society, the *bourgeoisie* and the *proletariat*. Marx employed the *class approach* to study society and history. There is another division which is common is the *tripartite* divisions, such as *feudal distinction of noble, burgher, and serf*, and contemporary designation of *upper, lower and middle* classes (MacIver et. al, 2012).

A few major characteristic features of Class-

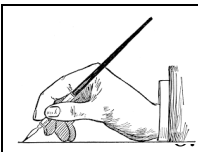
- A *class* is a segment of society that is defined primarily by property, wealth, occupation, income and education (Beteille, 2007).
- The members of the class do not form a homogenous entity in terms of language, religion, sect, caste or tribe (ibid).
- The membership in a class can be either by birth or it can be attained.

¹ The context of Marx conception of dichotomous classes of society was of the Western Europe of nineteenth century.

- No major social class is fully homogenous in terms of language, religion, sect, caste, or tribe (ibid).

In the *class* system of stratification, there is room for social mobility but the social category that we would discuss in the next section has no such possibility. In India, there has been a common tendency to combine class with caste and this has led to much confusion. This confusion that arose in India is not a recent phenomenon rather it dates back to colonial times when the usage of the term *class* was to denote socially disadvantageous groups. This tradition was further accentuated by the XVI part of Constitution of India which gives special provisions to certain classes which mostly are scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and Anglo Indian communities. So this tradition of confusion still persists in contemporary India (Beteille, 2007).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

	<p>1. What do you mean by Class?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>2. Write two characteristic features of Class.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>3. What is the difference between Ascribed Class and Attained Class?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

10.3.2 Caste

In a complex society, the social stratification is based on the occupation of the individual. Caste is said to be peculiar to Indian society (Dirks,

2002). C. H. Cooley, an American Sociologist defines caste as “when a class is somewhat hereditary, one calls it as caste”.

Caste basically is a hereditary social group which is associated with a specific occupation; bound by specific rights, duties and prohibitions (Hicks et. al.,1994). This system of social stratification is denoted as rigid and is ascribed by birth, so one cannot change its caste membership in one’s lifetime, unlike class. There is a complete prohibition on the social mobility of its ascribed members. It involves one of the most extreme forms of status hierarchy (MacIver et. al, 2012).

India has been described as “the land of the most inviolable organization by birth” (Weber, 1958 cited in Beteille, 2007). The social components like caste and communities have been long been the defining feature of India’s social structure which divides its population into various segregated groups. The task that British administrators undertook to classify and enumerating different castes and communities during their reign, is still a prevalent reality in contemporary India (Beteille, 2007).

In traditional Hindu society in India, it is divided into four *varnas* (colour), namely- Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisya and the Shudras. These divisions are hierarchical where the Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaisya are considered to be the upper rank of the social hierarchy tree while Shudras are placed at the bottom. Each *varna* has numerous castes, hereditary social groups bound by specific rights, duties, and prohibitions and occupying a permanent place in the social hierarchy ladder and each is associated with an occupation (Hicks et. al, 1994).

A few major characteristics features of Caste²-

- The observance of rules pertaining to purity and impurity³ where higher caste members consider the lower castes as impure.

² Caste still remains the important factor in arranging marriages in contemporary India but the rules regulation the marriages have become weaker (Beteille, 2007).

- The rules of marriage are regulated by caste
 - i. Endogamy- The marriages are held within the same caste group while inter-caste marriages are prohibited
 - ii. Hypergamy or *Anuloma*- According to *Anuloma* system a higher caste or sub-caste man can marry a lower caste woman but the other way round is prohibited. The act of marrying a lower caste man by an upper caste woman is known as *Pratiloma* (Beteille, 2007).
- The relation between caste and occupation⁴

In *caste* system of stratification, unlike *class*-based stratification there is no provision for upward caste mobility as the membership of an individual of a particular caste is by birth.

10.4 TYPES AND FORMS OF SOCIAL GROUPS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In this section, we are going to discuss the various types of social groups and social structures in details. In the beginning, we will start with social groups and its definitions.

10.4.1 Social Groups

The term *group* signifies any plurality pattern of association and distinctive names which characteristics the major classes of groups, as for example the terms like birds, mammals and dogs designate major classes of animals (Sanderson, 1938)⁵.

While a *social group* is any collection of human beings where the members of the group are in social relationships with one another and all the members have a sense of belongingness to the associated group.

³ The observance of purity and pollution has become weaker

⁴ There have been changes in the caste based occupation in recent times. The association between caste and occupation had significantly loosened (ibid).

⁵ Dwight Sanderson, 'A Preliminary Group Classification based on Structure', *Social Forces*, 196-201 (Dec., 1938)

Social relationships involve some degree of reciprocity and mutual awareness towards the members of the groups (MacIver et. al. 2012: 213).

10.4.1.1 Classification of Social Groups

In this section, an excerpt from Dwight Sanderson (1938) paper where the author presented a preliminary classification of groups based on structure⁶ is illustrated-

- I. ***Involuntary Groups***- In this form of groups, group membership is given by birth, locality or residence. This category of the social group is further categorised based on identity and composition due to the -
 - a) blood relations or kinship (biological)⁷- e.g. *family, clan, tribe, folk, race.*
 - b) locality (geographical)- e.g. neighbourhood, community, section, region; state, or nation, city, village, hamlet, (as communities and not as units of government)
 - c) incidental contiguity-
 1. Temporal- In this form of social group, there is little interaction but common point of attention among the members, e.g.- crowd, audience.
 2. Continuous
 - Occupational- e.g. *factory, store, faculty.*
 - Residence-e.g. *school, prison, hospital.*
 - d) cultural, non-territorial,-e.g.-*nationality, caste.*
 - e) citizenship, this form of membership is imposed by the government of whatever sort, - e.g. *national state, province or state, county, city, or village, as political units.*
- II. ***Voluntary Groups***- In this form of groups, the group memberships are taken up by choice.

⁶ ibid

⁷ Kinship is one of important criteria for organizing social groups based on either blood ties (by birth) or by marital ties.

a) *Unorganized*

1. Personal- personal contact, intimate, primary, informal, e.g. *playgroup, loafing group, commuters group*.
2. Impersonal- little interaction, no personal contact, common point of attention, e.g. *public*.

b) *Organized*

1. Leader dominant

- Informal, personal, contacts intimate, leader one of group, e.g. *gang*.
- Formally organized
 - i. Leader an adult outside of the group, appointed by a higher authority- e.g. *Sunday school class, scout troop*.
 - ii. Leader a director of coordinate participating group- e.g. *band, orchestra, chorus, football, basketball*.
 - iii. Leader employed as director
 - iv. Leader in control of group behaviour, but subject to higher authority in a hierarchy of control

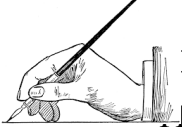
2. Leader not dominant

- Exclusive membership- e.g. *honour society, French Academy, lodges, Rotary, literary clubs*.
- Restricted, but not exclusive membership- e.g. *Trade Union, Corporative marketing associations, stock exchange, bank*.
- Inclusive membership- e.g.-*radio club, garden club*.

III. **Delegate Groups**- Here in this group, the members' representatives of and chosen by the group. e.g. *American Federation of Labour, United States of America*.

A brief comment on the categorizations, there are three major categories- involuntary, voluntary and delegate groups and under these, there are sub-categories of social groups. As stated earlier these above categorization of social groups are entirely based on the fundamental differences in the structure (Sanderson, 1938). It gives an overview of social group forms and type based on certain similar and dissimilar aspects.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

	1. Write two characteristic features of Caste.
	2. What is a Social Group? Mention the different types of Social Groups.

10.4.1.2 Tribe

The category of *tribe* falls under *involuntary social group* where memberships are given by birth. A *tribe* is a group of people who distinguish themselves apart from others based on their common heritage, and often common ancestors as well (Hicks et. al 1994). In this section, the explanation of the social category 'tribe' would be in the context of India. It was the colonial administrators who used the term tribe to identify and describe people who are heterogeneous in

physical and linguistic traits, demographic size, ecological conditions of living, regions inhabited, stages of social formation, and levels of acculturation and development (Xaxa, 2014). In this regard census⁸, another colonial endeavour played an important role in identifying and classifying people of India.

The category of the tribe has also been equated as caste groups. A prominent Indian scholar, G. S. Ghurye termed them as 'backward Hindus'. Ghurye's terminology reflects that tribes are imposed with a categorical site in the realm of larger Hindu society.

The three distinct and interrelated elements that can be seen in the conceptualization of tribe in anthropological literature are –

- Tribe in anthropology is seen as society as it has its own political, economic units which build the structure of their society,
- Tribe is also seen as a type of distinct society having certain aspects of one society while lacks in some other,
- Tribes were seen as representing a particular stage in the socio-political evolution (Xaxa,1999; 2014).

So in general, tribal society, unlike any other society, has social structures which divide the members into different social groups based on age, gender, descent, and region. A tribe is not a homogenous entity but the Constitution of India has designated an administrative homogenous term 'Scheduled Tribe'⁹ for the tribal population.

10.4.1.3 Religion

Max Weber in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirits of Capitalism*, draws a similar thread between a particular social group

⁸ If one look at the history of census, there is a gradual change in usage of the term tribe as in the 1921 census describe them as *hill and forest tribes*. While in the 1931 census report *tribes* were referred to as *primitive tribes* (Xaxa, 2014).

⁹ The administrative designative term, entitles the members of the tribal population certain benefits for their progress and upliftment.

and religion. So with this similar line of thought, many pieces of research were undertaken to understand the relationship between religion, social stratification and social change¹⁰. Apart from Weber, there is Durkheim who is considered as prominent figures in the field of sociological study of religion.

In the *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) by Durkheim state that the society is divided into two categories, 'the sacred' and 'the profane'. This division of society was based on religion. He added that the collective consciousness that a group of people shared is due to sharing of a common belief system¹¹. A belief system of a society acts as an adhesive agent which brings in the solidarity among the group members.

