



M.A. - PART I

**SOCIOLOGY
PAPER IV**

**PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN
SOCIETY**

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Preface

This paper is important as it helps you to understand Indian society. The first two papers deal more with theoretical concepts and are, in this sense, generalized. They can be used to study and society. This paper (Paper 4) is specifically on India. In this sense it is an important paper as we can apply our theoretical knowledge to Indian situations. Moreover, the contents in this paper is similar to the contents of NET, SET and PSC examinations.

This paper, like the others, is a revised paper. The old syllabus also had a paper on Indian society but its title and its content are substantially different from the present paper. This paper has been revised along the lines of the UGC model syllabus. A section that has been added is the second one, on emergence of Sociology in India. We felt that this was necessary because students of Sociology must be aware of how Sociology started in India. There is another reason why a section like this is necessary. As a student of Sociology you must be aware that the University of Mumbai (then known as Bombay) was the first in the country to introduce Sociology at the university level. The University's Department of Sociology is the oldest in Indian and second oldest in Asia (the oldest being University of Tokyo in Japan). The Department was founded in 1919 by Sir Patrick Giddes. He was a botanist by training but later studied town planning. Under his headship the Department emerged as a leading centre for urban studies. In fact the Department was known as Department of Civics and Sociology. Dr. G. S. Ghurye, who took over as Head after Giddes, continued to ensure that the department emerged as a leader in its field. By then more Sociology departments were opened in other universities. Dr. A. R. Desai too was an eminent sociologist who headed the Department for several years. Hence learning about the founding fathers of the discipline is almost the same as learning the history of the Department of Sociology. As a student of this university you should feel proud of this tradition.

This paper may appear easy for students. After all it is on Indian society and, are we not Indians? We therefore have a first hand knowledge of our society, don't we? This is the greatest mistake the students make, Being Indian does not necessarily mean that we understand our society better. When you go through the reading material you will find that many foreigners have made great contributions in understanding our society. Living in a society does not necessarily make one understand that society fully. Or else everyone would be sociologists! We hope that you will have an objective view after reading for this paper. Once again we must stress that it is necessary to study the suggested readings besides the study material.

The material in this chapter has been compiled by very competent sociologists. There were written in clear and lucid. We hope you enjoy going through the chapters.

Professor (Dr.) S. K. Bhowmik
Course Co-ordinator

I

SYLLABUS

MA - PART I
SOCIOLOGY – PAPER IV

PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIETY

- 1. Overview of Indian Society**
 - Diversity
 - Cultural Synthesis
 - Hierarchies
- 2. Emergence of Sociology in India**
 - Patrick Geddes: Urban Ecology
 - G. S. Ghurye: Caste and Race
 - A. R. Desai: Marxist Approach
 - Dalitist Approach
- 3. Changing the Contested Hierarchies**
 - Structure of Caste
 - Dynamics of Caste and Inequalities
 - Caste, Class and Gender
 - Role of the State
- 4. Tribal Communities**
 - Understanding Tribal Community (Tribe/Caste/Peasantry)
 - Ecology, Environment and Tribes
 - Nomadic Tribes
 - Denotified Tribes
- 5. Dynamics of Change and Transformation**
 - Agrarian Relations
 - Industrialisation
 - Gender
 - Kinship, Marriage and Family
 - Economic Liberalisation and Rural-Urban Dynamics
- 6. Sociology for India: Current Debates**
 - Pluralism
 - Politics, Religion and State.



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OVERVIEW OF INDIAN SOCIETY: DIVERSITY AND SYNTHESIS

Introduction :

Any person visiting India will be struck by the diversity in its society. There are very few countries in the world that has such wide variations in its people, language, ethnicity, religion and of course, in the wide gaps between the poor and the better off. Indeed, in very few countries in the world does extreme poverty (as in India) co-exist with such wanton display of wealth. All these diversities together constitute what is known as Indian society. Let us try to examine the nature of these diversities and try to understand, in a sociological manner, what these diversities hold for our society. Do they cause strain on our relations or do they help in bringing greater unity.

The population of India, at over one billion (hundred crores), is the second largest in the world - the largest being China. However India is likely to overtake China's population in: the next ten years, given the present population growth rates. If we compare India with China, we will find that apart from their large population, there is little in common. Though China is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual country, the main ethnic group comprises over 95% of the population and the main language (Cantonese) is spoken by the same number of people, making it the language spoken by the largest number of people in the world. India has no such distinction. It is a multi-lingual state but no single language constitutes the majority language.

Language:

The largest spoken language is Hindi that, according to the 2001 Census, is spoken by around 40% of the population. Hindi's position as the largest language is mainly because of the inclusion of dialects in the main language. These include, Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Maithili, Braj-bhasha, Khadi boll, Haryanvi, Rajasthani and the dialects in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. Languages like Maithili and Rajasthani have been wanting separate status as independent languages. At present they are included as dialects of Hindi. Similarly, after 1962, Punjabi has been recognized as an independent language.

One can see that no single language is spoken by a majority of the population, namely, over 50% of the population. In fact India has 18 official languages. These languages are recognized in the schedule of the Constitution of India. The languages are, Hindi, Bengali, Telegu, Tamil, Marathi, Malayalam, Gujarat, Punjabi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Urdu, Assamese.

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Oriya, Sindhi, Nepali, Konkani, Manipuri and English.

In no other country are there so many languages spoken by the people. In fact the 18 official languages is but a small number of the actual number of languages spoken in the country. The 18 scheduled languages are only the officially recognized languages, In reality there are many more.

The 1961 Census showed that India had 1,652 languages. The census had collected the language spoken by the respondent, as the language spoken. In that census all language data was collected, even if the speakers constituted a handful of people. In 1991 however this system was hanged. In that census, though all language data was collected, the reports gave particulars only of languages that were spoken by 10,000 or more people. The total number of languages under this category (of 10,000 or more speakers) came to 115.

The large number of languages prevalent in the country may give rise to two types of analysis regarding the unity of the country. First, the plethora of languages may create divisions among the people. People of different language groups Would try to group together and try and separate from the' country. They can also put up their specific linguistic demands. These demands may be contradictory to the idea of a united country. For example, speakers of Tamil may want to have its exclusive usage among the Tamil speaking population in the country. In their own region or state, they could resist the imposition of any other language. This could be regarded as separationist firstly, because this language group wants to impose its own language on the rest of the people by force. Secondly, the movement refuses to accept the usage of any other language besides the one it speaks. The case of Tamil has been given as an example. It should by no means be presumed that only Tamil speaking people want to lay greater stress of their own language. In fact in most of the states in India, we find that there is a tendency to lay greater stress on the language of the state.

The tendency described above has prompted some to believe that the Indian state should not be mufti-lingual. In fact many would argue that we should not have states based on language. Let us examine the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments.

The Constitution of India has tried to achieve a balance in the authority of the center and the states. The specific powers of each body, the union government and the state governments, are clearly defined in the three lists in the constitution - namely, union, state and concurrent. During colonial rule the administration of the country was divided initially into three Presidencies. These were, Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai). Later, as more and more parts of the country came under the subjugation of the British rule, the rulers created 'provinces'. In 1919 and later in 1935 the colonialists passed laws granting some autonomy to the provinces. The Government of India Act of 1935 provided for powers to the local population through elections.

After Independence, the main task before the government was of creating viable units of administration. The old provinces were not sufficient, because after

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Independence, a number of princely states that were not directly under British administration merged with India. Hence there was a need for evolving new provinces, or states, based on new criteria. Soon after the Constitution was adopted by the people of India, on 26 January 1950, a body, called the States Reorganisation Committee (SRC) was constituted. It was head by a famous historian and nationalist leader Sardar K. M. Pannicker. The SRC was to examine how the existing provinces and principalities could be reorganized into viable states.

After much discussion the SRC concluded that the only viable alternative to the existing system of provinces and autonomous areas was of forming states on the basis of a common language. Hence Bengal Province was divided into West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Assam. Similarly, Madras Province was divided into Madras (Tamil Nadu) and Andhra Pradesh. Kerala was formed out of the princely states there and parts of Madras province. The Hindi speaking states covered several provinces - United Provinces (UP), Central Provinces (CP) and Patiala and East Punjab States' Union (PEPSU). In the West, there was the large province of Bombay that is now Maharashtra and Gujarat. The Hindi belt was divided into several states as the area it covered was large. Hence we had states of UP, MP, Bihar and Rajasthan.

Since a majority of the states were formed on basis of language, other state that did not get such benefits started agitations for having separate states. The Bombay state was one of these. Finally on 1 May 1960 the two states of Maharashtra and Gujarat were created. Parts of the Bombay state merged with Karnataka.

The support for formation of states based on common language was initially supported by the left forces in the country. These groups comprised communists and socialists. The communists were in favour mainly because of what they thought was the successful division of provinces in Russia on the basis of language. These provinces were declared as autonomous regions.

A major intellectual support for formation of states based on common language was provided by none other than the Father of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. In the "Statement" that he submitted to the Linguistic Provinces Commission in 1948, titled, "Maharashtra as a Linguistic Province," he wrote: "what is the purpose Which lies behind the demand for Linguistic Provinces? ... those who advocate the creation of Linguistic Provinces do so because they believe that the Provinces have different languages and cultures. They should therefore have the fullest scope to develop their languages and their cultures. In other words, the Provinces have all the elements of a distinct nationality and they should be allowed the freedom to grow to their fullest in nationhood." Dr. Ambedkar felt that creation of linguistic states Would in fact enhance national unity. At another place in the same document he argues that the common unity would basically mean the domination of North India over the rest of the country Already, at that time, the South Indian Provinces were pressing for separation. He felt that the only way this could be stopped and the integrity of the country maintained was by allowing each language group to have their

own state so that it could develop its culture and language to the fullest. In this process, the people of this country, who represent different language groups, would feel that they are in integral part of the country.

Religion,

As in language, India has a number of religions. However, there is no single language is spoken by the majority. In the case of religion, Hinduism is the largest religion in the country. It is followed by 85% of the country. The next largest religious group is Islam covering around 12% of the population. All other religions, including, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism etc. constitute 3% of the population.

It should be noted that religion is a very broad and general term. Almost all the religions we speak of have sub-groups. For example, Christians are divided into Catholics and Protestants. The latter are further divided into different sects- Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Lutheran etc. Similarly, Muslims are divided into Shias and Sunnis. There are further sub-groups among these main groups. Among Hindus, these divisions are even more. There are so many local sects and groups that it is difficult to imagine a unification of all Hindus on the basis of one common religion.

The most unique feature of Indian society with regard to religion is that there have not been any major changes in the beliefs of the people over several years. In other words, there have not been any major shifts in religious beliefs in the country. The country has remained predominantly Hindu even though the religion of the rulers had changed. This was not true in the case of other countries. For example, when King Henry VIII, the King of England, renounced the Church of Rome and embraced Protestantism, the whole of England changed faith from Catholic to Protestant. In Spain too the Church is Catholic and so are its people. If we look at other countries we can see that such examples of having a common religion for all people on the basis of the religion of the rulers, is the rule.

India is an exception to this rule. Despite changes in the religion of the rulers, the country by and large remained unchanged. There were Hindu kings followed by Buddhist empires. Later, in the medieval period, the Muslim rulers predominated. In the modern period, the British colonized the country. Despite all these changes the people remained unchanged. This could be due to the fact that the Indian villages were more or less independent. The village, or the neighbouring group of villages, were largely self-sufficient. This helped the village to withstand the changes that were taking place in wider society. Charles Metcalfe, an officer of the British East India Company, wrote in his report to the British Parliament in 1780, "The village community stood impregnable in the face of all foreign invasions, dynastic changes, all violent territorial shifting in inter-state struggles. Kingdoms rose and collapsed but the self sufficient village survived."

We can hence see that thanks to the strength of the village community the people of India were not affected by changes in the wider political arena. This static nature of the community may have contributed to existence over a long period of

time, but it also help consolidate certain undesirable traditions. The only way the village economy could survive was through its economic institution, namely the caste system. The combined strength of the traditional village in its ability to keep all caste based occupations together. Each caste performed specific economic activities that were needed for the functional stability of the system.

The different castes entered into exchange relations with other castes for their goods or services. Thus a barber, performed duties with a circle of other castes. He served the farmer, and got food grains in return, he served the Brahmin who in exchange performed religious services for him. Similarly he had other clients like the weaver who gave cloth in exchange of his services, the washerman, the cobbler etc. how much he gave and what he received in returned was fixed by the community (viz. upper castes in the village). He always gave more and received less from castes that were superior to his. In case of castes lower to his, he received more of performing less work. Each member or household of every caste performed this network of services and duties with a group of clientele. This system was known as the jajmani system. It was a system of economic exchange performed at the village level or within a group of villages. This system did help to maintain the self-sufficiency of the village but it also contributed to maintaining the caste system more rigidly. This is one of the reason why this system does not change despite the changes in modern times.

Not everyone was in praise of this stability. The later social reformers like Tukaram, Kabirdas, Jyotiba Phule and of course Dr. Ambedkar, saw caste as the major stumbling block to social development. In fact, earlier, the eminent thinker Karl Marx had commented strongly: "these idyllic village communities ... had always been the solid foundation of oriental despotism - they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it unresisting to superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional values, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies." He added that these little communities were "contaminated by distinctions of caste and slavery."

Therefore on the one hand, the old traditions and practices were instrumental in maintaining harmony in society but on the other hand these were also responsible for reinforcing social inequality. One of the reasons why the pace of change has been slow is that the practices were in existence for long and hence changing them becomes more difficult.

Religion has been a very contentious issue,, especially in modern times. The same Hindu religion that showed broadminded approach towards other religion is becoming increasing communalized. It is difficult to imagine that a civilization that is so old and is predominantly Hindu, should be afraid or insecure about the existence of other religions.

Regional Integration:

If we look a the diversities in the society we will find that many times there are no similarities between two sections in the same village. For example, what similarity could one find between dalits and upper castes in a village, or between tribals and non-tribals. However these diversities there are similarities and a

tendency towards integration. Traditionally too there were means through which the society was integrated.

First, Indian civilization, unlike other ancient civilizations, was a continuous civilization. In the case of others there was a break in the civilization. For example the ancient civilization of Greece does not exist today. It disappeared over the ages, after Greece accepted Christianity. The same could be said of Rome. The only exception is China that like India has had a continuous civilization. However, unlike India where diverse dynasties ruled, China had mainly one dynasty - Han. This dynasty was the most important one in China. The others were of hardly of any importance. It is this continuity that has provided the strength of India's civilization and at the same time its weakness.

The strength is that there has been a continuity of the cultural character of India over a long period of time. This has helped in evolving a common identity for the country as a whole. The people of India, though separated into regions and languages have some forms of discrete continuities. If one compares society and culture of Kanya kumari, the southern most district of India, with Ladakh, the northern most district, there will hardly be any common features. There will be wide differences in physical features, language, religion and cultural practices. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to imagine how these two extremes have anything in common.

However, between Kanya Kumari and Ladakh there is a vast geographical area populated by different peoples who have common features with their immediate neighbours. For example, Kanya Kumari will have lot in common culturally with parts of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala which are its immediate neighbours. Similarly these regions will have much in common with their immediate neighbours- towards the north. In this way the different regions get linked to each other in a composite whole that is called India.

These continuities have, in fact made the political entity of India as a country possible. It should be noted that India as a political entity was formed during British colonial rule. However the country was not created by the British. There was a growing spirit that showed that there were common cultures and social systems within what is now called India.