Sociological studies of religious beliefs, practices, and institutions vary enormously in scope and emphasis. So M. N. Srinivas book titled *Coorgs of South India* is a good example where the author employs the sociological approach to study religion and society. The primary objective of the book is to give a comprehensive account of all the religious beliefs and practices in their social context. The basic framework of the book is placed in a certain way as at the beginning it narrates the various social units such as household, village, and region that build up the Coorg society and then he proceeds with the religious aspects of it. The book concludes by providing the readers with a general observation which builds up the relationship between religion and society. Srinivas later elaborately distinguishes between 'book-view' and 'field-view'. So basically his study on the Coorgs offered a field-view of Hinduism (Beteille, 1992).

¹⁰ Haralambos, M and R. M Meads. (1980). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

¹¹ *ibid*

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



Situation 1- As the part of the human society, what criteria according to you should one need/possess to get the membership of any group? Do you see yourself as a member or associated with any group? Explain the group of which you are an involuntary member. Provide a list of role and duties that an assigned member of the group should do.

Situation 2- On what basis is the group formed? Name a group which you are a part or not part of it. Why are you qualified or not qualified to be a part of the group?

10.5 SUMMING UP

One may classify types and forms of groups from varied angles and viewpoints. So a system of social classification may merely differentiate between individuals or groups as socially equals, or it may convey notions of superiority or inferiority (Hicks et. al., 1994).

This unit would help students to understand how societies organize people into different groups for its sustenance. A preliminary classification of social groups is described and illustrated here which provides a glimpse of the larger generalization of categories of human beings.

Glossary

- Prestige- involves social reputation and depends on people's evaluation of status.
- Descent- the tracing of kinship through a common ancestor
- Power- the ability or capacity to influence or control valuable resources
- Dwight Sanderson- an American sociologist who served as the 31st President of the American Sociological Association.
- Community- a group of people sharing a common language, religion or a sense of common ancestry (Beteille, 2007)

10.6 QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by social stratification?
2. Is social stratification necessary for the sustenance of a society?
Provide your answer in Yes or No and then explain.
3. Tribal societies are egalitarian in nature. State your opinion on this statement.
4. Is Marxian dichotomous scheme of class division still prevalent?
5. Write short notes on
 - i. Involuntary social groups
 - ii. Ascribed class
 - iii. Scheduled Tribe
 - iv. Census
 - v. Religion as social category

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UNIT 11: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: FAMILY KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Objectives
- 11.3 Social Institutions: Definition, Types and Role
- 11.4 Family
- 11.5 Kinship
- 11.6 Marriage
- 11.7 Summing Up
- 11.8 Questions
- 11.9 Recommended Readings and References

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In trying to understand what is meant by the concept of “institution”, we need to analyse the context in which institutions play their role. In a typical economic analysis, institution constitutes the rules that serve the interests of economic-rational actors, and must enhance the efficiency of their actions. In a typical sociological analysis, institutions are rules that serve the interests of social actors and enhance the formation of stable systems of hierarchically ranked groups. Institutions refer to man-made rules that govern human behaviour. In sociology, the concept of ‘institution’ has always been at the centre of analysis. When comparing the concept as used in different disciplines, we notice that their meaning differs significantly. When searching for the meaning of

a concept we first must develop an appropriate analysis of the situation in which the phenomenon that must be analysed plays a role. It means that we must develop an effective instrument that explains human behaviour in this respect. Then we understand why humans develop institutions or accept institutions as they are. The common understandings developed by persons and by groups – i.e. culture – are the basis for the design of frameworks of more specific rules that govern human behaviour. These are called institutions. Various persons and groups develop different institutions. Families, businesses, government agencies and churches, for instance, all have their own institutions. (Keizer, 2008). To be precise, institutions are a set of rules and norms that govern human actions and behaviour. These rules are framed based on two prime indices- first, morality and second, polity. People have the capacity to recognize when a situation is morally relevant or deviant and accordingly rules are framed to regulate human behaviour, keeping morality as an index. Further, every system has a subsystem that is responsible for the control of the typical processes that constitute the system. This control system or polity must be institutionalized in such a way that the system does not deviate too much from its optimal strategy. Societies have a government who is responsible for an effective institutional framework. If the government fails to avoid too much deviation, democratically organized societies trust people to vote for better politicians. According to John Rawls, there are five major institutions that are conventionally identified. 1. Economic institutions which serve to produce and distribute goods and services, 2. Political institutions that regulate the use of and access of, power, 3. Stratification institutions that determine the distribution of positions and resources, 4. Kinship institutions that deal with marriage, the family and the socialization of the young, 5. Cultural institutions are concerned with religious, scientific and artistic activities (Rawls,2001).

Roughly speaking, an institution is an organization or system of organizations consisting of an embodied (occupied by human persons)

structure of differentiated roles. These roles are defined in terms of tasks, and rules regulating the performance of those tasks. Moreover, there is a degree of interdependence among these roles, such that the performance of the constitutive tasks of one role cannot be undertaken, or cannot be undertaken except with great difficulty, unless the tasks constitutive of some other role or roles in the structure have been undertaken or are being undertaken. Further, these roles are often related to one another hierarchically, and hence involve different levels of status and degrees of authority. Finally, these roles are related to one another in part in virtue of their contribution to (respectively) the end(s) or function(s) of the institution; and the realization of these ends or function normally involves interaction among the institutional actors in question and external non-institutional actors. The assumption here is that the concept of an end and of a function are distinct concepts. The constitutive roles of an institution and their relations to one another can be referred to as the structure of the institution.

Moving on, institutions, therefore play very significant roles in the society we live in and cannot be thought of divorced from the social and cultural contexts in which they are embedded. In a world without institutions uncertainty creates existential fear and an unpredictable and possibly violent way of satisfying immediate desires. Institutions make the world simpler and people more rational and social. Rules to reach ultimate goals more effectively can only be developed if people know what their ultimate goals are. But goals can only be established in connection with ideas about how to interpret the world. So, institutions can only be developed in a cultural context. Within this cultural-institutional setting people live their daily lives, have their experiences and adjust their behaviour if their experiences are different from what they expected. (ibid).

11.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the meaning of social institutions;
- Analyse the role and the types of social institutions;
- Explain each type of social institution;
- Discuss the importance of social institutions.

11.3 SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The terms “institutions” and “social institutions” are used to refer to a miscellany of social forms, including conventions, rules, rituals, organizations, and systems of organizations. A social institution is a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organizing relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment. (Turner, 1997)

Social institutions are often organizations. (Scott, 2001) Moreover, many institutions are systems of organizations. For example, capitalism is a kind of economic institution, and in modern times, capitalism consists in large part in specific organizational forms—including multinational corporations—organized into a system.

Regarding the roles that social institutions play, one can assert that given the multiplicity of institutions that exist, there are multiple roles and functions of social institutions. However, what is universally applicable is that social institutions play the key role in forming the society, sustaining the social order and the normative structures thus preventing any form of social anomie or breakdown of society. Social institutions, therefore, weave the social actors with the society they inhabit in giving them a sense of belonging in any situation.

To explicate further, there are different types of social institutions. viz. Family, Kinship and Marriage. The following sections will briefly highlight what these concepts mean.

11.4 FAMILY

The family is the basic unit of structure in any society, be it a simple society or a complex modern society. The form and organisation of the family have varied, but in every social structure it has been a primary group and the basic unit of social organisation. Through the family, the individual becomes a person with status, children are reared and guided, and the cultural heritage is transmitted to the succeeding generations. Families may be organised in an amazing variety of ways. Although the family is rooted in the biological nature of human beings, in human experience it is always a social institution which is governed by cultural norms.

Sociologists identify different types of families based on how one enters them. **A family of orientation** refers to the family into which a person is born. **A family of procreation** describes one that is formed through marriage. These distinctions have cultural significance related to issues of lineage.

Sociological paradigms draw on what constitutes a family from the standpoint of three schools of thought- symbolic interactionism, critical sociology, and functionalism. Firstly, symbolic interactionist theories indicate that families are groups in which participants view themselves as family members and act accordingly. In other words, families are groups in which people come together to form a strong primary group connection, maintaining emotional ties to one another over a long period of time. Such families could potentially include groups of close friends as family. Secondly, critical sociology emphasizes that the forms that define the “typical” family unit are not independent of historical changes in the economic structures and relations of power in

society. Thirdly, functionalist perspective views families as groups that perform vital roles for society—both internally (for the family itself) and externally (for society as a whole). Families provide for one another's physical, emotional, and social well-being. Parents care for and socialize the children, a function that prepares new members of society for their future roles.

George Murdock lists four important functions served by the nuclear family, these functions serve to resolve four major problems of society. According to him, the nuclear family along with other social institutions, serves to regulate sexual relations, account for economic survival, controls reproduction and socializes children (Murdock, 1949)

Family can be further categorized based on three prime indices: Locality or residence, Authority and Lineage or rule of descent.

Accordingly, therefore, there are primarily, two types of family—patrilocal and matrilocal families, based on where a newly married couple decides to reside in. In the first type, the couple takes up residence at the home of the bridegroom's parents and in the second, the couple starts living in the residence of the bride's parents.

On the basis of tracing the lineage or descent either through the father's side or mother's side, there are patrilineal and matrilineal families respectively.

Lastly, from the point of view of authority, the pattern of dominance and subordination and decision-making in the family, two different patterns are visible in different societies. These are patriarchy-male dominant; matriarchy-female dominant, Thus, there are either patriarchal or matriarchal families.

Throughout India, patriliney, patriarchy and patrilocality are the norms in general, the society being a male-dominated one. However, with exceptions of communities like the Nayars of Kerala, Khasis of

Meghalaya, etc. there are families who practice matriliney and matrilocality. In addition, there are different typologies of the family as-

Conjugal family: Family in which the members consist of spouses (married couple) and their children.

Consanguine family: Family in which the members are related by descent rather than by marriage.

Extended family: Family consisting of one or more married pairs, their children and other near relatives

Nuclear family: Family consisting of parents and their children only

With the growth of industry and the rise of cities, family life and family patterns have undergone. The economic functions are now getting largely transferred to outside agencies. Family is a socially recognized group (usually joined by blood, marriage, or adoption) that forms an emotional connection and serves as an economic unit of the society. The present is a period of transition; however, the family has reconfigured according to the changes in the society at large.

11.5 KINSHIP

A society is a network of interlocking groups which are related to each other through institutionalized patterns. One of the most important structural subsystems of all societies is the kinship system. Kinship groups occupy an important place in an individual's life. The relationship of blood or marriage which binds people together in a group is called kinship. The kinship system includes socially accepted relationships based on fictional as well as actual ancestral ties. These relationships are established due to social interaction and accepted by the society. Kinship is one of the most fundamental principles for organizing individuals into social groups, roles, categories, and genealogy. Family relations can be represented concretely (mother, brother, grandfather) or abstractly after degrees of relationship.

According to A. R. Radcliff Brown, kinship is a system of dynamic relations between persons in a community, the behaviour of any two persons in any of these relations being regulated in the same way and to a greater or less extent by social usage. (Brown, 1952)

Robin Fox states that the study of kinship is the study of what man does with these basic facts of life – mating, gestation, parenthood, socialization, siblingship etc. Human society is unique, he argues that we are “working with the same raw material as exists in the animal world, but [we] can conceptualize and categorize it to serve social ends.” (Fox, 1983)

In anthropology, the kinship system includes people related both by descent and marriage. Human kinship relations through marriage are commonly called “affinity” in contrast to “descent” (also called “consanguinity”), although the two may overlap in marriages among those of common descent.

The kinship relations are of two types. The kinship based on marriage relations is known as affinal kinship and kinship based on blood relations is called consanguineous kinship.

Consanguineous Kins:

It is based on blood relations. This type of relationship exists between parents and their children and between the children of the same parents. This kind of kinship refers to a son, daughter, sister, parental uncle, etc. This type of kinship may be actual or supposed. In a polyandrous tribe, the actual father of a child is unknown. An adopted child is treated as if it were one's own biologically produced child. Thus, blood relationship may be established not only on biological basis but also on the basis of social recognition.

Affinal Kins:

The term 'affinity' means relation by marriage. Thus affinal kinship refers to the bond established only after marriage. Thus, marriage creates a host of relationships which are called affinal kinship. The relationship of a husband with his wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, etc. is of Affinal nature.

The kinship relations can be classified into four categories based on proximity or distance between the relations. 1. Primary Kin 2. Secondary Kin 3. Tertiary Kin. 4. Distant Kin

Primary kins: Primary kinship refers to the direct relations. People who are directly related to each other are known as primary kins. There are eight primary kins. They are husband-wife, father-son, mother-son, father-daughter, mother-daughter, younger brother-elder brother, younger sister-elder sister and brother-sister.

Secondary kins: Secondary kinship refers to the primary kin of a primary kin or those who are directly related to a primary kin become one's secondary kin. Outside the nuclear family the individual can have thirty-three types of secondary relatives. For example mother's brother, brother's wife, sister's husband, father's brother.

Tertiary kins: Tertiary kins refer to the secondary kins of our primary kins. For example, wife's brother's son, sister's husband's brother etc. There are one hundred fifty-one types of tertiary kins.

Distant kins: The primary kin of tertiary kin are called distant kins. Thus, the kin groups are united by ties of blood and marriage and can be traced back to several generations.

Every human society recognizes the existence of some kind of kinship system in the whole world. Kinship has always played a vital role in controlling individual behaviour and in maintaining social cohesion.

11.6 MARRIAGE

Marriage is conventionally defined as a socially sanctioned union between a man and a woman which is accomplished by culture-specific rituals and ceremonies. It is a socially approved way through which families are established. The institution of marriage is a complex normative pattern that applies to all marriages in a particular social system. The marriages conform to the pattern in varying degrees, but married partners all know the pattern itself and they regard it as morally valid and binding. It is viewed as the most important event in the life of an individual between birth and death and signifies transition into adulthood. (Johnson, 2006). Marriage can be conceptualized in three ways: as an institution, as a rite/ritual and as a process. As an institution, marriage consists of a set of patterned behaviours, expectations and relationships that are organized and endured over time. As a rite/ritual, it includes the ceremonies through which married status is achieved and as a process, it is a phenomenon which is marked by gradual changes that lead to ultimate dissolution through separation, divorce or death. (Thakur, 2004)

Moving on, the meaning of marriage from legal perspective implies that marriage is a binding contract between a man and a woman who join together their income, possessions and lives. Marriage is recognized by the law and dissolution of marriage can only take place through law through legal process of divorce. "Marriage is a state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or a wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law." (Nagpal, 2011). Thus, the institution of marriage is the socially and legally sanctioned way of procreation and establishing a family.

In all societies, there are certain restrictive and preferential rules regarding marriage. These rules determine the choice of marriage partners. Accordingly, there are as follows:

a). **Endogamy:** This rule restricts the choice of mate within a certain group. It is a marriage within caste, tribe, race or other groups. Caste endogamy is prevalent in Indian society. According to this rule of marriage, it is required that the marriage partner should be selected from same group, i.e. within the same caste or tribe.

b). **Exogamy:** It is the rule which restricts the selection of spouse from certain groups. It forbids marriage within the same group. The blood relatives are prohibited from having marital connections among themselves. There are two forms of exogamy: Gotra and Sapinda, both of which are practiced in Hindu society. Members of a same gotra are supposed to have descended from a common mythical ancestor of a rishi, therefore same-gotra marriages are prohibited. Sapinda means the individuals who carry the particles of the same body. Sapinda relationship arises from being connected by having particles of the same ancestors. Hence, the marriage between Sapindas are prohibited. Since there is no known limit of persons related by blood, the prescribed limit for prohibiting marriage according to Sapinda is within certain generations both from the father's and the mother's side.

The most common classification for forms of marriage is on the basis of number of mates. Therefore, there are the following forms-

1. **Monogamy:** It is the form of marriage in which one man marries one woman. This is the legally accepted and the most ideal form of marriage since it contributes to a stable family
2. **Polygamy:** It is of two types: Polyandry and Polygyny. Polyandry is the marriage of one woman with two or more men. It was practiced in ancient Indian society, though it is not practiced in modern societies. It still exists among a few tribal societies such as Nagas, Gonds and Baigas. Polyandry is of two types: fraternal polyandry and non-fraternal polyandry. When two or more brothers share a common wife, it is known as fraternal polyandry. The marriage of the character Draupadi

with Pandavas in the Mahabharata is an example of fraternal polyandry. Non-fraternal polyandry refers that type of marriage in which husbands of a woman are not brothers. This type of marriage is prevalent among the Nayars of Kerala. Polygyny is that type of marriage where a man marries more than one woman at the same time.

Functions of Marriage

Marriage regulates sexual behaviour: Marriage helps cultural groups to have a measure of control over population growth by providing proscribed rules about when it is appropriate to have children. Regulating sexual behaviour helps to reduce sexual competition and negative effects associated with sexual competition. This does not mean that there are no socially approved sexual unions that take place outside of marriage. Early anthropological studies documented that the Toda living in the Nilgiri Mountains of Southern India allowed married women to have intercourse with male priests with the husband's approval. In the Philippines, the Kalinda institutionalized mistresses. If a man's wife was unable to have children, he could take a mistress in order to have children. Usually his wife would help him choose a mistress.

Marriage fulfils the economic needs of marriage partners: Marriage provides the framework within which people's needs are met: shelter, food, clothing, safety, etc. Through the institution of marriage, people know for whom they are economically and socially responsible.

Marriage perpetuates kinship groups: This is related to the previous function, but instead of simply knowing who with whom is economically and socially responsible, marriage in a legitimate sense lets people know about inheritance.

Marriage provides institution for the care and enculturation of children: Within the umbrella of the marriage, children begin to learn their gender roles and other cultural norms. Marriage lets everyone know who is responsible for children. It legitimizes children by socially establishing their birth rights.

Marriage in India: The Hindu Context:

For Hindus, marriage is a sacrament and not a contract, i.e. it is considered as one of the most important and permanent elements of Indian society. In the Hindu social heritage, marriage has never been looked at from the materialistic point of view. It is considered as a sacred relationship. It is meant for the continuation of family and as well as the practice of dharma. Hindu Marriage is not a social contract; it is a religious duty or a religious sacrament. Marriage to a Hindu, is of great individual and social significance. It is a socially approved union of man and woman which aims at pleasure, observance and procreation of certain social obligations. There are several aspects due to which Hindu marriage is a sacrament. These are-

- The basic aim of marriage is dharma, i.e. fulfilment of religious duties.
- The union is considered indissoluble and irrevocable. The husband and the wife are bound to each other throughout life as well after death.
- Marriage is considered to be a social duty towards the family and the community with little idea of individual interest and aspiration.

Present trends in India:

Many changes have taken place in Hindu Marriage due to the influence of globalization and Western culture. Over time, the rituals of marriage have been minimized particularly among the Hindu society. Previously the selection of life partner was done by the eldest members of the family but now the consent of the boy and girl is also considered

essential. Also, the rules of exogamy and endogamy have been relaxed. The rules of varna, caste and sub-caste endogamy, gotra and pravara exogamy have been debarred through legal sanctions. The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act, 1946 permitted marriages between different divisions of the same caste. Besides, The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 have also allowed marriages between persons of different castes and religions. As we all concur that society is always in a state of constant flux and accordingly, the constitutive elements also undergo changes, so over time the concept of marriage although remained intact, the practice and the empirical realities have undergone changes which would therefore need greater reckoning and discerning and this unit therefore tries to this understanding of all the three key concepts in the context of India.

11.7 SUMMING UP

To conclude, this unit, elaborated in detail what constitute social institution and the roles and types of it. By the end of the unit, the reader can differentiate between different types of social institutions particularly in the Indian context. In the end, we would agree that by accepting the rules that institutions frame, be it any type and applying them in daily life, people are making sense of structures which govern them and their behaviour. The development of these institutions can only be successful if they are embedded in a culture that supports the ideas behind these institutions. If not, the experience of people can trigger cultural innovation and change, which concerns the way people frame their world and formulate their ultimate goals. Thus, institutions serve the key function in maintaining the stability and order in the context one inhabits.

11.8 QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by social institutions? Describe their roles and function.
2. Can any social institution exist without any socio-cultural context? Explain.
3. Define the concept of family. What are the different types of family in India?
4. Is marriage an institution? Justify.
5. What do understand by the term kinship? Shed some light on the categories of kins.