There are also many negative aspects of this long time unity. The most important being that this long cultural continuity also meant greater entrenchment of several traditions that go against the fundamental concepts of equality. The caste system has survived for so long and perhaps that is why it is so difficult to get rid of. Traditions that exist over a long period of time usually get well entrenched in the social system and become difficult to eschew even though a new socio-economic order emerges. Under modern industrial society where one's status is expected to be determined by one's achievement and not by one's birth. The persistence of caste as a system in which one's status is based on one's birth runs contradictory to the present system. This in turn causes increase in social tension, especially when the traditionally deprived groups start challenging the traditional order. A lot of India's social problems can be attributed to our somewhat rigid acceptance of caste as a form of stratification.

There are changes no doubt, but their pace needs to increase. Political unity

In the above sections we have discussed about the different aspects of unity and diversity in the country. These factors are important for creating a common identity of being Indian. However there has to be a means through which this unity through diversity is maintained. This is through the Constitution of India that gives enough scope and opportunity for the fulfillment of ones diverse linguistic, cultural and religious needs. The Constitution grants special rights to religious, linguistic and cultural minorities in the country. They not only have the freedom to practise their religion, speak and be educated in their own language and they can maintain their specific cultural traits. In simple terms this means that a person whose religion does not constitute the majority religion of the state has every right to practise his religion. The state has to provide special privileges for this purpose. This means that Christians, Muslims, Sikhs etc. who reside in states where Hindus are majority, will be provided special privileges to ensure that they can practice their religion. Similarly Bengalis and Kannadiga in Maharashtra have every right to speak their language. The state also provides for Bengali and Kannada medium schools for their children's education. Similarly these minority communities will have the right to practice their common traditions such as observing their new year, certain important festivals that may not coincide with the festivals of Maharashtra. The founding fathers of our Constitution had envisioned that only if diversities were recognized and minority rights were granted, the country could maintain its unity.

Another striking feature of our country is that we are one of the very few developing countries that chose the democratic path based on universal adult franchise and we have maintained our democracy right from the first elections in 1952. If we look at our neighbours who were also independent of colonial rule at the same time, we will find that they frequently lapsed into dictatorship. In South Asia, only India and Sri Lanka have remained wedded to the democratic tradition since their independence. It is not just South Asia, but very few countries in the world have such an unbroken record. This is certainly one of the major features accounting for the unity of this country.

Concluding observations:

We have seen from the above that in very few countries do we witness such diversities as in India. There are differences in language, religion, regional characteristics and economy in the country. However this form of diversity is what keeps the unity of the country intact. The diversities that we have in our country were not created by any one. They were not created by design, They are things that happened in the natural way. The ecological, geographic and socio-economic factors gave rise to specific socio-economic formations across the country. The acceptance of this diversity is what keeps the country together.

Had the present political rulers tried to superimpose a unity within the country the situation would worsen. This superimposition could be in the form of common language, common religion or common cultural practices. This would have definitely led to divisions in the country and it would have ruptured its unity. It

may have led to further divisions within the

country. In fact the main issue is on how to maintain the diversity of the country within the democratic fabric of the country. We have done this so far, but there is more effort needed. We are still divided on the basis of caste, religion and other barriers. The democratic structure helps in counteracting these fissiparous tendencies. In fact every election shows that the common people of India want to live in peace and in unity because they reject those forces that try to create divisions on the basis of language, caste and religion. These acts show that India has emerged as a mature democratic country.

Suggested Readings:

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EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA

Objectives:

In this unit we will learn about the emergence of sociology in India through the works of three prominent scholars namely, Patrick Geddes, G. S. Ghurye and A. R. Desai. The objective is to delineate the contributions of these scholars in understanding Indian society. Their works provide three distinct perspectives and approaches on three different dimensions of social life, each of which dominated the study of Indian society for years to come.

G. S. Ghurye: Caste and Race:

The caste system has been a subject of research from-British times. The British were confronted with a system of stratification that seemed unique to the Indian subcontinent. The earliest works on the caste system sought to comprehend its origin and nature. Caste as a system of stratification, with its strict emphases on caste purity and exclusivity, seemed similar to race. This led many to regard race as the basis of caste distinctions. It is in the context of the ensuing debate over the origin and basis of the caste system that G. S. Ghurye's contribution is consequential. He laid bare the limitations with the theory of racial origins of the caste system and ascertained physical affinity of different caste groups within a region.

There were broadly two disparate views on the caste system. One view traced the basis of caste distinctions to occupational differences. Denzil Ibbetson and J. C. Nesfield subscribed to this view. Both maintained that caste distinctions were mainly occupational in nature. It was a system, which over time, took the form of guilds and subsequently became exclusive and stratified into castes. Both Ibbetson and Nesfield asserted the essential unity of the Indian race thereby arguing that India comprises of one racial group across caste and regions.

Unsatisfied by the existing evidence on the origin of caste, Herbert Risley (1891) sought to collect anthropometrics; data on North Indian castes. The data revealed that neither Brahmins nor Chamars (Untouchables) among themselves were a uniform physical type. And yet he observed that a hierarchy of physical types does correspond with the existing caste hierarchy. His study was inconclusive due to insufficient measuring techniques. Risley could only demonstrated the actual distribution of physicals types over the northern region but did not correlate racial affinities with caste groups. Such an exercise, according to Ghurye, required a ethnological study of India.

The institution of caste is generally traced to the invasion of the Aryans around 2000 BC. Ghurye rephrased the question of caste and race around this historical fact. He sought to examine the claim that upper castes, especially Brahmins, were racially closer to the Aryans and therefore distinct from the aborigine lower castes of India. He too employed anthropometric methods to investigate these physical characteristics of castes across regions. He based his study on two assumptions. The first was that the Aryan type would be long-headed and fine-nosed, measurable through the cephalic and nasal index, which varies between 70 to 75 and 65 to 75 respectively. The second assumption was in relation to the aboriginal type. This type was attributed with broad-noses, with a nasal index above 80.

His findings were significant; as they dispelled the myth that race was the basis of caste distinctions. By comparing castes of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Punjab, Bihar, Bengal, Bombay and Madras, he illustrated that higher and lower castes within a region had greater physical affinity than upper castes across regions. Concomitantly, the classification of physical types is distinct from the social hierarchy of castes. This put into question the theory of the migration of 'Aryan' Brahmins across India and the physical separateness of Brahmins from other lower castes. The caste hierarchy does not suggest the racial and physical superiority of upper castes against the lower castes. Ghurye's findings also challenged the notion that India was comprised of one common race. Instead, he arrived at his own classification of the Hindu population in India, though he maintained that none of the identified physical types existed in their pure form in the present.

He classified the population into six main physical types: a) The indo-Aryan type; b) pre-Dravida; c) the Dravidian type; d) the Western; e) the Munda; f) the Mongoloid. The Indo Aryan type is confined mainly to north India. The Munda are concentrated in the Chotanagpur region. The forest tribes of south India are the pre-Dravida. Kerala and Tamil Nadu are largely Dravidian, while the western type are found along the western coast till the northern limits of Malabar, in Mysore, Andhra Pradesh and the whole of Maharashtra. The Mongoloids are found around the Himalayas, Nepal, Assam and Bengal. Ghurye's classification identified physical types on the basis of region rather than caste or community.

Thus Ghurye, through his work on caste and race, challenged the predominant racial interpretations of caste. He provided a strong critique to the colonialist interpretation of the caste system. He questioned not only the assumption that Indians constituted one race, but also that the caste hierarchy corresponded to a hierarchy of racial types. Ghurye asserted the diversity of Indians as a people while simultaneously associating this diversity to social and cultural reasons rather than with race.

His contribution to the understanding of caste and race is still quoted and challenged in the context of an ongoing controversy over caste and race. For many scholars, especially Dalit scholars, the rise and success of the low caste movement

But many scholars have drawn attention to the problems with such a categorization. They emphasize on the factual incorrectness of this postulation as well as the divisive consequences of the same on Indian society. The tussle between race and caste therefore is far from settled, though the scope of the debate has diversified over the decades.

Reference: Ghurye, G. S. 1969 (fifth edition). Caste and Race in India. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

A. R. Desai-Marxist Approach:

A. R. Desai's contribution to the study of peasant and agrarian struggles in India is pioneering. He concentrated on the category of class, rather than caste, to understand the nature of stratification in India. He provided a Marxist interpretation of the Indian reality. Desai focused on the responses of the countryside or rural areas to the changes in property relations and conditions of life introduced by the British and later in post-independent India. He cited numerous examples of protests and revolts through the 19th and the 20th century in his books titled Peasant Struggles in India and Agrarian Struggles in India after Independence to illustrate this fact.

The books, according to him, were intended to sub serve a number of objectives. They contest the popular assumption about rural people as docile, fatalistic, superstitious, unresisting, passive and peoples averse to change. Ensamples of peasant and agrarian struggles not only suggest the social and economic dynamics of rural life but also the will to change among the people. Many of these struggles actively participated, supported and contributed to the national movement. For him, the rural population was not homogeneous and was differentiated on the basis of their relation to land. These struggles also drew attention to the oppressive economic conditions of the rural poor. By examining the role and nature of peasant struggles, Desai sought to criticize the dominant official position that these struggles are disintegrative, anomic and dysfunctional phenomena. He disagreed with the view that agrarian and peasant struggles obstruct development and modernization of the countryside and therefore are problems' associated with the internal security of the country. Rather, he argued that these struggles were a response to the disintegrative and oppressive economic and social conditions introduced during the colonial period and unheeded thereafter. But most importantly, his work has a contribution to an Indian Marxist historiography. Peasant and agrarian conflicts were, for him, integral to his theory of change for the countryside. Discussed below is a summary of his theory on rural transformation.

The term 'peasantry' has been variously understood and the broadest meaning given to the term is a group consisting of small agricultural subsistence producers, who use simple equipment and family labour for cultivation. Desai however disagreed with this definition, as it confused different categories of rural population into subsistence farmers. It failed to accommodate the Marxian theory of change. Marx classified the rural population into landlords, absentee or otherwise, rich and poor peasants and the class of the agrarian proletariat. The recognition of different categories of peasants provides for the contradiction

to emerge between the propertied and the landless, which would finally lead to revolution and change. Desai introduces Lenin's two-stage concept of 'revolution' to explain rural change and transformation. The first revolution or the bourgeois democratic revolution would incorporate the 'whole of peasantry against the landlords and feudalism. Once the feudal order is demolished, the state is set for the second revolution or the socialist revolution led by the poor peasants against capitalism and the capitalist propertied agrarian class. He characterizes peasant struggles in the pre-independence phase as the bourgeois democratic revolution, as the struggles included the large mass of the rural population.

He distinguished between peasant struggles in the pre-independence phase and agrarian struggles after independence. Peasant struggles include struggles carried on in areas that have ceased to be a part of India and are now a part of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The character of peasant struggles also varied from one land tenure system to another. In Zamindari areas, peasant struggles included the entire chain of sub-tenants and intermediaries between the landlord and the actual cultivator of the land, while in Ryotwari areas the struggles included the categories of the rich and the middle peasants. In tribal areas, the struggles largely concentrated on the issue of the erosion of tribal rights on land and forests. As peoples who lived in close interaction with the natural environment, the denial of rights and control over land and forests directly impinged on their way of life.

With independence, princely states have been dissolved and there has been a political reconfiguration of India along linguistic lines. Many of the struggles within these states have dissolved or no longer exist in their original form. In independent India, land reforms further polarized class distinctions. Land reform is a state subject and therefore each state had its own definition of what it meant by 'actual tiller of the land'. Though reforms did cut into the holdings of absentee and large landowners, it was not even through out India. The provision of retaining land by paying compensation allowed a class of rich tenants to reap the benefits of the reforms. It broadened the base of the propertied class consisting of landlords and rich peasants and further pauperized and proletarianized the small farmer and the landless laborers. With marginal or no land, a large mass of the rural population had no option but to become agricultural wage labourers. He prefers to use the term 'agrarian poor' as against 'peasant' to refer to this large mass of pauperized unemployed or poorly paid agricultural workers. In doing so, he differentiates between the peasant revolutions of colonial times, which involved the rich peasantry in their struggle against the colonial rulers and the feudal relations of production in rural areas.

He further categorized agrarian struggles into two main types: Movements initiated by the rich farmers or the propertied class mainly to gain facilities and benefits from the government and those launched by the agrarian poor against the propertied class and the industrial and agricultural policies of the State. The goals of modernization and economic development sought through these policies essentially cater to the proprietary classes. The agrarian poor have been unable to avail of infrastructure, technological and credit facilities, as these are unevenly distributed across classes. Officially, sponsored village level

associations such as vikas mandals (development related associations), mahila mandals (women's groups), youth organizations and village panchayats are all dominated by the propertied classes. It is the agrarian struggles of the second kind launched by the agrarian poor that would initiate the second revolution or the socialist revolution to overthrow the propertied capitalist agrarian class structure to establish socialism.

Desai's work signified a shift from a static, synchronic view of Indian society to a perspective that captured processes of change and transformation. He, like other scholars of his time, was greatly concerned about the iniquitous economic and social conditions in India. But unlike many scholars, he looked upon the simmering discontent in rural areas as well as the agrarian unrest that marked various parts of the country positively. He pinned hopes for a socialist revolution in these upheavals. He thereby provided an alternative view of the State and society in India, which holds relevance in the study of Indian society even today.

Patrick Geddes - Urban Ecology:

Patrick Geddes' first visit to Bombay was in 1914-15, when he was invited to hold a series of public lectures in Bombay University. He accepted the post of professor in Bombay University in 1919. His distinctive presence was noticeable from the very start of his spell as a teacher in the University. Though a sociologist by vocation, he was known less within his discipline and more among geographers, town planners and natural scientists. Unfortunate as this might be, it is also not surprisingly. He had his own vision on the study of society, which was not confined within what may be considered as the 'conventional' boundaries of sociology as a discipline. And yet, he was known for his strong views on sociology as a discipline, pedagogy and practice: a science that encompasses all other disciplines and fields of study. It is this holism that, he sought in the study of society, which expanded the scope of his study beyond sociology and the social sciences. He tried to integrate this vision in his work on urban ecology.

He belonged to the generation that witnessed the first ill effects of industrialization and urbanization and its impact on human relationships. The mushrooming of slums, overcrowding of cities and the related problems of health, provisions for civic amenities such as clean drinking water, sewage disposal, and electricity, and sanitation demanded immediate relief and redress. Unlike some of his contemporaries, he did not have a mechanistic approach to these problems. He did not subscribe to the view that the only way to tackle these problems was to clear the city of slums and the ugliness that accompany it. Evicting people and clearing spaces does not solve the problem, as a city has the need for these people it houses as much as they depend on the city for their livelihood. For him, the city is more like an organism: it is difficult to cut off its organs, on which many of its functions depend. The real challenge is to find appropriate places in the city for various categories of people who are integral to city life and its functioning. Also, city life cannot be understood away from its natural and social environment. He proposed an alternative to the study of the city. He emphasized the importance of understanding the history of a city, its

growth and expansion thereby also comprehending the role and influence of its geography. This approach to the city would finally provide an insight into the life processes of the city in the present. This comprehensive grip over the past and present of the city would unravel the possibilities of negotiating with distinctive and specific character of the city and its inhabitants.

The 'Survey of Cities', which we thus reach, must take in all aspects, contemporary as well as the historic. It must be geographic and economic, anthropological and historical, demographic and eugenic, and so on: above all, its aim towards the reunion of these studies, in terms of social science, as "Civics" (in Abrams 1968: 267-8).