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UNIT 12: SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN INDIA: SANSKRITISATION, WESTERNISATION AND MODERNISATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Objectives
- 12.3 Sanskritisation
- 12.4 Westernisation
- 12.5 Modernisation
- 12.6 Summing Up
- 12.7 Questions
- 12.8 Recommended Readings and References

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Modern India has been characterized by varied forms of social changes, whether it is in the form of structural relations or cultural practices. The advent of the modern period has brought changes in almost all the traditional societies around the world. While studying social change, we also need to keep in mind that in the discipline of sociology, social change has not been understood as relations between chains of events, but as a ‘structured process’, whereby there are a direction and meaning in the processes of changes taking place in the society.

After considering the attitudes towards change in India, especially in the post-independence era, Yogendra Singh has described that the ‘simple social process’ of change in India has been loaded with ideology, and presented that ‘change in itself is desirable and sought for’ (Singh, 1986:1)

Studies on social change in India have generally identified two sources of change, broadly classified in terms of 'endogenous' (internal or indigenous) and 'exogenous' (external or exogenous). Yogendra Singh (1986) has further classified these two disparate factors of change in terms of 'orthogenetic' and 'heterogenetic', by taking the conceptual approaches applied by Milton Singer, McKim Marriott and host of other scholars that have studied Indian society.

Changes from *within* and *without* have been one of the major aspects of social change in India. In this aspect, M. N. Srinivas has distinctively classified two forms of changes in Indian Society, specifically *Sanskritisation* and *Westernisation* (Srinivas, 1966/1972:1). In classifying these two processes of social change in modern India, Srinivas's main emphasis is that 'Sanskritisation' has been an on-going form of change that has occurred in India throughout the centuries, whereas 'Westernisation' has taken place after the advent of the colonial rule in India (Srinivas, 1966/1972:1). Fundamentally, according to Srinivas, 'Sanskritisation' refers to changes in the caste systems, whereas Westernisation is the impact of Western culture on Indian society. His analysis has focused more on the cultural aspects of change, rather than the structural problems emerging in Indian society. From the studies that he has conducted in Mysore villages, Srinivas began to extend his analysis and generate an all India study. Nevertheless, his conceptualisation of social change in modern India has helped in understanding the directions of changes taking place in India. Therefore, Sanskritisation and Westernisation have been considered as two of the major social processes of change that have occurred in modern India. Although, critics of Srinivas have considered his theoretical approaches and studies as giving more attention to the cultural changes rather than the structural dynamics of Indian society, we cannot discount the fact that Srinivas has been considered as one of the few scholars in India who has done intensive field study and provided an alternative understanding of Indian society. He has been

considered as the pioneer of ‘field view’ as opposed to ‘text view’ of Indian society.

12.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the various processes of social change in modern India;
- Explain Sanskritisation and Westernisation or the changes that have taken place in cultural practices;
- Discuss the impact of modernisation on Indian society.

12.3 SANSKRITISATION

Sanskritisation is a term that has been coined by prominent Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas while studying religious practices among the Coorgs of South India. Srinivas found that ‘caste system was far from rigid’, and movement has always happened within the structures of the caste hierarchy (Srinivas, 1966/1972). Initially, Srinivas had used the term Brahminisation to denote the forms of social mobility taking place in caste system across India. However, due to inadequacy in focusing only on the Brahmin’s position in the caste system, the term Sanskritisation was preferred. It is important to interrogate why Srinivas preferred to use a general category, instead of focusing only one category of caste systems, although it may occupy the most important position in the caste hierarchy. According to Srinivas, the food habits of ‘Brahmans’ has changed in the post-Vedic period, and the agents of Sanskritisation are not always Brahmins, however, the rituals and customs of the ‘twice-born’ caste has been more or less the same and has been the orientation of lower caste (Srinivas, 1966/1972). Therefore, Srinivas had found the term ‘Brahminisation’ problematic on the account of the fact that if Brahminisation was used instead, there is a need to specify the Brahmins of which period, and how different are their practices from other castes who are twice-born (ibid). There are

also other factors which have made Sanskritisation a better term, as the orientation towards Sanskritic practices are found in other religious communities and tribes in India. And, interrelated with the issue is the concept of 'dominant caste', which Srinivas has propounded to understand the actual hierarchies of caste systems and as a deviation from *Varna* model in Indian society. Further, Srinivas has considered Sanskritisation as a form of social changes that have happened outside the caste systems, by which he means tribes and other communities in India. For these communities, Sanskritisation became a medium through they can be integrated into the caste system and converted to Hinduism. While Srinivas considers Sanskritisation as a process of social change that has occurred throughout the ages in India, some scholars have considered it as a form of cultural changes that have taken place in modern India.

In understanding the process of Sanskritisation, it will be essential to take stock of the main features of the caste system. Srinivas has identified certain aspects of caste systems that have remained more or less in similar terms throughout the historical period in India. These are: (1) the hierarchy system enshrined in caste is prevalent all over India, and regional variations do not happen, (2) there are only four varnas, but if we include Harijans then only it can be considered as five, (3) that the hierarchy is clear and (4) immutable (Srinivas, 1972:3). However, according to Srinivas, there are certain differences between caste system and *varna* model. While caste system is characterized by ambiguity, claims and counter-claims, and is an 'on-going' process, *Varna* model is quite clear on the question of hierarchy and does not undergo change (Srinivas, 1966/1972:4).

M. N. Srinivas found that Sanskritisation is an all-India phenomenon. He described that 'Sanskritisation is a process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of high, and frequently, 'twice-born' caste

(Srinivas, 1966/1972:6). While it may seem that Sanskritisation refers to the imitation of 'twice-born' caste life-style and customs by low caste and other social groups, it is more than a simple act of imitation and adoptions. Such changes in social practices, according to Srinivas, were 'followed by a claim' of higher position in the caste hierarchy (ibid). And usually, the claim of position is higher than traditionally accorded to the group. As per the *varna* model, social mobility or movement of caste group in the caste hierarchy is not permissible. And, in most of the cases, where a claim is made, it is met with opposition by the neighbouring caste groups. And it usually takes a generation or two before a caste group is finally accorded the status being claimed (Srinivas, 1966/1972: 6).

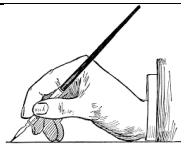
The dynamics of disagreement between the claimant caste and other groups, according to Srinivas, go much beyond differences of 'opinions' to become an integral part of the 'institutionalized practices'. He has explained this aspect of Sanskritisation by taking the examples of Harijan caste in Mysore who refused to accept cooked food and drinking water from the Smiths. This proves that Sanskritisation process is accompanied by an actual change in social relationships and practices and not just a symbolic change of customs and lifestyle. However, the adoption of rituals and lifestyle is connected with other intentions, which are directed towards the mobility of the group. We also need to take note of the fact that Sanskritisation is a process whereby all members of the social groups are involved in the adoption or claims of status, and not an individual's acts.

One of the most important aspects of Sanskritisation is social mobility, whereby a caste group move up in the ladder of caste hierarchy, usually derived from the *varna* model. However, Srinivas has cautioned that social mobility may happen without undergoing the process of Sanskritisation through other ways as well. Social mobility in Sanskritisation, according to Srinivas, only results in '*positional*

change’ of the caste group and not the ‘*structural change*’ of the caste system (ibid). This means that a caste group may move up, while their neighbours move down in the hierarchical order but the structural hierarchy that has been established by the *varna* model remains the same.

The model for Sanskritisation and orientation of caste groups are not always the Brahmins, who are supposed to occupy the highest position in the caste hierarchy. As per the structure of *varna* model, the Brahmins have the most ideal life that any caste group would want to imitate. However, as Srinivas has made it clear in his analysis, the position and lifestyle of Brahmins are not uniform in every part of India (Srinivas, 1966/1972). And, in most localities, it is not the Brahmins, but the ‘dominant caste’, which derives its dominance from land ownership or other avenues, has been the influential agencies. Srinivas considers the landowning caste in rural areas as being the ‘dominant caste’, due to the ownership of arable land by its members (ibid). There are numerous models and agencies of Sanskritisation, where ‘dominant caste’ has also remained as one of the most influential caste groups, as the people in rural areas are influenced by this caste group. Sanskritisation is an on-going cultural change that has happened in India. Thus, it is not a form of social change exclusively found in the modern period. However, in contemporary times, the changes in the economic condition of the people through education and employment have affected the positions of caste groups. There are certain manifestations of Sanskritisation which have led to the growth of sectarianism and social divisions.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Who has coined the term 'Sanskritisation'?

2. What is Sanskritisation?

3. What is a 'dominant caste'?

12.4 WESTERNISATION

The process of Westernisation refers to the changes which have been brought about by the impact of British rule in India. M. N. Srinivas has used this term to specifically mean the impact of British rule on Indian society, through the introduction of 'new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values' (Srinivas, 1966/1972: 49). As a conceptual tool to understand social changes in modern India, Srinivas has pointed out that Westernisation is different from other social phenomena like modernisation, urbanisation, though there are certain similarities in all of these concepts. Unlike modernization, it is not solely directed towards rationality, and influences from British rule was not always associated with the features of urbanisation and industrialisation (ibid). Thus, Westernisation encompasses certain

aspects of social change in modern India that go beyond the rubric of economic changes and other processes of change in Indian society.

Srinivas has explained the peculiarity of Westernisation in terms of changes in the social institutions. The impact of British rule, according to him, does not only result in the establishment of new institutions, such as newspapers, electoral systems and Christian missions, but it also has brought changes in the old institutions that were already been established in India. An example of one of such institutions was educational institution, where learning, that was earlier a prerogative of few caste groups, was opened up for all the members of society with the introduction of Western education, irrespective of the caste lineages. Similar changes also occurred in other institutions like the army, civil services and law. These changes do not simply translate into changing certain social relations or occupational structure, but also the ideals and principles that determine social relations and cultural practices of Indian society. Instead of harping on the age-old tradition of exclusion on the basis of caste, the ethos of egalitarianism was infused into Indian society through the institutional practices of the British rule.

The reform process introduced by Britishers, according to Srinivas, has a strong emphasis on humanitarian values. The legal reforms, in the form of civil law, penal law, etc. which were introduced during the colonial rule changed the form and process of legal practice in India. It gave the impression that everyone is equal before the law, and that one's birth-right should not interfere with the systems of justice and fairness in the legal terms. The implication of reform in legal practices also affected religious outlook and perspective, where customs and traditional practices that had been supported by old beliefs came under review

The impact of British rule in India has been considered as multifaceted, and Westernisation is a concept that tried to understand the cultural

changes brought about by the contact between Indian society and Western rulers. Srinivas considered this concept to be 'inclusive, complex, and many-layered' (Srinivas, 1966/1972:55). Some of the aspects that it covers include the introduction of 'modern science' and 'technology' (ibid). Moreover, in order to elucidate the extent of Westernisation on Indian society, Srinivas has also taken the example of changes in eating habits among the Indians. He describes that Indians traditionally took their meal by sitting on the floor, however, with the introduction of new technology and pieces of furniture like table and chairs, certain sections of Indian society who were 'educated and Westernised' preferred to eat by sitting at the table (ibid).

Most of the changes that Westernisation has brought to Indian society may seem to be for positive aspects, or in some form of progress. However, Srinivas has also marked out the contradictions that Westernisation has brought to modern social practices and also some of the negative consequences in India. He argued that 'Westernisation in one area or level of behaviour does not result in Westernisation in another area or level' (Srinivas, 1966/1972: 56). To show how these two remain in 'discrete' terms, Srinivas has cited innumerable examples (ibid). He has taken the example of a bulldozer driver who handles modern machinery but believes in superstition, the practice of cars being marked with vermilion and decorated with flowers (ibid). Srinivas's main emphasis is that there are also instances where adoption of Western technology has not translated towards rationalistic worldview. And in certain cases, the impact of Westernisation has also given rise to negative consequences like communalism and casteism in the political sphere, although nationalism and patriotism have been in itself a product of Western impact. Further, we also find that the impact of British rule on Indian society was uneven and dispersed. In this respect, those who live in urban centres were more Westernised than the rural population. It has also been found that people who lived in seaport towns and coastal regions were more exposed to Western

practices and the process of Westernisation has been more prominent in these areas.

Srinivas's concept of Westernisation has been useful to understand the impact of British rule as a form of historical experience and process of cultural change in Indian society; however, there are certain complications as well as limitations that this concept suffers. Yogendra Singh has argued that M. N. Srinivas' concept of Westernisation is too narrow as it is concerned only with the impact of British rule in India, leaving the influences from other Western countries like America and Russia outside its analysis and purview (Singh, 1986:12). The limitation of Westernisation also comes from the fact that it was only concerned with the changes that have occurred during the colonial period, whereas new forms of changes have taken place in Indian society after the attainment of freedom from colonial rule. Further, according to Yogendra Singh, the new elites in India as well as in other Asian countries find the term Westernisation as tacitly connected with the colonial domination; therefore, it is more 'value-loaded' than other concepts like 'modernisation', which is more concerned with the overall changes happening in the contemporary period (ibid).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Write the meaning of the concept of Westernisation as used by Srinivas.

2. State one limitation of Srinivas's concept of Westernisation.

12.5 MODERNISATION

As a process of change, modernisation encompasses social changes that have happened from within the social system itself as well as due to encounters with other cultures and nations. Therefore, the process of modernisation comes much before and also goes beyond the spheres of colonial impact on Indian society. In most of the countries and societies that have experienced colonial rule, the impacts of colonial rule have often been considered as part of the modernisation process. It may be partially true in most cases; however, we need to keep in mind that the aspects of modernity are much broader than the consequences of certain historical experiences. Often, modernisation refers to the transformations that have occurred in the traditional values and institutions. In most of the societies, it has also been identified with the emergence of 'industrial societies', urban centres, and social relationships that are based on formal exchanges and specific needs. Some sociologists, like Max Weber, would consider the presence of rationalising of social values and institutions as an integral part of the modernisation process. The social process of modernisation has also been studied in terms of changes at the macro-level and micro-level, thereby classifying the changes in terms of large-scale economic practices and political institutions of the country on the one hand, and everyday personal inter-relationships on the other. Modernisation also implies a certain form of universalism, as the ideas of progress and industrialisation have occurred at the global level. However, some Indian sociologists have argued that the experiences and process of modernisation are not the same in every society.

Modernisation process in India has taken place in every sphere of society, which includes social institutions, values, political practices, and knowledge systems, etc. Generally, modernity would imply

changes that have taken place in traditional values and institutions, or new ideas and practices that have been acquired at present times. However, we also need to go beyond this simplistic conception of modernity and analyse the larger implications of the modernisation process. In India, modernisation has been identified in terms of the introduction of the Western education system, establishment of bureaucratic administrations, changes in the political structures and thought, and industrialisation. Nevertheless, some sociologist like Yogendra Singh has identified two significant forces of change that have played a pivotal role in the modernisation of Indian society: Islamic conquest and British rule (Yogendra, 1986:60). Although India had interacted with other cultures and civilizations in the past, according to him, the actual transition of India into a heterogeneous society has happened only during the Islamic conquest and British rule of India (ibid). Through these historical experiences, Indian society was not only enriched by the acquisitions of different cultures and knowledge systems, but it also became heterogeneous in all other aspects of society. It has also been argued that the interaction between Islam and Hinduism was the encounter of two traditional societies, whereas the British rule in India differed from past historical experiences on the basic term that India was still a traditional society during the colonial period, whereas Britain had become a modernised country. Therefore, modernisation in India was considered to have had started after the establishment of British rule in India. Seen from this aspect, we need to look into varied aspects where India underwent changes during the colonial period as well as the transformation in the post-colonial era.

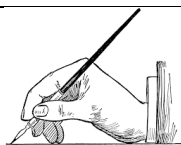
The introduction of Western education in India has been debated in various aspects; wherein Macaulay's minute which strives to promote Western education through the medium of English has been the main point of contention as far as British colonial education policy in India is concerned. India had its own education systems much before the advent

of the colonial period, but the contents of the knowledge systems in the past were 'esoteric' and access to education systems was limited to certain caste groups (Yogendra, 1986:101). The colonial rulers had introduced Western education with the belief that it will train the native population to take up some of the administrative tasks needed for ruling the country; however, the actual implications of Western education had gone far beyond the creation of 'native' administrators. Western education has created the form of modernisation that can change the structure of thought and institutions. Yogendra Singh argues that there were three major areas where we can find the significance of education on the modernisation of Indian society; these were: the cultural content of education, organisational structure, and the rate of its growth (ibid: 103). Western education which offered new contents in the courses taught to the students in schools began to change the outlook of the students. Even in its organisational structure, the manner in which schools were managed and teachers were appointed deviated from the traditional structure in which Indian society was shaped, more specifically the caste-based occupational division. Education has been one of the most significant tools through which the process of modernisation has happened in India. It has been instrumental in spreading the ideas of nationalism, and modern ideas such as liberalism and freedom. Initially, the spread of modern education in society was slow and limited to a few sections of the society, but the rate of Indians acquiring modern education systems has increased rapidly after India's independence. The progress in rates of literacy and education has been an important aspect of modernity in India. Some sociologists like A. R. Desai, have argued that there was a direct relationship between modern education and nationalism in India (Desai, 1948). Modern education is open to all individuals, irrespective of caste and religion, and it also promotes liberal ideas and values. The nationalists in India were influenced by the liberal ideas and democratic values which had come from the modern education system. Therefore, the modern education

system transformed India in varied aspects and played a vital role in building a modern nation in India.

Modernisation has often been equated with the coming of industrialisation in most societies across the world. Specifically, the growth of the industry as a system of production heralds not only changes in modes of production but also a transformation in traditional economic systems and social relations. Indian economy also underwent tremendous changes in the last fifty years, moving from an economy based on social welfare to a liberal economy, and these changes had its root in the colonial rule. Numerous scholars opined that colonialism was responsible for the destruction of the traditional economic system, where handicrafts and agricultural production were the mainstay of livelihood and trade (Desai, 1948). Marxist sociologists see the establishment of the industry with the rise of the capitalist class in India, who do not have much concern for the larger interest of the people. However, we cannot deny the fact that industrial growth not only transformed the economic systems, but also the overall social relations and living standards of the people in the country. It is important to mention here that the liberalisation of the country's economy was implemented during the 1990s as a part of the economic reform process. With the introduction of liberalisation policy, the private companies and foreign investment began to play a major role in Indian economy. The economic policy of the country took a new turn and was oriented towards the market from here on. There have been far-reaching implications of this new economic policy, leading to numerous changes in overall cultural practices and social life of the people.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. What is Modernisation?

2. Write one difference Modernisation and Westernisation.

12.6 SUMMING UP

The processes of social change in modern India have taken various forms. However, it is necessary to mention that these processes have not occurred independently but have emerged at a certain period of time in the nation's history, influencing each other. Therefore, one factor of change is related to other factors. For example, the process of modernisation encompasses varied aspects of change in modern India, which include secularism, Westernization, and nation-building. And certain factors of change, like modern education, have impacted Sanskritisation, nationalism, and the spread of secularism.

12.7 QUESTIONS

1. Define Sanskritisation and Westernization. Are the processes of Sanskritisation and Westernization diametrically opposite?
2. What is Modernisation? Discuss its impact on Indian society.

12.8 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 13: AGRARIAN CHANGES AND URBANISATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Objectives

13.3 Agrarian Changes

13.3.1 Pre-Colonial Period

13.3.2 Colonial Rule

13.3.3 Post-Independence Period

13.3.4 The Green Revolution

13.4 Urbanisation

13.4.1 Definitions and Characteristics

13.4.2 Urbanisation and Urbanism

13.4.3 Urbanisation in India

13.5 Summing Up

13.6 Questions

13.7 Recommended Readings and References

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Social analysts generally agree with the observation that major social changes are taking place more rapidly now than at any earlier period of history. Some of the important social changes that are taking place in the modern world have created and are creating a massive shift in social structure throughout the world. Agrarian change and Urbanization are such important changes. The Indian society is predominantly agrarian in nature throughout history. Agriculture and activities related to its

production become part and parcel of the Indian culture. On the other hand within a short span of time, India has witnessed the rapid growth of urbanisation. With urbanization, a shift in the social order can also be witnessed in the context of Indian society. Thus, the study of agrarian changes and urbanisation is utmost necessary in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the Indian Society.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the historical trajectory of agrarian change;
- Discuss various issues related to the agrarian change in India;
- Discuss the basic idea of urbanization;
- Analyse the various issues related to urbanisation in India.