He identified sociology as 'civics', or as a synthesis of disciplines in the Comtean sense. For Comte, sociology unlike the natural sciences such as chemistry and physics was not an exact science and nor is its subject matter definite. Sociology conjoins aspects of all sciences. A feature, which for most sociologists put into question sociology's status as science and was therefore problematic, was for Geddes, the specialty of sociology. It was in Fredric Le Play's formulation that he discovered his method for reconciling the dichotomy of the natural and social sciences in the study of society. He borrowed Le Play's three units for the study of society: Place, work and people or to put in disciplinary terms. Geography, Economics and Anthropology. The place, that is its geographic location, delimits the conditions and possibilities of work, which in turn determines the nature and character of family life and social relationships. The nature of social and familial relationship configures the environment (both natural and social) as well as the organization and quality of work.

It is for similar reasons that he was against a standard method of teaching. Classroom teaching was for him a partial pedagogic exercise. He believed that teaching, sociology or urban ecology for that matter is incomplete without field studies, practical work and exposure to the real conditions of life. Infact, in 1892, he - founded the 'world's first sociological laboratory' in England as a civic and regional museum. The museum housed a collection of maps, photographs, and projections to present various facets of cities and its problems. As a part of his teaching programme in Bombay University in 1914-5, Saturdays were reserved for field visits. He would take his students out on excursions through Mumbai City educating them about different aspects of city life and culture.

This he thought was essential because he was against the imposition of solutions before an in depth analyses of the problems. He argued that, unlike the practice of medicine and public health, which proposes diagnosis before treatment, city administrators prescribe solutions to urban problems even before understanding the problem at hand and shy away from seeking help of the civic sociologist. In his capacity as a town planner and an urban ecologist, he underlined the importance of seeking details on the city. A survey of city should then entail not only a life history of its community life, its past and its present, but also a sense of its 'soul'. For Geddes, a planner who only sees similarity of cities is no planner. He would be at most a 'too-simple engineer', with a mechanistic approach towards an inhabited space. Town planning calls upon

the artist in the planner, in his ability to see the beauty of the city with the view to enhance the same.

Geddes displayed tremendous sensitivity towards architectural traditions and symbols of the city. In his ten years stay in pre-independence India, he surveyed Indian cities and towns extensively. Though he was concerned about the lack of sanitary regulations, congestion, and unhealthy living conditions in Indian towns, he made a note of the cultural and religious symbols, monuments and habits unique to different cities and its inhabitants. For example, he was fascinated by the privileged space given to the tulsi plant in the courtyard of Hindu houses. He was impressed by the traditional architecture and planning in the temple towns of south India. He had a knack of translating traditional practices and customs into the media for initiating under reforms. He looked upon the Jagannath festival of Puri favourably. He was of the opinion that the festival ensured the maintenance of good roads, prevented small vendors from making permanent encroachments on the streets as well as encouraged community and civic participation.

People's participation was, for him, the key to maintaining healthy and clean urban spaces and that required understanding the life processes of the people. He recognized the importance of initiating reforms in consultation with people in order for them to be sustainable in the long run. A case in point is the cleanliness drive he initiated in the plague and malaria infested conditions of Indore in 1918. as a white, he was not looked upon kindly and was sneered at as the 'Saheb who brought the plague'. Undeterred, he approached the Maharaja and sought permission to declare a special festival on the day of Diwali. The idea was to take out a procession through the city on Diwali. He purposely kept the route of the procession a secret. The general condition was that the procession would go through those streets that are clean and well maintained. This set off the entire city in action. People got together to clean their respective lanes and by-lanes. The grand procession on the day of Diwali did not disappoint the people. It was a parade of cavalry~ infantry, elephants, and horses, followed by a tableau of the city ridden by poverty and plague. After a brief interval, the parade changed its character: from the visuals of plague and poverty, the mood was reset for celebration. Cheerful music led the civic procession of labourers, sweepers, the police, officials, the mayor and finally the Maharaja and Geddes himself. From the Saheb who 'brought' the plague, Geddes became the harbinger of the cleanliness drive through community participation.

The import of his vision on urban planning and ecology is felt now than ever before. The haphazard growth of cities and a disregard of the urban environment have made Indian cities some of the most polluted cities of the world. The 'Green City' campaigns in the leading metropolises of the country mark a return to Geddes' vision of creating and maintaining gardens and green belts as an essential part of the urban environment. Similarly, the decentralized urban bodies could well gain from Geddes's experiments with community participation to give better effect to the hygiene and sanitary concerns of the city. It is the human dimension of his work that continues to have a universal and an everlasting

appeal.

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Conclusion:

In this unit, an attempt has been made to present specific contributions of three different scholars to the study of society. Each of them might represent a different age and time, but the relevance of their contribution is still felt in the social sciences. They were known to be radicals of their times; vocal about their views and bold about their position on matters concerning their field of study. Ghurye had the distinction of cutting across the disciplinary confines of sociology and social anthropology and was as accomplished in his research on rural India and caste as he was in his study of urban areas and associations. His views on caste and race challenged the dominant, colonial views of the times. A. R. Desai similarly questioned the elitist position on the large population of the Indian peasantry. For him, the static view of rural India was unacceptable. He presented a fresh perspective on the simmering discontent in the countryside, though he did not shy away from enumerating the limitations of peasant resistance. Patrick Geddes not only stressed on the humane side of urban development, but also restored faith in the community for urban reforms. He laid emphasis on field action, both as a part of the teaching exercise and as a practitioner. All of them were pioneers in their respective fields and have inspired generations of scholars by their thought and perspective on Indian society.

STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF CASTE

Objectives:

This chapter aims to explain the meaning and concept of caste. The complex structure of caste is sought to be understood through the views and studies of sociologists Ghurye and Louis Dumont.

Concepts:

The term Varma is used in this chapter which is explained subsequently in Ghurye and Dumont's analysis of caste in India.

Introduction:

The caste system is a system of social stratification unique to India. The word "caste" comes from the Portuguese word "casta" which means race or breed or a complex of hereditary qualities. In the Rig Veda, in the Purushasukta hymn, there is a reference to four orders of society as arising from the sacrifice of the Primeval Being. They are named as Brahmana, (Brahmin, traditionally priest and scholar), Rajanya (Kshatriya, ruler and soldier), Vaishya (merchant), and Shudra (peasant, labourer and servant), who are said to have come from the mouth, arms, thighs, and the feet of the creator.

The caste system regulated interaction among groups of people, including marriage and occupation. Therefore in one sense the rigidity prescribed made it quite difficult for mobility to occur though it maintained a certain order in society. However with industrialization and urbanization lot of changes have had to occur in the caste system in order to meet the demands of the present situation and condition.

Sociologists Ghurye and Dumont's analysis serve to facilitate an indepth understanding of the complex features of the caste system.

Ghurye's views on caste:

Ghurye notes that the origins of caste can be traced to the Gangetic plains of India as a result of the Indo Aryan invasion in ancient times. Thus Ghurye states that, "Caste in India is a Brahmanic child of Indo Aryan culture, cradled in the land of the Ganga and Yamuna and thence transferred to other parts of the country."

Ghurye contends that the indigenous non Aryan races were subdued by the Aryan conquerors and conquered races became the Shudras. These groups were debarred from sharing the religious and social activities of the Indo Aryans. He notes "The various factors that characterize caste society were a result, in the first instance, of the attempts on the part of the upholders of the Brahmanic civilization to exclude the aboriginals and Shudras from religious and social communion with themselves."

Ghurye noted that the term Varna literally meant colour and the initial distinctions among groups was on two varnas based on skin colour. These were the fair skinned (and hence superior) Aryans and the dark skinned Dasas. Ghurye notes that in the Rigveda only these two varnas are mentioned. It is only in the later Vedic age that the concept of the four varnas came into. He also states that the distinction between Arya and Dasa was changed to Arya and Shudra. The four fold varna system, based on colour, gave way to the elaborate system of Jati which comprised a large number of groups based on occupational specialization, endogamy and hierarchy.

Ghurye saw the caste system as a hierarchical system of separate units (i.e. caste) Each of these units were further divided and subdivided into independent smaller units comprising the subcastes. Each of these subcastes maintained their distinctness through the practice of endogamy in marriage. The hierarchical pattern was maintained through degrees of social distance maintained from each other in matters of food, water, social and ritual privileges. The Brahmin was not only at the top but was also the apex of the system of ritual purity. The untouchables were at the bottom.

The features of caste system mentioned by Ghurye are as follows:

1 Segmental division of Society:

The entire society or village community was not a homogenous group but was divided into definite segments of castes and subcastes, the membership of which was determined not by section but by birth. The social status and occupation were controlled by the caste into which one was born and was expected to remain unchanged till death. Even a change in occupation of the subcaste did not change its social status. For example when Chamakars (those working with hides) became agricultural labourers, their status in the caste hierarchy remained the same.

Every segment (subcaste) had a well developed style of its own. It had its own traditional caste occupation and rules which were organized through its caste panchayat. It was the duty of this body to ensure that the rules were strictly adhered to. Thus when the Brahmins did not accept food or drink from the lower castes, they were expected to ensure that its members did not 'defile' the Brahmins by offering them food or coming in contact with them. These Panchayats were semi judicial bodies as they dealt not only with general social life of its members but also with certain offences committed by its members. Some of the offences dealt by caste Panchayat were:

- 1) Eating, drinking or having similar dealings with castes that are forbidden for such matters.
- 2) Keeping as concubine a woman of another caste
- 3) Seduction or adultery with a married woman
- 4) Sexual intercourse between unmarried persons
- 5) Refusal to fulfill a promise of marriage
- 6) Refusal to send a wife to her husband when she is old enough
- 7) Refusal to maintain a wife
- 8) Non payments of debts
- 9) Breaches of the customs of trade
- 10) Killing of a cow or any forbidden animal
- 11) Insulting a Brahmin
- 12) Defying the customs of the caste panchayat on various occasions such as marriages and other ceremonies

The various punishments that were given by the caste panchayat to its members were:

- (i) To Outcaste or throw a member out of the caste either temporarily or permanently
- (ii) To impose fines
- (iii) A member could be compelled to give a feast to his caste members
- (iv) Corporal punishments
- (v) Sometimes religious expiation

2. Hierarchy:

One of the principal characteristic of caste was the organization of independent structures into hierarchical structures. These hierarchies were predetermined and even though there may be several views about the origins of these discriminations, the basic fact remained that they were there and the Brahmins was at the head of the hierarchy. Ghurye admitted that besides this no other statement could be made about the order to ranking of castes. There were a large number of castes or subcastes in various parts of the country. Many of these could not be compared to other castes in another region. Ghurye assessed that there were around 200 castes for each linguistic group.

3. Commensality:

There are two means through which castes are separated from each other in a hierarchy. Firstly social intercourse was not freely permitted among all castes. Untouchability was widely practiced and the members of a caste would become polluted if they had physical contact with members of castes considered as lower in status to them. Secondly, in food too an elaborate system of pollution was followed. There were taboos regarding acceptance and consummation of cooked and uncooked food and water. Certain castes could accept cooked food from other caste members but not from a caste considered lower. The degree to which cooked food, uncooked food and water could be accepted between members of two castes depended on the extent of social distance between them.

Based on the above distinctions, Ghurye gave five broad categories into which castes were divided. These were:

- 1 . Twice born castes. These referred to those castes whose members could wear the sacred thread (the thread ceremony symbolized their second birth) and referred mainly to Brahmins.
2. The caste at whose hands the twice born could take cooked food.
3. Castes at whose hand twice born castes could not accept any kind of food (cooked or uncooked) but could accept, water from them.
4. Castes that were not untouchables but from whom the twice born could not accept water. In other words if the twice born came in physical contact with them the former would not be polluted but they would be if they took food or water from them.
5. Castes whose touch not only defiles the twice born but all other castes above them. These were the untouchable castes.

4. Inability to Change Occupation:

The occupation of a person is fixed from birth. A person is born into an occupation, he does not choose his occupation according to his interests or abilities. For example, if a person is born into a family of carpenters, he becomes a carpenter when he grows up. There are no schools or institutions to teach him his trade. He learns this at home from his father and kinsfolk. Moreover, he cannot change his profession even if he thinks that he will perform better in some other occupation.

The status of a person is fixed according to his occupation. It is his occupation and not his ability or personality that decides his social status. This is in effect his position in the caste hierarchy. Thus we can say that the person's position in society, his social status, is decided by the caste he is born into.

The role of caste in determining occupation and social status is something unique to our society. Determination of status by caste basically means that one's status is determined not by one's ability but by the family one is born into. Such a situation did exist in all societies that were in the pre-industrial age. For example, in Medieval Europe, the status of a person was ascribed by birth. Thus the son of a feudal lord, irrespective of his ability, would become a feudal lord, just as the son of a king would become king. Similarly, the son of a serf, the tenant or worker, of feudal lord, would become a serf, irrespective of his ability.

The difference between the above system and the caste system is that after the system changed, due to industrialization, achievement became the criterion for determining one's economic and social status. In other words, one could change one's occupation, It was not necessary to follow the family occupation anymore. Indian society too has undergone similar changes. The son of a Brahmin need not be engaged in conducting his caste duties. He could even

become manager of a leather factory. Similarly, the son of a Dalit could, through his efforts, become a college or university lecturer. Ghurye however admits that though the economic status of castes may change, the social status remains the same. He gives the example of two soldiers in the army, one is from an untouchable caste while the other is an upper caste. Though both have the same status and possibly the same careers, their status in society would not be the same because of their caste differences.

5. Restrictions on marriage:

The culmination of the caste system can be seen through the strict observation of endogamy. Marriages take place within the caste. In fact in most cases the subcaste is more important. For example, Bengali Brahmins are divided into two groups, Kulin and Raadi. In traditional society, marriages between the two groups were avoided. Similarly, among other castes too marriage is restricted among the specific caste. A Charkar will not give his son in marriage to a Dhor's daughter, though both castes deal in leather. Caste panchayats play an important role in ensuring that marriages are restricted within the caste groups.

Endogamy is an important means of perpetuating the caste divisions. This in fact ensures that even after changes in occupation, the status continues. The example that Ghurye gave (noted earlier) about the social status of two soldiers belonging to different castes, becomes a reality in the case of marriage. Even if the soldiers are of the same rank, the child of one would not marry the child of the other. Similarly a Brahmin, on migrating to the city, becomes a taxi driver. He does not own the taxi, but he hires it from an owner who has several more taxis. This owner is of a lower caste. The Brahmin taxi driver, though economically inferior to the taxi owner, would not give his son's hand in marriage to the owner's daughter because of the caste differences. Therefore one can see that the caste restrictions on marriage cut across status divisions.

Ghurye's findings show that caste is not a simple form of gradation of society. It is fairly complex, involving a variety of factors, that in effect, help to maintain its hierarchy. The caste system operated in all aspects of life. Caste distinctions and untouchability were not prevalent only in religious functions and rituals but in civil life as well. In marriage, strict rules of caste endogamy were observed. Occupations were also based on caste lines which were prescribed by the higher castes. Thus they had no choice in deciding Occupations.

Ghurye's work on castes was largely ethnographic. He noted in detail the various aspects of the caste system and then tried to analyse his data. In the process he explored the basis of the origins of the caste system, which he felt was based on the multiplicity of races and the superiority of the Aryans over the other races. In his analysis of caste he found that the whole system was centred around the interpretations provided by the Brahmins as they were at the apex of the system. His analysis is mainly a Brahminical interpretation of caste. We can now turn to another author and his work on the caste system, namely, Louis Dumont.

Louis Dumont's analysis of caste:

Dumont is a French sociologist whose work "Homo Hierarchicus: The caste system and its implications" created great deal of interest. Published first in 1970, the study will enjoys wide popularity among sociologists. This study has been defended by sociologists like T. N. Madan and Satish Sabarwal, while a host of others including M. N. Srinivas, Andre Beteille, Gerald Berreman, Joan Mencher and others have been equally strong in criticizing it. It is reputed to be the most systematic exponent of the dominant conceptual view of the caste system.

Dumont views the caste system as a hierarchy which is unique to Indian society. According to his understanding the caste system is a single hierarchy which is divided into four varnas. The Brahmins who are the priests are at the top followed by the next varna of the Kshatriya, the warriors. The Vaishya or the traders from the third varma, followed by the Shudras who did the manual labour. There is also the fifth varna, namely the untouchables. The hierarchy formed by these Vamas have some specific features.

Dumont defines the caste system as a system of ideas and values which is viewed as a formal, comprehensive and rational system based on a hierarchy. He goes on to define this hierarchy. He finds that the varnas are ranked in relation to the whole society. This makes them acceptable to all parts of the country. The higher varnas encompass those below them. The status of each varna is determined by those encompassed by it. Those encompassing other varnas are more important than those which are encompassed. In other words the large the number encompassed by a varna the higher is its status. The Brahmins occupy the highest status because they encompass the largest number of varnas or castes. The untouchables fall at the bottom of the hierarchy as they are encompassed by all other vamas or castes.

Dumont distinguishes the caste based hierarchy from social stratification in other societies because the basis of hierarchy is different. The caste hierarchy found in Indian Society is not based on secular forces and on politics. It is based exclusively on ritualistic purity. The status a caste occupies in the hierarchy is based on its ritual status and not on the political or economic power it enjoys. The higher the ritual status the higher is the position in the hierarchy.

Dumont's classification therefore makes a distinction between caste and class. Social classes are a result of the unequal distribution of political and economic resources. Those classes which have greater access to these resources are ranked higher in the class hierarchy as compared to those classes which have lesser access to the same resources. In the case of caste however it is the ritual status and not the control over economic or political resources that gives a caste its position in the hierarchy. Thus the Brahmins may not have control over land or political power, but they occupy the dominant position because of their ritual status.

While further elaborating on the role of rituals status, Dumont asserts that purity and pollution from binary opposites on which this system is based. The segregation of people especially the untouchables, based on the notion of pure and impure, makes this system not only unique but also permanent. Massive categories of people are made permanently impure because of the work they specialized in (scavenging, removal and treatment of hides etc) This notion of impurity, continued even after many of these people gave up their traditional activities and took up other activities which are considered cleaner. Thus this form of opposition based on purity and pollution or impurity is functional in maintaining the system of hierarchy. Dumont finds that the caste system is a religious ranking that classifies things and beings according to their degree of dignity.

At the same time Dumont contends that dignity, purity and ritual status do not fully form the principle of hierarchy. This power structure is however sustained by the castes which are ranked accordingly to their status. This means that it is the status of a caste which gives it power and not its control over material resources. Hence even though Brahmins may not own land, they enjoy power because of their status in the hierarchy.

Dumont found that this kind of hierarchy was based on inequality but it did not necessarily follow that it was exploitative. He felt that inequalities should not be equated to exploitation. The inequality in the caste system is a part of the values of Hindu society. In other words, all members irrespective of the fact whether they are pure or impure, accept this system as functionally stable. Therefore it is a reality. Exploitation would presume that one section of the people (the exploiters) impose their views and their will on the others (the exploited). If this were the case the system would have been challenged during the course of history by the exploited castes. This did not happen as the caste system had existed for several centuries. This therefore signified that this was a system which was accepted by all and it was not regarded as an exploitative system.

Criticism of Dumont:

There are many points of criticism of Dumont's work. Dumont mainly stresses on two aspects of hierarchy in Hindu society. First, that hierarchy is based on ritual purity of the caste concerned and not on material wealth. In other words the Brahmin is at the top of the hierarchy because of his ritual status and not because he control property and wealth. Secondly, the hierarchy is based on status but it is not exploitative. Each caste in the hierarchy is rewarded according to its status. This also means that the reward for each cast depends on its importance to society as a whole. In this way, the caste system is based on hierarchy but it is not based on exploitation.

While critically evaluating Dumont's views, we shall deal mainly with two works that more or less cover the main point. These are by G. D. Berreman and Joan Mencher. Both are anthropologists who have done extensive fieldwork in India and among the different caste groups.

Berrernan says that there are various views on caste. It all depends on how and from which view you look at the hierarchy. He states that Dumont has taken purely a view from the top. In other words his analysis reflects the Brahmanical view of caste. He questions the basic fact of Dumont, that each caste is rewarded according to its importance in the hierarchy. Providing sustenance according to status is itself a form of exploitation, Berreman says. The sustenance of those at the top is always provided by those at the bottom. It is the hard work of the low-caste agricultural laborers that actually leads to the agricultural crop. Yet these people are rewarded less, because being poor and low in the hierarchy, their needs are decided as being less than those of the upper castes. Hence the upper castes get more for working less whereas the labour get less for working more. Dumont finds that Dumont only looks at the positive aspects of the caste system. He ignores or over looks the negative aspects. This, he states, is like praising Britain for (at one time) ruling over the world, without discussing the exploitation of the colonies during colonial rule.

Another point that Berreman stresses on is the fact that Dumont emphasizes that the caste system is unique and that it does not exist outside the Indian sub-continent. This he says is not true. There are other systems in the world, especially in the developed world, where similar processes take place- For example just as one's birth (the status of the caste one is born in) determines one's life chances, in the same way if one is born in a black family in USA one's life chances are different from/Worse than the life chances of those born in white families. Similarly if one is born in an aristocratic family in Britain, one's life chances are certainly better than those of common people. Hence being born in a particular family is more important than the physical features.

Dumont has noted while justifying the existence of the caste system for so many centuries as a sign of its acceptance by the people. Berren-san points out that this is not correct. There have been movements against the prevailing caste relations for centuries. For example, 600 years before Christ, Gautam Buddha raised his voice against caste exploitation. His new religion (Buddhism) was based on equality of all humanity This was his answer to caste based hierarchy. Similarly, there were other movements like the Bhakti movement, movements led by Sant Tukaram, Rohidas, Kabir etc. at different times in history. By Denying the existence of such movements Dumont has been unjust to the common people of India who have struggled for over 2,000 years against this oppressive system.

The other major criticism is by Joan Mencher, Her main point is that caste based occupations, as stressed by Dumont do not always exist. Her researches show that many times the upper castes (mainly Brahmans) label certain castes as untouchable because of the needs of the land holders in the region. She finds that the number of untouchable castes are more in areas that are irrigated, because the land holders in these areas need more labour for their farms. These are also areas where the land holdings are large, in other words there are large land lords in these areas. One can find this situation in the Eastern part of India (Eastern U. R, Bihar, West Bengal Orissa). In these areas the number of untouchable castes are also higher.

Mencher explains the reason thus: In wet-land areas there is more need for labour as the land is more fertile. The main way of getting cheap labour is from the castes branded as untouchable. These castes are kept in the outskirts of the village, they require very little resources for building houses. Because of the low status, their material needs such as clothes and other things - utensils, implements etc. - are minimal. At the same time they are expected to work more to appease their upper caste masters. Hence, by keeping a large section of people as untouchable, the land lords were able to get maximum work from them at minimum costs. In fact one will find in these areas that castes engaged in cultivation are labeled as untouchable, In other regions such castes would not be untouchable.

Mencher finds that in dry-land areas, such as Maharashtra and parts of Tamil Nadu, the number of untouchable castes are less. For example in Maharashtra the percentage of Scheduled castes (who are the ex-untouchable castes) from 12% of the state's population. This is below the national average where the Scheduled Castes form 15% of the population. Similarly in West Bengal Scheduled Castes form nearly 20% of the population, which is 5% higher than the national average. Hence Mencher concludes that there are fixed hierarchies. Castes that are not untouchable in one place become untouchable in other places. Hence one cannot take a generalized view of caste hierarchy. On the contrary the local variation is more important.

Conclusion:

The caste system thus characterized by hierarchy, restrictions on food and social intercourse and caste endogamy does seem to be quite restrictive. According to some scholars however, the caste system has been grossly degraded by 19th century colonialist historians who saw only its surface rigidities and made sweeping generalizations. It is however ironic, that they never saw the parallels with the European system of guilds that divided artisans into separate social and economic entities on the basis of their specialization and subspecializations.

With the changing economic and thereby social conditions, there has been considerable alterations in the operation of the caste system especially in the urban areas.

Summary:

Ghurye traces the origin of caste to discrimination based on colour, He elaborates the features of caste system mentioning that occupations are hereditary. Also there are restrictions on marrying outside one's caste, the type of food to be accepted and group interactions.

Dumont views the caste system as a hierarchy which is divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and the Untouchables. According to him the caste system is based on ideas of pure and impure. Though it is unequal, he doesn't look upon it as exploitative. It is a system accepted by all.

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Questions:

- 1) Discuss Ghurye's views on the structure of caste.
 - 2) Critically analyse Louis Dumont's understanding of the caste system.
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THE ROLE OF THE STATE

In this topic we would be discussing on various Government policy, which are intended to help the vulnerable communities such as Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes the role of the state and the loopholes of such policies.

The Role of the State :

The State has been given the responsibility towards the development of the several Back ward categories of the Indian society. The schedule castes and schedule tribes who have been historically deprived of their basic human rights fall under such category. Constitution of India have ensured through several acts the provisions for their upliftment through opportunities reserved in education and employment sectors. The state also ensures there are general program which would have beneficial for the sc/sts. However the irony is the overall development of these backward classes that looks beneficial on papers is absolutely difficult when the state intervene with the loophole that comes along with the state policy.

Who are the Schedule castes and Schedule Tribes?

The first official recognition of the existence of 'Depressed Classes'(Dalit) was recognized in the Text of the Act of 1919. But later on in 1931.the census superintendent of Assam made a suggestion to change this title from the 'Depressed classes to the 'Exterior classes.'It is a broader title because its connotation does not limit itself to 'outcaste' people. On the other hand 'Exterior Castes' will include those who had been cast out because of some breach of caste rules. It is the contribution of British to Indian caste system which gave rise to 'schedule castes which was not by Simon commission but which already existed in Government Of India act 1935 section 305. The scheduled tribes constitute about seven percent of the Indian population. There is a great diversity among them from one region to another. The question of what constitutes a tribe and how to define it has perplexed scholars and administrators in India. There have been debates on how to classify and characterize tribes. They differ on the basis of language, social and economic systems. The co-existences and in many cases the cohabitation of tribal groups with the general population in India inhibits a singular definition of tribes. Various scholars have tried to reconcile this diversity among tribes and provide an overall picture of tribes as a people. The schedule caste and schedule tribes and other backward classes constitute under privileged who have been oppressed, supposed, exploited humiliated and deprived equality liberty and justice in various spheres of life. They have suffered numerous deprivations and have been denied their human rights.

The under-privileged sections of Indian society:

The schedule caste and schedule tribes and other backward classes constitute under privileged who have been oppressed, suppressed, exploited, humiliated and deprived equality and justice in various spheres of life. They have suffered numerous disabilities and deprivations and are therefore known as down trodden and deprived classes of society.

The term schedule caste appeared for the first time in the government of India act 1935 in April 1936, the British Government had issued the Government of India (schedule caste) order, 1936 specifying certain castes, races and tribes as schedule castes.

Under article 341 of the constitution, certain backward classes and communities suffering from LIN touch ability and exclusion were declared as schedule caste and schedule tribes. After the constitution came into force in 1950 the list of schedule caste was notified under the constitution order 1950 by the president of India. Any amendment to the existing list of schedule caste and schedule tribes is made by parliamentary enactment. On the part of the government; no definition of schedule caste and tribe has ever been given. Only at the pleasure of the authorities a community becomes a schedule caste or a tribe no wonder a community having some socio cultural economic characteristics is a schedule caste or a tribe in one state or union territory but not in other.

The schedule caste and schedule tribes constitute 15.74 per cent and 7.85 percent respectively i.e. one forth of the total populations of the country. About 52 per cent of all schedule caste workers are agricultural labourers and 28 per cent are small and marginal farmers and share croppers.

Constitutional safeguards:

The constitution prescribes protection and safeguards for the schedule caste and schedule tribes, and other weaker sections either specially or by the way of insisting on their general rights as citizen with the object of promoting their educational and economic interests and removing the social disabilities. The main safeguards are:

- i) Abolition of un touch ability and the forbidding of its practise in any form (Art 17)
- ii) The promotion of their educational and economic interests and their protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. (Art 46)
- iii) The throwing open by law of Hindu religious institutions of a public characterto all classes and sections of Hindu (Art 25 b):
- iv) To removal of any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment or the use of wells; tanks; bathing ghats; roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partially by the state funds or dedicated to the use of the general public (Art15(2))

- v) The curtailment by the law in the interest of any schedule tribes of the general rights of all citizens to move freely settle in and acquire property. (Art 19(5))
- vi) The forbidding or any denial of admission to educational institutions maintained by the state or receiving grant out of state funds (Art 29 (2);
- vii) Permitting the state to make reservation for the backward classe's in public services in case of inadequate representations and requiring the state to consider the claims of the schedule castes and schedules tribes in the making of appointments to public services (Art 16 and 335);
- (viii) Special representation in the Lok Sabha and the state of the Vidhan Sabhas to schedule castes and schedule tribes till 25 January 2010.
- ix) The setting up the Tribes Advisory Councils and separate departments in the states and the appointment of a special officer at the center to promote their welfare and safeguard their interest (Art 164 and 338 and Fifth schedule)
- x) Special provision for the administration and control of schedule caste and schedule tribes areas (Art 244 AND Fifth and sixth schedules) and;
- xi) Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour (Art 23)

Earlier Policy :

The Policy of Anti-discriminatory measures include enactment of Anti-untouchability act of 1955 (renamed as protection of Civil rights Act) and Schedule Caste/Tribe (prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 under which practice of untouchability and discrimination in public places and services is treated as offence..

The state had also realized the problem of the schedule caste and schedule tribes lies deep in the history and they have been excluded and denied in all the spheres of life. Hence to overcome the extent of possible exclusion 'policy of protection' through several acts has been constituted. Along with the protection empowerment of dalits was taken in account therefore to overcome their deprivation development and empowerment measures were made a part of the policy.

Present policies:

With the neo-liberal economic policy, the state, which was the guardian of the interests of dalits, directly shed of the responsibility. The protection and empowerment of dalits which was the earlier policy of the state simply disowned them. The state had already reduced its role in social and economic spheres, this was just the reversal of the earlier policy which was drafted in the view of development opportunities of the historically excluded class.

As a part of structural adjustment program the Indian government has introduced changes in several area which include agriculture land, labour, education/health, industry, financial sectors. Below the discuss some of these changes and their consequence of dalits.

Land policy and Dalit access to Land:

In 1991, about 13% of SC households were landless and 87% owned some land. Among the latter, (that is land owning household), about 56% owned less than one acre. The landless and near landless (that is those owning less than one acre) account nearly 70% of the total SC household in 1991. in 1999-2000, put the figures of landless and near land lessness among the SC in vicinity of 75 percent. Thus since about three fourth of the Dalit household are either land less or near landless, their main occupation turns out to be wage labour.

The state in the post independence era announced, 'Land to the tillers.' This approach of the state brought some relief to the landless tillers most of them being people of SC/ ST' categories. Land is a crucial asset in India, which determines the status of a family socially and economically. After the election in the early 1950's the state approached with new reforms such as land redistribution, land ceilings and land assignments to dalits had begun. Dalits had become producers.

Dalits had become producers, though marginal, in the agricultural sector. However, current policies of the Government under globalisation and 'structural adjustment have inducted a shift towards consolidations of agricultural land, leasing of land for corporate production and corporate farming, removal of ceilings for selective use in agriculture, policies of horticulture, aquaculture. Over the past decade the Government has put a brake to land assignments; existing land holdings are not being regularized-and Dalits are not being given priority in the land market.: Thus, Dalits find themselves excluded from land ownership.