13.3 AGRARIAN CHANGES

Although some sociologists, particularly those working on developmental issues, were writing on agrarian issues, it was with the publication of Andre Beteille's 'Studies in agrarian social structure' in 1974 that agrarian sociology gained importance within Sociology. Indian society is predominantly agrarian and agriculture has been the dominant occupation throughout history. Agrarian change is a continuous process and in order to clearly understand the changing agrarian scenario we need to trace it in different phases of the history.

13.3.1 Pre-Colonial Period:

In the pre-colonial India since land was in abundant supply, there was no sale or purchase of land in most parts of the Indian countryside. However, not everyone had equal rights of cultivation or claims over the land produce. These were instead based upon custom or upon grants made by the king. Irfan Habib's writing on the Mughal period points out that these rights could even be purchased and sold (Habib, 1963).

The village did not hold its land in common. The village was linked to the central authority through the revenue bureaucracy. Land revenue worked as the dominant mode of surplus appropriation during medieval times. The Jajmani system was one of the features of pre-colonial agrarian society (Jodhka, 1995).

Stop and read:

The Jajmani system tended to conceptualize agrarian social structure in the framework of exchange relations. In its classical construct, different caste groups specialized in specific occupations and exchanged their services through an elaborate system of division of labour.

13.3.2 Colonial Rule:

After having established its political supremacy, the colonial regime initiated the task of reorganizing local society in a framework that would make governance easy and manageable. This process begins with the introduction of new property rights in land. The first in this case was the permanent settlement introduced in Bengal in 1793 which was followed by the ryotwari system and the mahalwari or malguzari system.

Despite differences in arrangement, the patterns of change experienced in land relations were more or less similar in most parts of the empire. Though the new settlements changed the formal structure of the authority, the colonial policies also reinforced and revitalized older quasi-feudal one.

British rule marked the beginning of commercialization of agriculture which denotes firstly, a shift in the agrarian economy from production for consumption to production for the market and second a process

where land starts acquiring the features of a commodity and begins to be sold and purchased in the market like other commodities (Jodhka,1995) Production for market was not entirely a new phenomenon for Indian agriculture. The big peasants during the Mughal period produced cash crops such as cotton, tobacco, and sugar cane. However these markets were generally local in nature and the demand for such things were limited (Habib, 1963).

Establishment of the colonial rule changed the entire scenario. The laying of the railways and the opening of the Suez Canal made the Indian village a part of the global market. The Industrial Revolution in England generated fresh demands for agricultural products required as the raw material in the new industries. This also compelled the colonial rulers to focus on agricultural production. One obvious consequence of this shift in cropping patterns and the growing involvement of the peasantry in the market led to a significant increase in the vulnerability of local populations to famines. Forced commercialization of agriculture disintegrated the traditional systems of food security and as a result, India experienced a number of serious famines particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century.

While the new land settlements conferred formal and transferable/ alienable rights over land, the growing revenue demands and the increasing market orientation of agricultural production created conditions under which land began to acquire the features of a commodity (Jodhka, 1995).

Land became both scarce and transferable and the economic environment began to change. At this stage, the rich landowners also entered the credit market, more with the intention of usurping the lands of smaller peasants rather than to earn interest. Thus began the process

of 'land alienation'. The discontent among the peasantry continued to grow and expressed itself in a series of revolts and protest movements, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century (Dhanagare, 1984).

13.3.3 Post-Independence Period:

In many ways, independence from colonial rule in 1947 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of Indian agriculture. However, even though the political system had changed in a very fundamental sense, the structures that evolved during the colonial rule still continued to exist. The Indian state chose to reorganize agrarian relations through redistribution of land, but not in a comprehensive and radical manner. The Government of India directed its states to abolish intermediary tenures, regulate rent and tenancy rights, confer ownership rights on tenants, impose ceilings on holdings, distribute the surplus land among the rural poor, and facilitate consolidation of holdings (Jodhka, 1995). Legislations were passed by the state governments over a short period of time. Despite the overall failure, land reforms succeeded in weakening the hold of absentee landlords over rural society and assisted in the emergence of a 'class of substantial peasants and petty landlords as the dominant political and economic group' (ibid). The relations of production in agriculture have undergone profound changes as a result of land reforms on the one hand and changing production technology like the introduction of canal irrigation in some parts of India on the other.

However, both the extent and nature of this change was limited because irrigation investment was confined to only limited areas. The agrarian structure and land relations in India have undergone a significant change since independence both as a result of land reforms during the mid-fifties and more so as a consequence of rapid technological changes, especially since the mid-sixties. The national movement

largely succeeded in making the anti-landlord and anti-feudal struggle a part of the struggle for national independence. In the process, it was committed to initiating radical land reforms after coming to power (Singh, 2006).

The achievements in the abolition of intermediary tenure have been quite impressive. By 1964, all states had passed legislation abolishing landlordism. In terms of agrarian structure, a major change has been brought about through the abolition of absentee landlordism in most states of India and that self-cultivation has emerged as the dominant mode. But very little success has been achieved with regard to the imposition of ceilings (Jodhka, 1995).

The regional variations in both implementation of land reforms on the one hand and spread of modern techniques of production on the other have produced widely varying rural institutional structures in different parts of the country (Singh, 2006).

On 2nd October 1952, the Community Development Programme was launched with the objective to provide a substantial increase in agricultural production and improvement in basic services, which would ultimately lead to a transformation in the social and economic life of the village. But the programme couldn't be successful in bringing transformation in the rural lives. Most of the benefits were cornered by the rural elite (Dube, 1958).

13.3.4 The Green Revolution:

The Green Revolution is considered to have been the most successful of all the programmes introduced during the post-independence period. The Green Revolution led to a substantial increase in the agricultural output, to the extent that it almost solved India's food problem. It also produced significant social and political changes in the Indian village

and, in a sense, did bring about an ‘agricultural revolution’. The green revolution conceptualized agrarian change in purely technological terms (Jodhka, 1995).

Stop and read:

The United States played an active role in its conception and implementation. The term *Green Revolution* was first used during the late 1960s to refer to the effects of the introduction of high yielding variety (HYV) seeds of wheat and rice in developing countries. However, the *Green Revolution* is not just about the use of HYV seeds.

The Green Revolution has definitely strengthened the economic and political position of the rich farmers but on the other hand, it compelled the small farmers to rely on the market for their every agricultural activity and thus make them more vulnerable.

The changes produced by the Green Revolution also generated an interesting debate among the Marxist scholars on the question of defining the prevailing mode of production in Indian agriculture. While some scholars argued that the capitalist tendency has started in India with the disintegration of the old system during colonial rule, on the other hand, another set of scholars argued that Indian agriculture was still dominated by semi-feudal mode of production. However, towards the end of the debate there seems to have emerged a consensus that though it may have its local specificities and considerable regional variations, the capitalist mode of production indeed was on its way to dominating the agrarian economy of India and most certainly that of the regions which had experienced the Green Revolution (Thorner 1956).

The growing integration of villages in the broad market and the increasing availability of agricultural sources of employment outside

agriculture, along with the changing political and economic environment had led to a process that weakened the hold of landowners over labourers. In some cases, the developmental schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) being run by the central government also helped the process. Although different positive changes were taking place during the post-independence period, the country still has been passing through agrarian distress. A large number of farmers committed suicide in some states in the recent past. About half of the farmers are indebted. Thus, it can be said that the agrarian structure needs to overcome many more challenges in order to achieve the desired development for the country (Singh, 2006).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. What do you understand by the Green Revolution?

2. Mention three agrarian changes that can be witnessed during post-independence period.

13.4 URBANISATION

13.4.1 Definitions and Characteristics

The word 'Urban' is derived from the Latin term 'urbs' which was applied by the Romans to a city—especially the city of Rome. Urban refers to a city or town, which is directly opposite to village or country. A resident of a village is known as Folk and the city is known as Urban. Urbanization is simply defined as the shift from rural to an urban society, which is triggered by social, economic, and political developments. Urbanisation is intimately related with industrialisation, westernisation and modernisation. These concepts apparently look quite synonymous, although differ characteristically in meaning and content.

Many Scholars have defined urbanisation according to their own orientation and understanding. But there is a general agreement that that urbanisation is a complex socio-economic process closely connected with the scientific-technological revolution, and that it exercises a growing influence on all aspects of society's life affecting the nature of economic development, the demographic, ethnic and many social processes. Urbanization is an index of transformation from traditional rural economies to modern industrial one. It is a progressive concentration of population in the urban unit. Kingsley Davis has explained urbanization as a process of the switch from the spread-out pattern of human settlements to one of concentration in urban centres (Cited in Sandhu, 2003).

Davis has mentioned three stages in the process of urbanization. Stage one is the initial stage characterized by rural traditional society with predominance in agriculture and dispersed pattern of settlements. Stage two refers to the acceleration stage where the basic restructuring of the economy and investments in social overhead capitals including transportation, communication, take place. The third stage is known as the terminal stage where the urban population exceeds 70% or more. At this stage level of urbanization remains more or less same or constant

Rate of growth of urban population and the total population becomes the same at this terminal stage (ibid).

Stop and read:

Although industrialisation today has become embedded with urbanization, the latter is something more than mere industrialisation. It has many other dimensions too. Broadly speaking urbanisation is the transformation of the total way of life of a particular community. While industrialisation is the change in the mode of working in the economic sphere, of the community. In fact, industrialisation, westernisation and modernisation are usually taken as the necessary elements of urbanisation.

Different factors are responsible for urbanization. Migration, commercialisation, industrial growth, many social factors such as attraction of cities, better standard of living, better educational facilities, need for status also induce people to migrate to cities and employment opportunities are some of the important factors behind urbanisation. Thus urbanisation can be characterized by such self-evident factors as -

- a) The mobility of population from agricultural to non-agricultural areas;
- b) the concentration of populace in a new place of habitation or a place characterised by a new way of life;
- c) Variety of professions other than agriculture and continued mobility in these occupations, mobility both - vertical and horizontal;
- (d) A particular mode of habitation and non-agricultural (i.e., industrial, commercial, etc.) pattern of economy.