Withdrawal of government intervention in the land market, in the form of land redistribution and other interventions, has a serious impact of Dalits access to land. And selective efforts to remove ceiling and encourage corporate farming is destroying the livelihood of the poor dalits.

Education and Health Status:

The impact of withdrawal of state in social infrastructure in basic needs as education and health needs to be understood. Dalits being poor have been depending heavily on state for education and health. Education is the only tool for their upward mobility. Now that has also been denied to dalits by the state as it has ensured that privatization has penetrated in education at all levels including the primary, secondary and higher. There are large gaps in literacy rate and level of education between dalits and others, and this gap is only widening due to privatization. Other important factors like, drop out in school, poor quality of education, discrimination in education, are some of the educational problems faced by SC and the STs

Access to health care is an issue with the dalits evidence based on National Family Health Survey data for 1998-99 revealed wide gap between SC and others in health status and access to health services.

Privatisation of health care system have started in India only to make the matters worse for the dalits. Most of the dalits are still unable to access to health facilities in villages. Negligence of Hospital staff and ill treatment leads only insult to the broken people. Practice of untouchability in health care institutions is also present. Apart from that the earlier policy of the state funded medical aid or treatment, has now been reversed making the poor people pay for the medical treatment. This has only lead them fall into debt traps or mercilessly surrender to death.

The major impact of economic reforms in India under New Economic Policy and globalisation is the reduction of government spending on public health and the withdrawal of government responsibility for the fulfillment of the people's basic rights is the paradox of earlier policies.

Reservation and the loopholes of policies:

The schedule caste and schedule tribes have been given special provisions promoting Educational and employment opportunities among these categories by the state Education, land distribution, such programmes have been taken into the past by the Government. Post independence the state thought for the overall development of these categories, They categorized all such castes and tribes who have been historically deprived of their rights. These castes according to the schedule were recognized and thus they are known as schedule castes and schedule tribes, which have been given constitutional safeguards for their advancement through education and employment.

Post independence the state announced its programmes and land policy and announced as, 'Land for the Tillers'. Land has always been crucial in the agrarian society of India. This was announced before the elections and as point elections the elected members who were dominantly from the higher caste who represented the people changed the entire policy. The whole idea behind the will of the state was to provide lands to these people and to cease the land through the Land Ceiling Act. The state again shifted its focus from land redistribution, which was earlier, a failure to land ceiling act. G. Pant who became the first chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, objected the policy of land to the tillers to the land ceiling act. This intervention and its impact was studied by Daniel and Alice Thomer, in Land and Labour in India, points out that in Hindu society the family is undivided in India but the state has ensured that the basis of inheritance is individuality, therefore an individual is chosen as the unit for the land ceiling act. In the state like Andhra Pradesh for dry land 18 acres of the land can be retained per individual therefore for the family of four would mean eighteen multiplied the number of the individuals in the family.

Post independence i.e. since, 1950's onwards. (1950 to 1956) Land reform acts were formed with huge loopholes by giving exemptions to temple lands, temples that owned hundreds of acres of land and employed dalits who were employed on these lands as agricultural labourers.

The state has special drives for programmes for education and employment along with the development programmes for the schedule caste and schedule tribes, but again along with these categories there are other backward classes which have been included in the reservation quotas.

The state is supposed to provide basic facilities to the poor, like housing, drinking water and sanitation, which unfortunately are also not provided by the state. Though the policy of the state always looks promising on the papers the implementations have always been questionable and sceptical at the will of the implementers. Reservations have been provided to the schedule caste and schedule tribes to ensure their upliftment and also primarily because the evil of social stigma of discrimination is always a threat to this vulnerable community.

Despite these efforts of the government and voluntary organizations for the development and welfare of the schedule castes and the tribal people have experienced nothing but failures of organizations and individuals.

In spite of constitutional safe guards and exclusive welfare programmes for the SC and the STs, they continue to live in pathetic situation. Millions of the weaker sections with small land holdings or landless, escape from atrocities or having their lands is still a distant dream.

On one hand caste based inequity is being accentuated despite claim to the contrary and on the other hand tribal regions all over the country are simmering with discontent. Technological advances, instead of helping them march towards a better tomorrow, are devastating them with severity. The situation in tribal areas is particularly disturbing as evident from the demand of separate Bodo land. The claims of the state, in utter disregard of their traditional rights and forced displacement for making room for the so-called development projects, have made the trials restive for the powerless.

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DALITIST APPROACH

Background:

To Understand a dalitist perspective one needs to be sensitive towards to the complex fabric of the Indian society and particularly towards the Caste system which had taken its worst form to exploit millions of people on the basis of the caste.

The most remarkable feature of the dalitist approach towards the Indian society reflects the opposition in the beliefs of the various scriptures which include the Vedas, Shastras, etc and abandoning any such scriptures and practices which propagates the belief in inequality among human society.

Dalitist approach is the alternative, which is a different one; the dalit intellectuals like Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar base it on the logical arguments and convictions. The approach criticises the belief in unchallenged supremacy of the Brahmins. courtesy to the Vedas, Shastras and Hindu scriptures like of Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The earlier approaches Indo logical or Philosophical approaches came from the westerners like Max Muller, William Jones, Charles Wilkins or the Indians who were parietically from the higher castes, Dr. G. S. Ghurye, Iravati Karve who viewed society with the cultural approach which was a top-bottom approach. The earlier approaches were heavily influenced by the beliefs in the Hindu religion, whereas a dalitist approach came from the people who belonged to this section of society the section who was deprived of their basic human rights and were aggressive and it questioned the authorities of the Brahmins who were at the top of the society.

Views of Mahatma Phule : (1827 - 1890)

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was the first social reformer in India who attacked the caste system. He attacked the caste system and the Brahmin priests who self proclaimed themselves as intermediaries between the God and the Devotees. He believed that Brahmin who had their vested interest to exploit dalits couldn't be a intermediary between anybody. They are just the custodians of the Hindu religion and interpreters of the scriptures. These scriptures prescribe inequity among the people. Mahatma Phule thought, the scriptures lack egalitarian thoughts, they advocate exploitation of human, and practices LIN touch ability,

sat!, advocates child marriage and evils of exploiting men, women and even children. He views, Hindu religions as a medium, through which Brahmin want to enjoy the supremacy.

Mahatma Phule started a 'Satyashodhak movement' and went on to form 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' on 24th September 1873. Satya shodhak means "society for the search of the truth". Its membership was free for any shudra. Mahatma Phule also is the pioneer of the term dalit, which means oppressed, and to describe the outcastes and untouchables broken victims of Hindu society.

The Several works of the movement, satya shodhak samaj believed the for spiritual attainment be it if of any religion, there is no need of intermediates. Vedas, Shastras, scriptures of Hindu religion advocates the indefinite power to the Brahmins, to be the legal intermediaries between the gods and the devotees. Mahatma Phule feels it is not scientific, but this has a vested interest of the Brahmins to exploit innocent Mahatma Phule feels it is not scientific, but this has a vested interest of the Brahmins to exploit innocent people. In fact Phule totally rejected the Vedic tradition and the Aryan culture and its supremacy. He regarded Aryans as the destroyers of the indigenous non-Aryan culture, which existed and lived peacefully on egalitarian thoughts of love, peace and harmony. Mahatma Phule launched several attacks on the Vedas and said Vedas were the misleaders and frauds. Mahatma Phule questioned the ridiculous stories of Puranas, for the absurd stories by the Brahmin authros.

Thomas Paine, who has written "Rights of Man!" and has emphasised on natural religion, which is more liberal and had morality and treat all human beings as equal, influenced Mahatma Jyotiba. Thus Mahatma Phule last book 'Sarvajanic Satya Dharma' emphasises on the truth based on the religion, which believes in equality between man and woman and advocates "SATYX ie. Truth.

Thus this approach of Mahatma Phule criticising the imposed supremacy of the Brahmins who advocated the Hindu religion, its scriptures for their own benefits was the first revolutionary in its kind due to the paramount importance attached to the supremacy of the Brahmins in that period. This explains the imported or belonged to the views predominantly of the higher caste, lacked such analysis that was from the bottom of society.

Views of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar:

Dr. Ambedkar emerged as a social reformer, legal philosopher, and finally and idol for millions of dalits all over India. He was given the responsibility of writing the constitution of India, the constitution reflects his thoughts and faith in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,

Dr. Babasaheb was a rebel against the oppression done by the higher castes, he argued that any developed society, which has developed, always have division of labours, but the caste system in India has divided in not merely the

division of labour, but a division of labourers.

Babashaheb was heavily influenced and inspired by saint Kabir, Mahatma Phule and John Dewy (His Guide at Columbia University). Babasaheb has based all his arguments very rationally. In "Annihilation Of Caste", there are several aspects of the Hindu Society which he has discussed in details and raised valid questions. He argues that Hindu is not a religion, but an identity given by the Mohammedans to geographical location near the river Sindhu. Thus a religion, which advocates the undoubted supremacy of Brahmins and believes in the evils of caste system are not egalitarian. It advocates inequality, inhumanity towards certain section of people who were made untouchables. Untouchables were made to do menial work of the other three Varnas, Viz, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. He also criticised Chaturvarnya and cites examples which makes his argument strong. A brief of Ambedkar's view on various aspects of Hindu society gives an perspective, a bottom - top approach.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and his views on Hindu society and its practises:

Babasaheb in 'Annihilation of Caste' emphasises according to the shastras "Brahmins" are appointed as the guru for the three Varnas. The shastras do not permit a Hindu to accept anyone as his guru merely because he is well versed or learned. This fact is made very clear by Ramdas, a Brahmin saint from Maharashtra who wrote socio - politico - religious treatise 'Dasbodh'. He had said that,

'We cannot accept ANTYAJA i.e. a shudra as our guru because he is a Pundit i.e. a learned. A shudra should "NOT" be accepted as our guru no matter how learned he is...

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar in his paper on 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development' which he presented in Columbia university, New York, USA on 9th May 1916, point out Hindu society wants to preserve caste system, and caste being a self enclosed unit naturally limits social intercourse thus making endogamy or absence of intermarriage as an essence of caste system.

Or Ambedkar has criticised the practices of Hindu society, which is his critical view of looking at the Hindu society. The practices he criticised severely were:

- i) Sati or the burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband
- ii) Enforced widowhood by which the widow is not allowed to remarry
- iii) Child marriage

He believed these practices suppressed the women in general and underlying it curtails the possibility of intermarriage. Enforced widowhood and child marriage gives women no choice to marry outside the caste and sati in itself ends the possibilities of remarriage of widow women in future. These practices have made the clutches of the caste system strong, said Babasaheb.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's thoughts on Chaturvarnya:

Or Ambedkar was a rebel against any sort of belief that praised the superiority on the basis of the Varna or the Caste. He often questioned, "how can individual be worthy on the basis of his Varna or Caste? He questioned to the set of reformers who believed in the Chatutrvarnya, or the division of the society in to four classes is possible when we have four thousand castes in India?

Babasaheb says that chaturvarnya of Arya samajist insist on labelling people as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and shudras. He argues that Arya samajist insist on continuance of this labelling and it is a common experience that certain names become associated with certain notions and sentiments, which determines a persons attitude towards men and things. This notion is based on hierarchy, based on birth, and as long as the names continue, Hindus will continue to think of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras as hierarchical divisions of high and low, based on birth and act accordingly. Thus Babasaheb says that the designation of an individual by such stinking labels of Brahmin, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, which indicates social division based on birth is a snare.

Further more, Ambedkar has given a lot of illustration on Chaturvarnya and has criticised them. Chaturvarnya justifies the killing of Shudra and this is proved by the story in "Ramayana", when ram killed shambuka. Chaturvarnya justifies the killing of Shambuka by Ram, because shambuka was a shudra, he had transgressed his class and wanted to be a Brahmin, and that is why Ram killed Shambuka, as rams eternal duty not to penal sanction for the maintenance of Chaturvarnya but by punishing death penalty which is necessary.

Manu smriti prescribes heavy sentences as cutting off the tongue or pouring the molten lead into the ears of the shudras, who recites or hear Vedas, is known to everybody which is worth of criticism from any human society. But unfortunately there are defenders of Manu too.

Babasaheb severely criticized chaturvarnya as the most vicious system, which propagated Brahmins, should cultivates knowledge, Kshatriyas should bear arms, Vaishyas should trade and shudras serve to all the above. Chaturvarnya also believes that shudra should not bother and take trouble to acquiro wealth and education. The Chaturvarnya theory if Understood explains that shudras are looked upon as wards and the other three varnas as his (shudras) guardians. Babasaheb opposes to the beliefs of the theory and argues "interdependence of one class on, another is allowable, but why make one person depend on other for the vital needs such as ed ucation?" Babasaheb says, "education everyone must have and it is one of the most paramount requirements of every man."

Further more Babasaheb supports his argument against chaturvarnya theory by simple example "how can the fact that the neighbour who is educated, the other armed help a man, who is uneducated and disarmed?" (This was in reference to chaturvarnya theory that shudras need to education and arms) Babasaheb concluded that such theories of chaurvamya as "Absurd" theories.

The Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, Puramas, Ramayana and Mahabharata are

the Hindu scriptures which advocates beliefs in the dogma of Caste System, Varna vyaystha, Varna system, practices of exclusion of certain deprived sections of society based on their birth and so on. Bababsaheb has been a staunch rebel against all such scriptures and beliefs of society which underlying has its vested interest to exploit vulnerable people.

Conclusion:

Thus, the views expressed by Mahatma Phule, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar through their writings points out one thing clearly that is "Hindu Society" and its intolerable and ridiculous ways to strengthen the shackles of the caste system are their points of criticism. This approach is a Dalitist Approach. The dalit intellectuals like Phule, Ambedkar, Naicker the revolutionaries of change for dalit community had deep belief in liberty, equality and fraternity, which they found ridiculous to be missing in the Hindu society.

The common feature of Dalitist approach can be seen as, they have abandoned the supremacy of Brahmins, Aryans and Vedic culture and its scriptures which advocates irrational and stagnant belief and oppress large number of people by labeling them as shudras. This approach is a Dalitist approach, an alternative to the Top-Bottom approach to view Hindu society. Dalitist approach can be said as an alternative that studies or views the Hindu society from below a "Bottom-Top regalitarian approach.

Reference :

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UNDERSTANDING TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Objectives:

The scheduled tribes constitute about seven percent of the Indian populations. There is a great diversity among them from one region to another. The question of what constitutes a tribe and how to define it has perplexed scholars and administrators in India. There have been debates on how to classify and characterize tribes. They differ on the basis of language, social and economic systems. The co-existence and in many cases the co-habitation of tribal groups with the general population in India inhibits a singular definition of tribes. Various scholars have tried to reconcile this diversity among tribes and provide an overall picture of tribes as a people. This unit would provide a historical overview of tribal studies in India. This would also cover the different approaches and perspectives on tribes in Indian sociology

Introduction:

The most striking feature of tribes in India is their heterogeneity. The arena is an inconsistent tableau of landscapes, economic conditions, physical appearances, languages, cultural practices, and dress, codes. D. N. Majumdar, in his book *Races and Cultures of India*, provides some order to the diversity of tribal groups across the country. He distinguishes tribes on the basis of three criteria: territorial distribution, linguistic affiliations and occupations.