Urbanisation has different impacts on the society. Increasing crime rate, global warming, pollution, lack of sanitation, expansion of slums and its consequences of overcrowding, the problem of waste management, traffic congestion, unemployment and homelessness – these are the important impacts of Urbanisation (Pawan, 2016).

13.4.2 Urbanisation and Urbanism:

There is always a confusion in the use of the term 'urbanisation' and 'urbanism'. Urbanisation is not urbanism as it is generally misconceived. Urbanism represents a particular way or style of life contrast with that of rural agriculturally dominated communities while urbanisation refers to the process whereby a traditionally rural bound community wholly or partially moves to adopt a different pattern of living. In fact, urbanism is the adaptation to the urban traits or characteristics. According to Louis Wirth, it is a way of life in urban places. Urbanism refers to those elements and factors which are internal to a urban or city life only. Whereas urbanisation is a process of development and extension of these urban factors (Wirth, 1938).

13.4.3 Urbanisation in India

India shares most characteristic features of urbanisation in the developing countries. It is the most significant phenomenon of the 20th century which has almost affected all aspects of national life in India. Being the second most populous country in the world after China, India's growing urbanisation has a regional as well as world-wide impact. India's urban population constitutes a sizeable proportion of the world's urban population (Jaysawal and Saha, 2014).

Urbanisation in India began to accelerate after independence, due to the country's adoption of a mixed economy, which gave rise to the development of the private sector. Urbanisation impacts the environment through the strain of resources, including food, water,

energy and the land itself, which increases as the population within the urban area increases.

Stop and read:

About 34% of India's population now lives in urban areas, the U.N. World Urbanization Prospects 2018 report has said. This is an increase of about three percentage points since the 2011 Census.

The most striking feature of India's urbanisation is its long tradition. The emergence of early urban life is associated with the evolution of the Indus Valley civilisation around 2500 B.C. Despite its long history, India remains one of the less urbanised countries of the world. According to the 2011 census, in India out of the total population of 1.21 billion Indians, 833 million (68.84%) lives in rural areas while 377 million stays in the urban areas. The degree of urbanisation varies widely among the states of the country. Goa is the most urbanised state in India with 49.77 per cent urban population followed by Mizoram, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. The maximum concentration of the country's urban population is found in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

Urban centres in India are characterised by extreme heterogeneity in terms of their socio-economic characteristics. Rapid industrialisation and urbanisation have already shown their effects in the form of problems like congestion, over-population and lack of space in many countries. Other social problems such as crime, delinquency, alcoholism, prostitution and dehumanization are present to a great extent in the West. India is also not free from these influences. Overcrowding, slums, fast tempo of life, break of primary relationships and change in traditional living, occupations, values, etc. are fairly evident in the Indian scene. Mass migration from the rural areas to

cities and towns is creating imbalances in the economy. Urban amenities and the provisions of the basic supply are increasingly facing the problem of shortage and scarcity. Town and urban planning has, therefore, become a need of the hour especially in the context of developing countries like India. (Jaysawal and Saha, 2014).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. What is the difference between urbanisation and urbanism?

2. What are the main reason of urbanisation?

13.5 SUMMING UP

- Agrarian change is a continuous process and one change can lead to the other. It can have large implications in the society.
- British rule marked the beginning of the commercialisation of agriculture and land became a commodity.
- After independence, the Indian state chooses to reorganize agrarian relations through redistribution of land, but not in a comprehensive and radical manner.
- Urbanisation is simply defined as the shift from rural to an urban society, which is triggered by social, economic, and political developments.

- Urbanism refers to those elements and factors which are internal to urban or city life only. Whereas urbanisation is a process of development and extension of these urban factors.
- Urbanisation in India began to accelerate after independence, due to the country's adoption of a mixed economy, which gave rise to the development of the private sector.

13.6 QUESTIONS

Short questions

1. Who is the pioneer of agrarian sociology in India?
2. When did the British introduce permanent settlement in Bengal?
3. What was the main objective of Community Development Programme?
4. Which is the most urbanised state in India?

Essay type:

1. Give a comparative account of agrarian changes that have taken place in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods?
2. Discuss the colonial rule in reference to the agrarian change in India?
3. Critically examine various consequences of the Green Revolution in the context of Indian agrarian structure ?
4. What is Urbanisation? Give a comprehensive picture of Urbanisation in India.

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UNIT 14: NATION AND NATION BUILDING

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Objectives
- 14.3 Nation and Nationalism
- 14.4 War and Nationalism
- 14.5 The Question of Nationality
- 14.6 Aspirations for Regionalism
 - 14.6.1 Region and Nation
 - 14.6.2 Regionalism in India
- 14.7 Nation Building in India
- 14.8 Summing Up
- 14.9 Questions
- 14.10 Recommended Readings and Reference

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The idea of nation and nation-building is one of the most significant processes in any modern country. It is useful to understand this process especially from the lenses of sociology. Many social scientists have analysed this topic in different ways. There are various schools of thought exist which approach this issue from their own understanding.

14.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Explain nation and nationalism;
- Describe the process of Nation-building;

- Critically analyse the idea of nation, nationalism and nation-building.

14.3 NATION AND NATIONALISM

Nation and Nationalism are terms that have been defined and redefined according to time and context, therefore, it is difficult to adhere to any single definition or understanding of the same. In common parlance, the definition of “nation” is drawn from the theory of European Marxists who have had its own long history. According to this theory, the following characteristics define a nation:

- a common territory, a common language, a common economic life and a common psychic that compounds into a common culture.
- To this is added a fifth category, i.e. sovereignty.

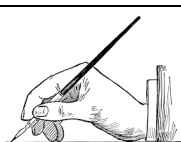
Henceforth, the ideology emanating from the above presumption is nationalism. It assumes a solidarity among people sharing these socio-political norms. Nationalism means the spirit of allegiance and aspirations common to the whole of a nation, devotion and loyalty separated from the interests of other nations. However, with parochialisation of ideas, the basic understanding of nationalism was deemed to be diluted. The coherent question that corroborated the ideation of nationalism was- What is a nation? Can all human collectivities be defined in some specific kind of collective identity?

The inference deduced from this theory points that those nations that have the liberty to form separate states are nations; whereas the oppressed nations under colonialism without statehood is excluded from the definition of nation. Further, it also means the decolonial movements of colonized states would not be equivalent to national movement or national liberation movement. Questioning this scientific schema, Stalin opines that such ideation of collectivities justifies

colonialism and imperialism by refusing to realise oppressed nations; giving the pretext to rule over them (Stalin,1929).

The term nationalism emerged in literature in 1798 but gained significance only in the 19th century. The term nation is derived from the Latin term “nationem” meaning breed/race. It is, however, interesting to note that ‘nation’ retains the original sense to a large extent. Many people still like to view the nation as a homogenous and terminal unit comprising people having a common bond (linguistic, racial, ethnic, religious, etc.). No doubt, it is the vestige of tribalism which has survived the process of societal development. It directly opposes the modern sense of nation which presupposes a heterogeneous society where people share allegiance to a civil state governed by a set of laws and run by a common economy. These two contradictory concepts of the nation have, in fact, given rise to two differing notions about nationalism — one that feeds on primordial ties (something already given) and another that thrives on civic ties (something acquired with time for effective governance).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Define nation.

2. What do you mean by nationalism?

14.4 WAR AND NATIONALISM

The more defined principle characteristic of nationalism emerged in the 19th century and became more prominent towards the end of the World War. It was the product of two unintended developments: the collapse of the great multinational empires of Central and Eastern Europe and the Russian Revolution which made it desirable for the allies to play the Wilsonian card against the Bolshevik card (Hobsbawm, 1990). Inter-war Europe led to the fragmentation of states. By 1913 capitalist economies were aligning itself in large blocks of concentrated enterprise, aided by the governments. This drift towards state-planned capitalism was a latent function of war. Even after the withdrawal of Free Trade in 1931, the apprehension of the states compelled them to opt for protectionism so defensive that came close to autarchy based on bilateral agreements (Hobsbawm, 1990). Formation of nation-states into independent units to evade the consequences of economic change was problematic to the definition of Nation-State.

The reality unmasked by war was adequate to comprehend the caveats of nationalism and nation-states. The old definition of liberating and unifying nationalism was divergent in theory and reality. The scientific schema of the Wilsonian principle to make the boundaries of State congruent to the frontiers of nationality and language was impracticable. As for instance, the majority in the six counties of Ulster refused to see themselves as part of the larger “Irish” community, in spite of being a minority in the border. The assumption of a single state of Ireland or an isolated aspiration of a single, independent and united Ireland was proved to be mistaken (Hobsbawm, 1990).

14.5 THE QUESTION OF NATIONALITY

Horace B. Davis acknowledges two types of nationalism. Primarily that nationalism emanating from enlightenment was by and large rational rather than emotional, and the other based on “culture and tradition” developed by German romantic writers such as Herder and Fichte, which asserted that the nation was a natural community and therefore something “sacred, eternal, organic, carrying a deeper justification than the works of men” (Chatterjee,1999). Both these ideas distinctively European are poles apart from the conception of Nationalism in the non-European world.

The national question in the non-European world is intrinsically linked with a colonial question. The assertion and formation of nationalism were based on a struggle to end colonial oppression. Here lies the paradox, between choosing traditional cultural values or a rational, secular, modernist struggle. Between the two trends, the modern and westernizing trend of nationalism wins, but only after a prolonged struggle (Chatterjee, 1999).