The territorial layout of tribes reveals a topographical pattern in their settlements. They largely inhabit forest areas, except for the tribes settled in the northern plains. The major tribes in the northeastern region are the Garo, the Lushai kuki, the mikir, the Abhor, the Dafla, the Nafa (Angami, Sema, Chang, Lhota and the Konyak) and the Khasis. In Central and Eastern India, there is a large concentration of tribes in the Chotanagpur region and the Chattisgarh region. The present states of Jharkhand and Chattisgarh have been carved out from these regions. The tribes predominant in Chattisgarh include the Gonds (Maria, the Hill Maria and the Muria), and the Dhurwa, while the dominant tribes of Chotanagpur are the Munda, the Santhal, the Ho, the Kharia and the Oraon. The Gonds are spread over the two states of Chattisgarh and Hyderabad. Similarly, the Bhils are found in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The north Indian tribes include the Tharu, Dhurwa, Bhoksa, Korwa, Bhuiya, Chero, Majhi and the Biyar.

Linguistically, tribes in India broadly belong to three families: the Austro-Asiatic group which include the Munda, Santhal, Ho, Kharia, Gabada and the Korwa tribe; the Dravidian group consisting of the Oraon, Maler, Mhond, Saora, Parja,

Koya, Chenchu, frula, Kadar and the Malaryan tribes; and the Tibeto-Chinese group comprising of the Naga, the Garo, the Kuki, the Mikir, the Dafla, the Abhor and the Khasi tribes,

The occupational classification of tribes provided by Majumdar distinguishes between tribes within a region on the basis of whether they are hunting-gathering, shifting cultivation and settled agricultural communities. For example, in the northeast, the Kuki, Konyak Nagas practiced hunting-gathering, the Garos practiced shifting cultivation and the Khasi and the Manipuri tribes practiced settled agricultural. With time, many of the tribes have given up shifting cultivation and taken up settled cultivation. Similarly, tribes practice more than one occupation; many tribes still take recourse to hunting-gathering to pull through the lean agricultural season. Specialization in traditional crafts and skills such as carpentry, basket making, cloth weaving and pottery are also an integral part of the tribal economy and culture.

A Historical Overview:

The first serious deliberation on tribes as a people can be attributed to the British. In their endeavour to categorize peoples of India into different caste, tribe and race, the Census Report of 1891 arranged castes on the basis of its traditional occupation. It was under the category of Agricultural and Pastoral castes that a separate sub-heading was titled "Forest Tribes". The following Censuses, that of 1901 and 1911, returned tribes as those practicing Animism. The subsequent Census of 1921 substituted "Animism" for "Tribal Religion". The 1935 Census replaced the term "Forest Tribe" with "Primitive tribe", which listed their names and numbers. This classification was far from satisfactory as the British realized that they had clubbed a large section of tribes living in the plains within the category of "Forest" or "Primitive" tribes. Tribes as a whole did not conform to any one classification of language, religion or occupation. Different tribes practice different occupations and speak different dialects. A number of tribes do not possess a separate dialect and most are bilingual. For instance, the Konda Reddies and Chenchus speak Telegu, the official language of Andhra Pradesh. The Koaism in Andhra Pradesh have lost their original dialect and speak Telegu, while those settled in neighboring Maharashtra speak Marathi. Not only are there linguistic, religious and occupational differences within a tribe, but there are also similarities between tribe and caste within a geographical area. This made it difficult to classify tribes or to categorically define tribes as a people, especially away from the rest of the Indian population.

The problem of defining tribes has been centrally tied to matters of administration. Resistance and friction marked the initial British encounter with tribes. Zealously guarding their rights on their habitat, tribes did not submit to British rule easily. The British realized that regular administration could not be extended to tribal areas. Separate legislation were introduced in tribal areas keeping in mind the responses of tribes of stringent laws and its implications on their lives. The Scheduled Districts Act was given effect by the Government of India Act of 1870 and 1874. The main concern was not only to secure peace in tribal areas, but also to protect tribes from outsiders or non-tribes. The attempt

was to keep the administration as simple as possible, with a few officials to supervise it. However, despite these intentions, the British could not prevent alienation and displacement of tribes from their land and forests.

Improvements in the system of transport and communications as well as the opening up of remote tribal areas created conditions for migration of entrepreneurs, merchants, traders and labourers. The system of civil justice and the introduction of modern courts as well as the legal proprietary title among tribes only strengthened the position of the migrants. Despite the special administrative setup established for tribal areas, the non-tribes were quick in grasping the new system of civil and revenue administration and using it to steadily taking control over tribal land.

The debate on tribes at the eve of independence was also primarily administrative. It was on the future of tribes in independent India. The question was whether the system instituted by the British should be retained or replaced by another, without disregarding the interests of the nation and the tribes. At stake were the issues of social justice and the protection of vulnerable peoples in India. The arguments presented whether for and against a course of development for tribes, illustrated a particular understanding of tribes in India. Presented in the next section are the three aspects on which tribes in India have been examined. These aspects have not only been discussed at length in understanding tribal life in India but also in explicating perspectives on the future of tribes in India.

Defining the category "Tribe":

Given the diversity among tribes and the complex relationship of tribes with the mainstream 'society, the discussion on defining tribe branched out into various debates. The debate on whether there is any distinct feature that distinguishes tribes from the rest of society or is the classification 'tribe' only a politico-administrative category has led scholars to reflect on the nature of tribal society. The discussion has branched out variously. We shall discuss three of the prominent themes that have dominated the understanding of tribes in India. They are as follows:

1. Tribes as the autochthons or aborigines of India;
2. Tribes as peoples outside of civilization and as peoples set in an earlier stage of evolution;
3. Tribal societies as stateless societies, as societies with no or minimal contact with state formation and functioning in India.

Tribes as Autochthons or Aborigines:

British administrators such as Sir Athelstane Baines and Lacey categorized tribes in India as 'aborigines' or as the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India. Tribes were contrasted to the Aryan mainland inhabitants of the country, as peoples who had maintained their social and physical exclusivity from the later immigrants of the plains. Tribes were associated with the pre-Aryans and the Dravida. Thus tribes were distinguished not only from castes but also on the

basis of their physical type or race. Later, the proponents of this position on tribes did not insist so much on the physical difference of tribes from the rest of the population as they did on tribes being the original inhabitants of the land. The debate on whether tribes are the original inhabitants of India narrowed down to the question, 'who came first?.' The answer to this question seemed pertinent in the context of the rights and privileges of tribes vis-à-vis the rest of society.

In recent times, this debate has come into focus over the issue of defining 'Indigenous People'. The term indigenous has been a part of the common academic vocabulary to refer to tribes in India but is now of greater significance with the term gaining currency in international circles. Though the ILO used the term 'indigenous peoples' as way back in 1957, but it was in 1993, also the year declared as the international year of indigenous peoples, that the term came to be associated with the restoration of tribal rights over land and forests. The internationalization of the concern over tribal rights on land and forests resuscitated the debate on the indigenous peoples in India. The debate was on whether tribes in India could make claims on land and forests on the grounds that they are indigenous or the 'first settlers' in India, since their claims on being autochthons is still an unresolved question. In many parts of India, the tribes are later settlers. For instance, the migration of Singhbhum, Jharkhand had forced the earlier inhabitants, i.e., the Bhumij and Sarawak, to the south of the West Singhbhum upon: their migration into the area. But tribal claims on being 'indigenous' are based less on the privilege of being autochthonous and more on common experience of being marginalized by the rest of society.

The British encounter with tribes in India had been uniform at least, and importantly, in one respect: they had to fight severe and long drawn out battles with tribes in order to get access and control over their area. The Ho rebellion (1831-32), Paharia of Rajmahal Hills (1767-80), Santhal rebellion of 1855, Bhumij revolt of 1832-33 are few examples of the opposition tribes put up against the British. Despite their regular interaction with the mainstream society or civilization, tribes in India have managed to maintain their separate identity and escaped complete absorption into the latter. This feature comes out clearly in the resistance offered by tribes to British domination. It is this feature of tribes and their endeavour to maintain their separateness from the larger society, which is considered as the defining factor for tribes 'claims of being indigenous.' Thus it is the experience and growing awareness and consciousness of economic and social marginalization, which has strengthened the struggle against subordination. The struggle for the rights of 'Indigenous Peoples' has come to symbolize this common experience of alienation, economic, social and psychological, among tribes across the world.

Tribe vs. Civilization:

Given their experience of Africa, North America, Australia and the Pacific islands, some among the British viewed tribes in opposition to civilization. There are predominantly two approaches, evolutionary and historical, which explicate on the relationship of tribes with civilization. The evolutionary approach places tribe low down in the scheme of human evolution and progress. Tribal societies

are regarded as 'survivals' of a past or a bygone stage of evolution. These societies are therefore considered to be primitive, static and backward. Yet, in another sense, since they are less evolved and in the childhood or adolescence of civilization, they are associated with simplicity, innocence, naivete and honesty. Tribes are the 'yet to be cultured' peoples and thereby still unscathed by the ills of civilization. The tribal way of life was romanticized as a life reminiscent of a past stage of evolution. It was celebrated for its simplicity and proximity to nature. It alluded to a life near to nature: a spiritual and ascetic retreat from the present day materialistic world.

The second approach, i.e., the historical approach did not place all tribes within one evolutionary stage, but argued that different tribes occupied different social and economic formations depending upon their geographical and cultural proximity to the rest of the society. Haimendorf (1982) draws attention to the diversity among tribes. He gives the example of the Hill Maria of Chattisgarh who practice only slash and burn cultivation, while the Bison-Horn Maria or the Muria, also from middle India, practice both slash and burn and cultivate permanent fields. Similarly, the Apa Tani and Nishi tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, despite being neighbors, display differences in the system of cultivation. The Nishi are slash and burn cultivators and cultivate a piece of land not more than three times, while the Apa Tani have permanent holdings and cultivate irrigated rice fields.

Most British officials subscribed to the historical approach, as they realized that tribes in India, with the exception of some tribes living in the deeply forested areas, have been in close contact with the general population. The position however did not challenge the evolutionary perspective. Both perspectives agreed upon the unilinear stages of evolution and that this model was a legitimate model for determining levels of development and progress of a tribe. In both perspectives, tribes were the 'other' of civilization. The difference however lay in the way this classification of tribes as the 'other' of civilization was rendered: whether it is worth preserving the tribal way of life or whether it was in the best interest of tribes to be assimilated into the mainstream society.

This dilemma was brought out most clearly at the eve of Indian independence in the debate over the future of tribes in India. The debate can be summarized in the views of G. S. Ghurye and Verrier Elwin. Their position on the future of tribes in India derives primarily from their understanding of the question of 'who constitute tribes' and the relationship tribes share with the rest of society of civilization.

Elwin (1941) divided tribes into three classes: the Gond aristocracy, Bijhwar landlords, Konku noblemen or in other words those tribes which were politically and economically powerful, the Hinduized tribes who had been acculturated into the Hindu way of life, and tribes who have been living in remote forests and hills cut away from the general population. Interestingly, Elwin's perspectives on tribes were, on the one hand, historical and he distinguished between different tribes on the basis of their interaction with the rest of society as well as their level of progress. Yet, on the other hand, his views were evolutionary. He characterized these tribes as naive, innocent and as peoples unexposed to the ills of civilization. He was concerned about the fate of tribes living in forests

who were, with the opening up of forests areas by the British to outsiders and commercial interests, at the risk of being displaced from their habitat by the newcomers. He infact advocated the policy of 'isolation'for these tribes from the rest of society. Therefore his perspective on tribes concentrated more on establishing tribes as the 'other' of Hindu,or mainstream society.

For Ghurye, tribes were'backward Hindus'. no different from the large mass of the Hindu population. With the exception of a few hill tribes, who have not been influenced by Hinduism, Ghurye found similarities between the tribal population and the Hindus in matters of occupation and religion. Lower forms of Hinduism and tribal religion were animistic and both had faith in nature worship. Agricultural labour and allied services are common occupations among Hindus and tribes and, very often, there is regular exchange of goods and services between the Hindu population and the neighboring tribal groups. Therefore he saw no reason for segregating tribes as a separate and a special category, that too at the cost of the rest of the Indian population. The tribes share the problems of poverty, illiteracy and ill health with the larger population of India. He advocated the approach of assimilation of tribes with the mainstream and adoption of policies of a general nature addressing the issues of development of all.

This debate over the future of tribes in India got caught up with accusations and counter accusations. For the integrationists, who saw themselves as 'indigenous social workers and nationalist politicians', the isolationists were advocating separatism while for the latter, the integratignists were 'interventionists', imposing their world-view on to tribes. Ghurye, however, attributed these opinions to the differences over the best way to preserve the'vitality of the tribal people.' Either way, from the point of view of both perspectives, tribes were on the periphery of civilization: one perspective proposed isolation while the other advocated assimilation of tribes with the mainstream,

Tribes and the State:

Of the many books on tribes, one of the most acclaimed and celebrated books is on the Nuer tribe of Africa and on African political Systems. These works describe the two forms of political systems in Africa: stateless and state societies. State societies are hierarchical, with a chief at the apex of the political system. Stateless societies are segmentary systems, which lack an authoritative figure of a chief or a king as in state societies. The organizing principle is usually kinship. They are made up of loosely integrated lineages which are further differentiated into smaller lineages. They function independently of each other in every day matters, but come together as a unit in times of political and economic crises. This process is termed as fission and fusion respectively. Maurice Godelier, who subscribed to evolutionary and Marxist perspectives, viewed this form of social organization as a stage in evolution. Tribes are both a stage in evolution (an incipient stage preceding the development of lass based inequalities) and a type of society. Tribes are juxtaposed with class-based societies. They are homogenous societies, lacking the inequalities of state societies. As a stage in evolution, tribes are placed along the Marxist continuum of tribe-peasant-class, wherein tribes would move form a classless society of primitive communism, feudalism to capitalist relations of production in the establishment of socialism. And yet'tribe', for Godelier, is acompletely organized

society', distinguishable from one another and from other forms of society. But what are the features of tribal society that distinguishes it from other forms of society?

A cursory glance suggests greater dissimilarities than similarities between tribes and caste society. Hierarchy, differentiation and heterogeneity characterize the caste system, while the features of heterogeneity and equality distinguish tribal society. This however does not bear evidence at least in the case of India or, for that matter, south Asia. Detailed analyses reveal that the relationship of tribes with state and Civilization in India has been a complex one. Inequalities of class, status and rank are common to tribe and caste. Scholars such as D.D. Kosambi and N. K. Bose have succinctly demonstrated the uniqueness of the Indian social order. The caste system in India has consolidated a system of occupational endogamy of castes, though it has been quintessentially a hierarchical one. This feature of the caste system has been regarded as 'tribal' and the logical conclusion of this assumption has been that the caste-based order was built brick by brick, i.e. with the gradual accretion of endogamous tribal groups over time. This assumption has been criticized, as not all tribes are endogamous. Nonetheless, the criticism notwithstanding, occupational specialization necessitated interdependence between various caste and tribal groups. For example, almost every tribal village of West Singhbhum in Jharkhand has a representation of service castes such as Tanti (cloth-weavers) and the Gope (cattle-tenders). These castes were an indispensable part of the village economy. There has been then a fusion of tribal features with the Hindu values and belief systems. To quote Bose (1971:28),

The privilege or benefit of exercising cultural autonomy which tribes continue to enjoy even after they have been fully integrated into Hindu economic system gave to caste a resilience which helped to perpetuate it in spite of centuries of Muslim and British rule. Castes were undoubtedly divided into privileged and unprivileged, dominant and suppressed classes. In spite of that element of weakness, its strength lay in the monopoly, which was theoretically given to incorporated communities over certain occupations, and the non-competitive orientation of the whole organization. Caste was an organization of differences; free at the upper end of Beliefs and practices, but bound tightly at the lower end, which gave it almost a totalitarian character.

This feature of the caste system prevented the growth of nationhood in India. Likewise, State in India did not affect the caste system significantly. The caste system functioned autonomously, irrespective of the changes in State formations. The interaction between Hindu society and the State in India has not been uniform. The relationship of tribe with State in India therefore is not distinct from the general population. Besides, there have been tribal kingdoms in India or tribes associated with power such as the Gond of Chattisgarh, the Ahom of Assam and the Meena of Rajasthan. Thus the rigid divide between tribe and civilization or between tribe and State loses its cogency and needs to be qualified by the diversity of experiences within tribes as well as the similar experiences of tribes and the general population in India.

Conclusion:

A large number of scholars continue to view tribes as communities outside the confines of the Hindu civilization though not outside the purview of the State.

Whether as communities in the plains, living alongside the general population or as peoples tucked away in forest areas, tribal groups have demonstrated features that distinguish them from the mainstream society. As demonstrated earlier in the unit, tribes were first noticed and distinguished from the general Hindu population in India for their strong and consistent resistance to the colonial state. And from thereon, tribes and tribal areas have been accorded special administrative status under law. Despite these special legal status accorded to tribal areas, there has been a gradual sense of alienation and marginalization of tribes from their habitat all over India. This led to an acute sense of victimization among them against the state and the general population leading to the rise of resistance movements among them. The Jharkhand and the Chattisgarh movement are cases in point. Efforts were made to rediscover a sense of self and identity in the face of this process of marginalization. The resistance movements among tribes therefore were not just political in nature: they were 'as much about redefining tribal identity and seeking answers to the question, 'what constitutes a tribe.' Here we see the articulation of a different understanding of tribal communities, with the recurrent theme of being separate from the general population as the point of convergence. Now the formation of the tribal states of Jharkhand and Chattisgarh have renewed this process of reflection over tribal identity, at answers to the same would be crucial in determining the future of tribes in the regions. The question of what the future of tribes should be and what would help maintain tribal tradition and culture depends on how the tribes look upon themselves, their way of life and the changes over the years in tribal thought and practice. Thus understanding tribal communities is an ongoing and a fluid process, which reflects the history and the politics around the concept 'tribe'.

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TRIBE, ECOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Objectives:

Tribes have been known the world over for the special relationship they share with the natural environment. They have, for long, been associated with the forest, as peoples who live in the jungle. As inhabitants of ecological alcoves, which were considered uninhabitable by most, tribes were not only feared, but also viewed with suspicion. The features associated with the jungle were indubitably extended to its inhabitants. As jungle folks, they have been ridiculed as junglees (Wild folks), lacking in etiquette, a sense of dress and morals. But a closer examination of tribal societies has proved otherwise. Tribal societies have scrupulously laid out moral and social codes and conventions, which encompass every dimension of life including their relationship with their natural habitat.

Over the century, the process of ecological degradation and the alienation of tribes from their habitat have occurred simultaneously. The deterioration of the ecology has spelled havoc for the tribes. This not only reflects our perception of tribes as a people, but also of wilderness, which has changed overtime. Now, with ecological degradation having become a global concern, the thrust is on preserving the life of the biosphere, conserving global, natural resources and restricting unsustainable consumption patterns that threaten the natural environment and, through it, human survival. In this regard, tribes are increasingly being seen as custodians of traditional knowledge systems, which can restore the natural environment.

In this unit, we will explicate the historical course of this process, of being viewed as 'primitive' and 'backward' due to their association with the ecology to the present where, in the face of the ecological crises, they are eulogized for their ecologically prudent beliefs and practices. This literal about turn in the understanding of tribes and the ecology as well as their relationship with the environment is illustrative of how a description of one is incomplete without the other. We will provide a gist of this interconnectedness; and its implications on tribal life in the following sequence:

- * The values and theories that have informed the understanding of tribes and their relationship with the natural environment.
- * Colonialism in tribal India and the accompanying political and economic processes that alienated tribes from their habitat.
- * The extent and levels of tribal exploitation in independent India.
- * The development and ecological implications of the above on tribal life.

Introduction:

Before we explicate the economic and political processes that marginalized tribes and the ecology, it would be useful to first understand the values that legitimized and justified them in the first place. The British introduced some of these values in India while some were already present and got reiterated through scientific theories on tribe. These theories and the built-in iniquitous values espoused by them persist even now; in the way that the Indian State and its policies and programmes look upon tribes and the ecology.

The earlier references to jungle folks were made in ancient Hindu texts such as the Bhagavata Purana, in which they were described as the rakshasa (demon) and nishada (literally translates as people of the night). It was the British, however, who took a special interest in people living in and around the forested areas of India. Though this interest was primarily motivated by economic and administrative concerns, it was important for them to first reconcile with the diversity and differences presented by non-white cultures and peoples. It was essential to understand the subject population, their psychology and way of life not so much with the view to preserve it, but more with the intention to be able to govern them effectively. The scientific (both natural and anthropological) theories of the times helped in this regard.

The newly discovered African and Asian countries became the laboratories for testing many theories on the history and the evolution of man. The diversity displayed by societies across the world demonstrated the different stages of development reached by them. Thereby the argument was that despite the diversity, all human societies have and will evolve along a single line of development. The closing stage of these unilinear stages of development was the one reached by the western, developed and industrial societies. These societies had overcome constraints posed by nature through human initiative and advances in technology. But most importantly, they were influenced and driven by the philosophy that the earth was not created by providence, it evolved and with it its inhabitants, both animals and humans. This belief not only undermined the role of religion and tradition in the creation and maintenance of the world, but also questioned humans' subservience to the rhythms of nature. Nature, by this new valuation, was a source that could be manipulated, modified, transformed and submitted to suit the material needs of humans.

By this measure, tribes across the world represented an earlier, lower stage of development, a long way from the western counterparts. They were societies still taking recourse to superstitious beliefs and practices to overcome the complexities of nature. They were indisposed to experimentation and innovation and practiced age-old techniques to exploit the natural environment. They were remnants from pre-history and lacking in history. Tribal societies were equated with peoples of the Neolithic times, with primitive technology and complete dependence on the natural environment for sustenance. These societies were, in this sense, static and primitive. To many western scholars, tribes as relics of the past, a past already traversed by western societies, provided cues to their own historical evolution. Tribal societies made available a rewind in history, as

they unfolded the process of evolution to the point where raw instinct or emotions were just about being concealed by civilization. Thereby a study of human behaviour in such societies were undertaken to seek answers to the origins of many of the deep social and psychological problems confronting modern societies. Tribal life, in the Process, was also romanticized for its simplicity and incivility: natural emotions and reactions yet to be disguised by culture.

These theories were endorsed in India too. A number of Indian scholars equated the nishada with the tribal population of India spread across the forest areas of the country. But in India, the study of tribes also took on an added dimension. Colonialism exposed the highly iniquitous nature of Indian society. Awkward about the all pervasive inequality in India, nationalist leaders not only engaged themselves with reform but also sought to appeal to what they considered as the desirable qualities of Indian culture. In this, higher of Hinduism and its Aryan origins were celebrated. Tribes however were outside the purview of this self-reflexive exercise. Tribes were the Ati-Dravida or the pre-Aryans, who were conquered and forced to retreat into the jungles by the Aryans upon their migration into the northern plains. Certain physical characteristics such as the shape of the skull, the dimensions of the nose, the colour and texture of the hair, cheekbones and the breadth of the pelvis were used as anthropometric devices in the pursuit of a scientific study of Man. This not only distinguished the presumably Aryan, Hindu population from the Ati-Dravida or the Non-Aryans, but also ascertained the racial superiority of the former. Culturally also tribes were distinguished from the general population. The polytheistic character of tribal religion was contrasted with the higher forms with Hinduism and Christianity. Tribes were designated as 'primitive' at all levels: cultural, social, intellectual and racial. They were doubly marginalized: by the colonialist construction as well as by the overpowering, national definition of them as peoples in the periphery of the Indian civilization.

Colonialism and Tribes:

For the British, tribal areas were resource rich areas with the potential for generating high revenue. With the establishment of the railways, to facilitate governance and the transport of raw materials across the length and breadth of the country the British sought to consolidate their hold on resource rich tribal areas. They were eager to open up these areas to tap its rich resource base. Tribal groups across the country met their initial efforts to get a foothold over these areas with strong and consistent resistance. The British managed to overpower these resistance movements after long drawn out struggle. However, in due course, they realized that in order to quell any further dissent, they had to adopt special administrative measures to protect tribal rights on land and forests.

Tribal interests on land and forests clashed with those of the British. On the one hand, they wanted to extract as much revenue as possible, which entailed increasing the commercial potential of the areas. On the other hand, they knew that over-exposure of tribal areas to outside influences and people would instigate the local tribal population and create conditions of unrest. But most importantly, the British officials were divided on their policy on tribes and the administration of tribal areas. While some were very clear of their commercial

interests in the area, there were others who wanted to protect tribes from being completely ousted from their habitat. They saw their role also in terms of the paternalist ruler, who had to protect the less civilized tribes from the shrewd, cunning outsider and simultaneously tutor them to a more civilized existence without abandoning their simplicity.

The Scheduled District Act of 1870 and 1874 authorized special rules for governing areas brought under the purview of these acts. The rationale behind introducing these special laws as against the ordinary laws of the land, in areas predominated by tribes, was primarily to provide economic and cultural protection to the tribal population. This would have entailed respecting the practice of shifting cultivation among a large number of tribes in India. In shifting cultivation, a patch of forest is cleared for cultivation, which is subsequently left fallow for over three to five years to regenerate, and a new patch of forest is cleared for the next cultivation cycle. A large number of tribes such as the Bhil, Korku, Bhiuya, Birhor, Gond, Paharia, Baiga, Kharia and the Ho of Central and East India, and a large tribal population of Jantia Hills and Assam practiced shifting cultivation. This practice however assumed the availability of large tracts of forest and supporting a relatively small population.

A paternalistic approach to the issue of shifting cultivation clashed with the State taking over the control and management of forests. The classification of forests into Reserved, Protected and Village forests changed the status of tribes from 'owner' to 'usufruct'. The usufructuary rights, in turn, were fettered by too many regulations. Tribes had restrictive access to the reserved and protected forests, that too, on payment of a fee. Their interests in the forests were secondary to the interests of the State. In fact, tribal interests were looked upon with suspicion. They were accused of illegal felling of trees, converting forest land into agricultural land and grazing of livestock, especially goats, which apparently fed on the undergrowth of forests reducing its capacity to regenerate itself. They were held responsible for the deteriorating condition of the forest. The practice of shifting cultivation was seen as wasteful and responsible for the large-scale conversion of forest and into barren land.

Land legislations were introduced with two intentions in mind: one, to gradually accustom tribes to settled agriculture and subsequently give up the practice of shifting cultivation and, second, to restrict transfer of land from tribes to non-tribes. For instance, the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and Central Provinces Land Alienation Act 1916 were introduced in Central India with the view to curtail land alienation. The law granted individual land rights to tenants. Land ownership was legal and fixed. These acts redefined land rights in tribal areas. But, conversely, these acts also made tribes more susceptible to the new legal system and the market, intricacies of which they could barely understand. Community was no longer the proprietor of the land. Despite a prohibition on the sale and mortgage of tribal land, illegal tenancy of usury practices nullified the professed intent of the law. The law and the administration were not effective enough, by design or otherwise, to check these deceptions.

But most significantly, the new legal system introduced a clear divide hitherto unknown to tribes: between land and forest, the cultivated and the wild or

between culture and nature. In shifting cultivation, land was a clearing' in the forest and the forest was regenerated land. The category 'land' and 'forest' were fluid and flexible. The modern legislation however introduced a rigid and irrevocable divide between 'land' and forest' and with it a divide between 'culture' and 'nature'. The knowledge system, skills and the accompanying belief system, which evolved and accumulated over generations through a system of learning and which equip tribes to survive in the forest, were slighted. The reservation of forests and the accompanying restrictions on the access and use of forests and forest produce impinged directly upon their way of life. It is this systematic disrespect for their culture and way of life implanted by the British and perpetuated over the years that led to their ruin.

Tribes in Independent India:

With Indian independence, the Indian State sought to deliberate upon the future of tribes and the restoration of their habitat. The Indian State was faced by the dilemma of taking stock of the flagging Indian economy as against the interests of minority and marginal groups. The former necessitated rapid industrialization and modernization of the Indian economy and tapping the rich natural resources within the country for the same. The latter required protecting the rights of tribes on their land and forests, which were the reservoirs of the raw materials that the State so desperately wanted to exploit. This paradoxical situation led to the adoption of a dual policy: planned industrialization for the country as a whole and the protection of tribal way of life. The pursuit of these two visions, independent of each other, reflected itself institutionally in the separation of economic planning from social justice and welfare-, industrial development from tribal development.

Tribal areas, since Independence, have been exposed to extensive industrial and development activities. Almost all important heavy industries and wood industries are located in tribal areas. Bhilai (Steel), Bailadila (Iron Ore), Raipur (Cement), Bilaspur (Cement), Korba (Coal, Aluminum and thermal power plant), Raigarh (Sponge Iron and Jute) Sarguja (Coal) and Bokaro (Coat) are the leading industrial towns in the tribal state of Chattisgarh. Similarly, Ranchi (China clay, Gold ore, Bauxite and lime stone) Dhanbad (Coal), Jamshedpur (Steel), and West Singhbhum (Quartzite, Iron ore, Manganese, Talc, Coal, Copper and Asbestos) are major industrial centers in Jharkhand. Tribal areas of Orissa, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh are also known for their rich natural resources. Almost all bauxite reserves in Andhra Pradesh are found in tribal areas. Fifty five percent of India's plywood production comes from Assam. Assam also accounts for slightly less than half of the total crude oil production. The other northeastern states are dominated by wood and agro-based industries.

These accounts of the development activities undertaken in tribal areas convey the extent of exploitation of tribes. Recent statistics reveal that fifty one percent of the scheduled tribed population in the country is below the poverty line. A large number of them have been displaced from their habitat due to the extensive industrialization of these areas. The Government of India, over the last fifty years, has introduced a number of programmes and projects in tribal areas with the intention of ameliorating the conditions of tribes but has not been able

to stop their marginalization. Tribal development programmes have been, at best, attempts at minimizing effects of development processes without being critical of the conditions that have led to their impoverishment. Tribal programmes have focused on providing education, health, housing, and subsidies\loans for generating emolument; there has been however no serious deliberation on the main cause for the continued exploitation and poverty among tribes. The problems are symptomatic of the alienation of tribes for their habitat and the destruction of their way of life around land and forests. Moreover, corruption and heavy bureaucratic rules have encumbered the efficacious utilization of the funds set aside for tribal development. More than eighty percent of the tribal development funds are spent on the upkeep and maintenance of the administrative structure that has been set up for implementing tribal development programmes.

A document brought out the Ministry of Rural Development in 1996 suggests that over one crore sixty lakh person have been displaced due to mining, dams and canals, industries, sanctuaries and national parks. Of these, about thirty-nine lakh have been rehabilitated. According to Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Commission report (1990), almost percent of the displaced population belongs to the scheduled tribed category. The Sardar Sarovar Dam project in Gujarat, Koel-Karo Dam project, Subemarekha and the Kuju Dam project in Jharkhand, Balimela project and the Machkunda Darn in Orissa are some of the better-known instances where tribal rights to land and forests have been disregarded to fulfill the larger interests of the State and the general population. It is worth noting here that despite the implementation of the irrigation projects in these areas, many are covered under the Drought Prone Areas of the government. In Jharkhand alone, there have been thirteen large irrigation projects, hundred and eight medium irrigation projects and six thousand eight hundred and twenty small water projects. Most of these projects have failed; some have been abandoned halfway and have been notorious for high levels of corruption and red tapism. Now, with the plan to implement new hydroelectric projects on the Siang, Subansiri and other Himalayan rivers, the fear is that the same results will be reproduced. Not only would it displace thousands of people but also destroy the rich and dense bio-diversity of the area.