Here, we need to reflect that nationalism is not irrational, but may be irrationally applied. As discussed earlier, the formation of nation states is a resultant of the capitalist development of society. In countries where the linguistic and cultural integration of loosely settled communities into united and compact nations preceded the establishment of centralized national states, no significant problem of nationalities or minorities emerged. But the opposite was the case where there was the imposition of integration to a centralized state amongst the cultural and linguistic minorities (Desai, 1984). The real problem of such ethnic and communal groups is embedded in the fact that they were not accustomed to the upheaval of socio-economic changes that integration into centralized states unleashed (Hobsbawm, 1990). They had an inherent tendency to naturally draw into groups with others from “the old country” or “down home”, out of insecurity

and nostalgia (Hobsbawm,1990). This explains the plethora of ethnic tensions and conflicts in Africa and Asia, where the workable multi-ethnic modus vivendi is vague and is far from clear that state separatism is what each of the peoples composing them or even their leaders and spokesmen have in mind (Hobsbawm, 1990).

This brings us to the question of nation and its form. Drawing from the above discussion between the Western and oriental conception of nationalism, let us now discuss the question of the universal. That being the debate of the 1980s and 1990s as to why the Western experience of nationalism be considered universal experience and all other experiences be derived from it. Here when we are discussing between universals and particulars, a new engagement is required. The issue of nationalist epistemology is associated with the dynamics of power. In accepting this division, theorists abandoned the question of how a concrete universal is forged amongst singularities? A challenging task is the investigation of the emergence of a Nation amongst multiplicities (Samaddar,2012). He opines that the people in the ex-colonies have imbibed the ideal of democracy long before they became independent. The history of colonialism and the anti-colonial nations, the singular and the plural, the concrete and the universal went on negotiating each other in the emerging national or the collective political life (Samaddar, 2012). And at the crux of this collective entity (the universal one) is the nation that resonates with governmental rationality. Thus, after the decolonization, these ex-colonial states had separate dynamics in the formation of State and Government which ultimately culminated in the formation of a distinct political society (Samaddar, 2012).

This necessitated a government that could deliver the aspirations of democracy to its nationalist resolution. Does it percolate to the question of how the nation is to be governed? (Samaddar, 2012). The nationalist theories appear to be at loggerheads here. After Independence, the path for development was based on Industrialization,

which was based on the ideation of “modernization” and “development”. But what was overlooked was in forging a government that was an assemblage of the practices of nationalist popular. The nationalist leaders at that point of history, including Nehru, failed this understanding. The administrative mechanisms were functioning against people, laws became a burden which stood to be parallel to the regimes the colonial rulers imposed on their colonies (Samaddar,2012). Was the new government an extension of that flesh? This clash of ideas is an impediment both to the realisation of democracy and functioning of the government (to be a sovereign state).

This interplay of dual images to an extent exemplifies the reason for the emergence of a myriad of nationalism in our sovereign state. The process of self-construction, namely democracy and ethnicity, with one playing on universality and the latter playing on anthropological differences, one playing to maintain the “nation” from within while the latter trying to burst its seams. This leads us to the understanding of the governmental perspective trying to hold in equilibrium the notion of nation, while the forces from the margins squeak for self-rule (Samaddar,2012).

14.6 ASPIRATIONS FOR REGIONALISM

14.6.1 Region and the Nation

Regionalism has many dimensions and it is formed on the basis of a region. Each region has a particular kind of characteristics in terms of social system, culture, economy, polity and so on. Therefore, each region displays their distinctive identity through language, culture, tradition, religion etc. When we talk about regionalism as an ideology or political movement, it tries to challenge the greater nation state under which it operates. The main causes of regionalism in India could be attributed to various factors. Some of these factors are historical, geographical, economic, political, linguistic and ethnic.

But at the international level, the meaning of regionalism differs from the national one. Here it may refer to the transnational cooperation between various countries to meet a collective objective or to address a common problem faced by various countries like SAARC, ASEAN, etc. Sometimes a region or a state may assert itself against the country or other regions of the country. Then it may be labelled as regionalism. But special motive or interest to develop one's own region may not fall under the category of regionalism. When one fights for the development of the region and pressurize the nation-state, it may appear as regionalism but it is not actually regionalism.

14.6.2 Regionalism in India

India is considered one of the most diverse countries in terms of language, ethnicity, culture and religion in the world. Sometimes to assert their distinct identity and sometimes to resist the sense of deprivation various regions raise their voice against the union government. Some observers also point out that India is not a single nation, rather it is a collection of multiple nations. Several parts of India is having a different culture. Broadly people in India refer to different parts as north India, south India, central India, eastern India, northeast India and western India.

India got independence with a nationalist movement and many leaders propagated the idea of nationalism throughout the independence movement. Many critics believe that it was not durable because it was not kneaded naturally. To address the immediate issues all regional forces came together to fight against the British, but after independence, all sorts of friction started surfacing in independent India. Nehru was forced to bring the State Reorganization Act, 1956 because of the pressure from Andhra Pradesh to be separated from Madras presidency. Within the same historical process, again Andhra

Pradesh witnessed the same fate and it gave away its part to Telangana after a violent Telangana movement.

In the second phase of the regional movement, in the 1970s and 1980s, various regions and forces in North-eastern India demanded autonomy. Some regions even demanded a sovereign state. During this process union government of India responded with the North-eastern States Reorganisation Act, 1971 which helped in the formation of Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh.

In the third phase, Chhattisgarh out of Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand out of Bihar and Uttaranchal out of Uttar Pradesh were created and later separate Telangana came out of Andhra Pradesh as a result of the movement that started in the 1950s. Social analysts give various reasons for the rise of regionalism such as a feeling of cultural discrimination, economic discrepancy, political and social prejudice or favouritism.

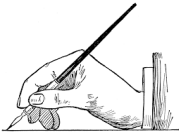
“Son of the soil” dogma also fuelled the process of regionalism in India for sometimes. Various parts assert their superiority over other communities as indigenous and local. The migrated community often faced violent attack from the local people in some of the parts of India. In Assam, the Videshi-Khedao Andolan is one of the examples.

Following movements could be considered as regional movements in contemporary times:

- Telangana Movement: which give away to one separate state of Telangana. It was based on the uneven development discourse.
- In the name of Marathi pride, one of the regional movements is about the Shiv Sena against the outsiders mainly in Mumbai. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) also agitates time to time against the north Indian workers in Mumbai.

- Bodoland demand in Assam. It is mainly intuited by the ABSU (All Bodo Students Union). In the name of deprivation and unemployment, they are demanding a separate land.
- Gorkhaland in north Bengal area which asserts the Gorkha identity on the basis of ethnicity.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

	<p>1. What is regionalism?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
	<p>2. Name a few regional movements in India.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>

14.7 NATION-BUILDING IN INDIA

Nation-building is defended as the making of an identity and structure by using the power of the state. There is a difference between nation formation and nation-building. The latter concept is less broad than the former one. Nation formation is a process where a non-existent or new nation is formed or come into existence through a process whereas nation building is bringing people of different regions, culture, ethnicity, and language together to form a stable country. Nation building also takes the development of a nation through various socioeconomic, cultural and political dimension into its account

The process of a new nation-building has to take up few initiatives to make it more legitimate and leave a deep impact amongst its citizen. This may include the creation of various national symbols such as flags, anthems, emblem, animal, song, bird. These symbols help in creating an imaginary nation and make it real within a short span of time. Nation-building may take up major infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth. According to Andreas Wimmer (2018), three factors are responsible for the success of a nation-building. These are early development of civil society organisations, the rise of a state capable of providing public goods evenly across a territory, and the emergence of a shared medium of communication.

The first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, is considered as one of the finest nation-builders of modern India. His famous quotes like “dams are the temples of modern India” shows that how much he was committed to development. He was influenced by the French, American and Russian revolutions. Nehru wanted to strengthen the Indian polity based on politico-economic democracy, social justice, secularism and federalism. He emphasised the role of various marginalised communities in the making of modern India.

Other personalities also contributed greatly towards making of the Indian nation. SB Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Maulana Azad. Rabindranath Tagore, M K Gandhi, J C Bose, Annie Besant, M Visveswaraya, BG Tilak, G Gokhale and many more. Nehru gave great importance on the role of universities and institutes in the making of modern India. He viewed it as symbols of humanism, progress and search for truth. Many reformers and builders of modern India such as Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, VKRV Rao and others greatly contributed to building the nation.

The nation-building process in India undertook various kinds of reform and transformation through preparing for a classless society. India tried to follow a mixed pattern such as the socialistic pattern of society

realisable through a planned economy. Land reforms, cooperative farming and industrialisation were also taken up to build the nation. Planning has been an important tool for building the nation. Through planning commission and Five-year plans, India set goals to achieve development targets. Presently, the planning commission has been replaced by the NITI Ayog. Various rural development and employment generation plans are implemented in India to support the rural and urban poor. These are MGNREGA, NRHM, PMGSY, MDM in schools through ICDS project and many more such programmes.

14.8 SUMMING UP

Nation building is not a simple process in a country like India. It has various kinds of impact. Especially regionalism in India creates two kinds of impact both positive and negative. Some scholars believe that regionalism plays important role in nation building process if the demands of the regions are rightly addressed by the union government. Citizens of the particular state or region develop a sense of responsibility as they are given more decision making power. Regional identities create a pluralistic and colourful nation state where the difference is used as strength and power. Diversity brings in innovation to run the society more efficiently. Citizens feel more involved and it strengthens the local and regional governance.

There are some harmful consequences of regionalism too. Sometimes it can create a serious impediment to the unity of the nation. It hinders the process of both social and economic development of the country. Some regional political leaders play politics of vote bank based on language, ethnicity, religion, etc. which goes against the ethos of healthy democratic political governance. Regionalism sometimes induces violence which disturbs the society and damages public properties. Some leaders commit favouritism and try to implement the development programme in their regions which creates disparity.

Towards the end, it is important to raise a few pertinent questions in the context of India. Can India be called as a nation state or it should be called as a multi-national state. If it cannot be called as a nation-state then we need to analyse what difficulties and challenges India is facing in the process of nation-building? How can the new Indian nation-state address the issues and challenges raised by religious, cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups? It will be interesting to see how the new nation-state is going to include all the alienated, excluded and marginalised groups into its fold and strengthen the Indian nation-state by building a strong secular, democratic and multicultural federal nation.

14.9 QUESTIONS

1. Define and explain the process of nation building in India.
2. Discuss the problems and challenges faced by a country in terms of the process of nations building.
3. Elaborate on the pros and cons of regionalism.
4. Can we call India as a nation? Explain.
5. How can nationalism be used in the development of a nation?

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