Development and Ecology:

The tribal population has been at the receiving end of both development and ecological initiatives. Development activities, such as railways, roads, irrigation projects, field-firing ranges, weapon testing grounds, nuclear power plants, industries or mines, displaced tribes from their habitat. The process of displacement has not only led to the break down of their production systems, but also their social and religious organization. Their disempowerment is total: economic, psychological, social, cultural and geographical. Similarly, ecological initiatives like the formation of national parks and sanctuaries to protect forests and wild life have also displaced a large tribal population. The Rajiv Gandhi National Park in Nagarhole, Karnataka, the Indravati Abhyayaranaya, the Kanker Valley National Park and the Pamed Buffalo Sanctuary in Chattisgarh, are

examples wherein the tribal population have not only been displaced, but also denied the right to collect regular forest produce for their day-to-day survival.

Ecological responsibilities have been separated from livelihood and habitat concerns of the local population. In this respect, governmental efforts in dealing with ecological degradation have fallen short of expectations. The social forestry programme introduced in the late 1970s to deal with the shortage of fuel wood as well as to rehabilitate degraded forests in rural India came under critical scrutiny. For one, it introduced fast growing commercial plantations to overcome the fuel wood crisis. This was strongly criticized by environmentalists for its negative effects on the social quality and the water table. Secondly, this programme was introduced on village forests, thereby the government wittingly retained its control over what was considered as village commons. In many areas, the task of social forestry was handed over to private and international agencies. The initial attempt to involve the local population in the implementation of the programme did not happen; instead the monoculture plantations became a bone of contention with the tribal population. Commercial trees, primarily meant to serve as wood, supplanted the natural vegetation, which fulfilled various medicinal and food requirements of the locals. The former increased a dependency on the market while the latter provided the essential inputs for survival within the village. The government programme therefore only enhanced the vulnerability of the local tribal population vis-A-vis the market.

Displaced from their habitat and source of livelihood, the tribal population has been forced to work as wage labourers. They were forced to work in mines, factories and nearby industries as casual labourers, with little or no employment benefits. Many took to felling trees for private contractors to pull them through the lean agricultural season. Forests that met most of their needs through the non-agricultural months became a source of employment. These eventualities led to a heated debate over the role of tribes in ecological degradation. They were held responsible for cutting down forests and hastening the deterioration of the environment. This accusation gained greater ground when the forest felling movement, as a mark of protest against the government forest laws, spread across the villages of Jharkhand in the 1980s. The villagers cut down trees indiscriminately. The protestors, angered by the restrictions on their access and control over forests, were targeting forest regulations by converting the inaccessible forest and to agricultural land. It was also to drive home the fact that, except for the local tribal population, other stakeholders such as the forest department, the private contractors and the industrialists were deriving maximum benefits from forest resources. It reiterated the sense of tribal alienation from their land and forests.

The government has been forced to recognize the growing resentment among tribes across the country on their receding control over natural resources. The realization on the part of the government is also largely due to the presence of strong resistance movements in tribal areas. Self-determination movements in tribal areas have for long protested against the alienation of tribes from their habitat and have demanded the right to self-rule. These movements, such as the demand for a separate Jharkhand and Chattisgarh, have consistently claimed rights over their waters, forests and land (jai, jungle aur-zamin) and with it the right to determine its use and management. They have tried to expose

the direct relationship between ecological degradation and the violation of tribal rights. The argument being that restoring tribal rights on their habitat and thereby their beliefs and practices around land, forest and water, would enable the creation of a more sustainable natural environment. The movements tried to bridge the divide between 'nature' and 'culture' put in place by the British and sustained by the Indian State. They demonstrated that the right to practice tribal culture is closely tied to tribal rights on land and forests. The struggle then has not just been political; it is also cultural and ecological regeneration, no programme could be sustainable. Similarly, nationally and internationally, it is now clear that the concerns of development and ecology cannot be separated from each other. The shift in focus from State guided economic growth and development to decentralization of development concerns was also motivated by the change in the economic policy of the Indian government in the early 1990s. Despite emphases on economic growth over ecological concerns, the Indian government was unable to overcome and repay its fiscal and foreign exchange debts. There was tremendous international and internal pressure on the Indian government to open the economy to private and 'international investments to ease off the balance of payment crisis. The ascendance of private and international interests in the natural resources of the country was on the one hand made tribes more vulnerable as there are more competitors now than ever before. On the other hand, with the State gradually reducing its control over the economy, there has been a gradual trend towards decentralizing governance and administration. The movement for self-rule in tribal areas coincided with this move towards decentralization and has initiated a debate over the efficacy of the new decentralized system of governance in ensuring tribal rights on land and forests.

Programmes such as the Joint Forest Management (JFM) Programme (The Forest Department) and the Watershed Development Programme (Ministry of Rural Development) were introduced as ecologically sustainable development alternatives, to be implemented through peoples' participation. The watershed development programme introduced in areas under the Desert Prone Area Development programme focused on regeneration of the catchments basin of a stream or river system by developing forests, pasturelands, raising soil conservation measures and building water-harvesting structures (gully plugs, check dams) along watercourses. The intention was to develop ecologically appropriate land use strategies, which were also economical. Though viewed as a welcome relief from the large and medium irrigation projects introduced so far in tribal areas, the programme did not manage to evoke people's involvement on a large scale.

Similarly, JFM, which sought to involve locals in the afforestation programme, met with a tepid response. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as facilitators were expected to organize the locals in the implementation of the programme. On paper, the programmes did seek to bridge the divide between ecological requirements with the livelihood concerns of tribes. People's committees were set up to oversee the inception, implementation and monitoring of programmes. But there was a lack of financial and executive independence. The real control remained in the hand of the respective government departments. The committees reflected the local level power dynamics within the village as

well as between the villagers and the local officials, which hindered the process of participation and dialogue.

People's participation or decentralization in highly iniquitous social and economic conditions has raised several questions about its relevance. As demonstrated in the case of watershed development and the JFM, people's participation has not devolved power and control to the people. Instead, the power to decide the content and implementation of the programmes still remain in the hands of the local power elite and government officials. In such a scenario, should the State give up its control over natural resources completely? Will it not give a free hand to private commercial interests as well as the locally powerful to optimize their vested interests as against all others? Secondly, the terms people's participation and decentralization presume a definition of a community. Which is equitable and homogeneous. This however is far from reality and the implications of the same are now evident in the international struggle of various developing countries as well as Indigenous Peoples over intellectual property rights.

Tribal cultures all over the world have tremendous knowledge of the flora and fauna and species of plant and animal world, however this knowledge is not granted the legitimacy accorded to biotechnology. The former is treated as discovery, devoid of creativity and the application of human intellect. The latter is viewed as an invention, that is, a derivative of nature, which is processed scientifically in a laboratory and transformed from a raw natural product to a chemical, synthesized form. The product then undergoes change through human facility and therefore patentable. This dominant view of traditional knowledge system reintroduces the modern, scientific divide between 'nature' and culture', as the knowledge set, produced and sustained within a community and a culture is treated as informal and incidental.

Tribes are doubly vulnerable, not only in terms of their natural resources but also in terms of their knowledge base. The recourse to this misappropriation of traditional knowledge is to vest it in the community. But there are numerous tribal groups within a region, across regions and with varied cultures. The community no longer enjoys the traditional rights over resources. Common property, as we understand it today, is a euphemism for State ownership. How then can intellectual property rights be vested in the community? Is it appropriate to leave the responsibility of coping with the problem entirely with the State, given its predominant role in disrespecting tribal rights on their habitat? The answers to these complex questions are not easy to come by. As an interest group, tribes have to be able to negotiate their differences to prevent despoils of their way of life and knowledge systems at various levels: local, regional, national and international.

Conclusion:

Tribes are, undoubtedly, the worst hit victims in this mad rush to harness all possible resources to fulfill the needs of modern existence, but they are only the immediate victims. Their crises are as much ours. At stake is human survival. There is an ongoing debate over the ecological and human costs of development. It has been argued that the disregard of the environment, whether through the incessant cutting down of trees, changing courses of rivers to harness energy,

using strong and poisonous pesticides and fertilizers to increase production, replacing natural vegetation with hybrid and fast growing seeds and trees to hasten the reproductive capacity of nature, has systematically endangered the future of the biosphere. Just as we are responsible for the ecological crises, we are also the victims of the same. Growing drought conditions in our countryside, deteriorating soil quality; desertification of land has led to the consequent impoverishment and inflation. The emanation of toxic waste from the factories and industries as well as the callous disposal of synthetic and plastic waste has contaminated our water and food. The experience of tribes is a stark illustration of the inhumanity involved in the modern quest for progress and development. It is also a warning of what is to become of us if we do not retrace our steps towards a more humane and ecologically viable way of life.

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DENOTIFIED TRIBES AND NOMADIC TRIBES OF INDIA

In the previous units we have discussed about tribals and their problems. In this unit we shall discuss two other types of tribal populations. These are known as De notified Tribes and Nomadic Tribes (DTNT). Though these two groups are put together for purposes of reservations in jobs, there are sharp differences between them. We can also see that though Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are confused as similar or nearly similar groups. In reality this is far from the truth. There are wide differences between the SCs and STs as we have seen in the last four units. Similarly there are many differences between these two groups. Both have some common features. Both groups belong to societies that are nomadic, in the sense they did not remain rooted in one place, as most families do. Instead, these societies move from place to place in search of opportunities of livelihood.

It is obvious from the term, itself, that Nomadic Tribes are wandering tribes. These people are mainly shepherds, cowherds etc. hence they move along with their livestock, in search of their food, such as grass etc. The "denotified" tribes of India are among the lasting victims of British imperialism. Originally "notified" by the government as criminals in 1871, the DNTs should have enjoyed the freedom of independence that came to the rest of India's people in 1947. Instead, they have languished as the most handicapped community in the nation, with health, literacy, and employment levels far below the average.

The British labeled them criminals because they pursued a nomadic way of life. The nomadic tribes traditionally carried important commodities such as salt and honey between the coasts and the inland forests. The British relied on these networks to establish their own trading relationships and to guide their armies through unknown regions. Indeed, these traders and transporters of goods were crucial informants for the new rulers, who benefited from tribal knowledge of flora and fauna, transportation and communication.

As railways and telegraphs were built in the 1850s such networks became redundant. The colonial authorities grew nervous about people who moved around, carrying intelligence they could not control directly. In the aftermath of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 these former allies were seen as potential enemies. In 1871, an official Act was passed for "the notification of criminal tribes." Hundreds of tribes that traditionally collected food from the forest became criminals with the stroke of a pen. When they could not be forcibly settled, they were sometimes shot on sight. Those who were settled were subjected to a pass system to control their movements and were rehabilitated through rigorous labour.

These criminal tribes were properly de notified in 1952 after India's independence. But they were reclassified as habitual offenders in 1959, The stigma of the criminal label still follows them to this day. Many laws and regulations in various states prohibit certain communities of people from traveling; others must still register at police stations in the districts they pass through. This close association with authority makes nomadic tribes especially liable to suspicion when crimes actually occur. The percentage of DNT s in custody and under investigation is greatly disproportionate to their population. Progress towards social justice is being made. DNT s throughout India are standing up and demanding their rights. Their voices are being heard in the courts, in the press, and within the administration. They demand the same rights to land, education, health care, employment and justice enjoyed by all Indian citizens. There are approximately sixty million denotified and nomadic tribal people in India today.

Denotified and Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra:

There are about 5 million of Nomadic and De notified tribal population in Maharashtra and about 60 million all over India. There are 313 Nomadic Tribes and 198 De notified Tribes. Due to the wandering traditions over hundred of years without any ostensible means of livelihood under the influence of the caste system, they are forced to live under sub human conditions. The large section of these tribes is known as "Vimuktajaatis" or the Ex-Criminal Tribes because they were branded as criminals by birth under the "Criminal Tribes Act 1871 ", enacted by the British Government. In spite of the repeal of the act in 1952, they are still treated as Criminals by birth and subjected to harassment and persecution at the hands of the police and the state machinery. However, they have been deprived of the status of Scheduled Tribes provided by the constitution due to certain historical circumstances and the acts of omission and commission on part of the Government and the society.

Constitutional Safeguards:

After Independence, under Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India certain tribes were classified as Scheduled Tribes and have been provided with constitutional safeguards under Article 342 (2) on a national basis. The classification was made on the basis of the following criteria, which are fulfilled by the NT's and the DNT's being the most depressed sections of society.

A majority of the Nomadic and Denotified tribes exhibit the primitive traits even today. They still live in tribal groups moving from place to place in caravans in search of livelihood. The various practices like worship of nature in different forms, animal sacrifices during religious ceremonies, adorning head with horn (Banjara woman), not wearing a blouse (Wadar woman) are only a few of them to demonstrate this fact. Their social life is still governed by Jat Panchayats, a primitive form of social organization. Every year they assemble at Madhi a village in Nagar district of Maharashtra state, in annual fair where the sessions held by the Jat Panchayats of each tribe sort out various issues pertaining to individual and social problems.

Cultural Identity :

The Nomadic and Denotified tribes have a culture that is distinctly different from other social groups and can be easily identified by their dress, dialect, folklore, customs and practices. Their life style and the profession display these characteristics in every social sphere.

Location :

These tribes have had wandering traditions and they have hardly been integrated in the society. In fact, the society has always looked at them with mistrust and suspicion due to the stigma of criminality attached with them. In that sense they have been living a life of isolation from the rest of the society. Some of these tribes still prefer to stay near jungle, away from the village. Their temporary settlements are known as palorpada.

Social Backwardness:

The Nomadic and Denotified tribals have no means of production and livelihood as a result of which they have to move from village to village in the form of a caravan their children are deprived of education. They cannot take education through regular school systems in a settled society due to this unstable life style. They are left away from the mainstream of life and their life is fossilized in poverty, superstition and ignorance. They have remained backward economically and socially. Apart from the criteria mentioned above there are two other criteria which make these tribes eligible for having constitutional safeguards which are enjoyed by the Scheduled Tribes.

Nomadic Way of Life:

These tribes have wandering traditions. in absence of any means of survival and lack of education to fit into the settled society they are forced to continue with this tradition for bare survival in the most degrading and sub human conditions. Thousands of families belonging to these tribes wander from place to place and stay in temporary structures rarely fit for humans beings to stay reside in sub human conditions. Unless they settle at one place or another, unless they are provided with opportunities of education and employment they will never be in a position to integrate themselves in the society and avail of the benefits of modern civil life.

Stigma and Criminality:

The Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952 the stigma of criminality but is still attached with them. Due to this stigma they have been the victims of are the victims of hounding and torture at the hands of the British in the past and now at the hands of the state machinery. Anywhere an act of theft or robbery takes place persons belonging to these tribes in the surrounding area are arrested and subjected to various forms of torture. In the eyes of the society they are still criminals, and a wide gulf exists between them and the rest of the society. In many cases, while traveling in Maharashtra, people are told to be careful if they come across "Pare-Wada:", settlement areas of people belonging to the tribes who were formerly known as Criminal tribes. This shows us the

stigma is still retained by the authorities in their approach, which makes these tribes vulnerable in cases of theft or burglary.

A List of NT's and DNT's in the original schedule

Denotified

1. Berad, 2.. Bestar, 3. Bhatma, 4. Kaikadi, 5. Kankarbhat, 6. Katabu, 7. Lamani, 8. Phase-Pardhi, 9. Raj-Pardhi, 10. Rajput-Bhatma, 11. Ramoshi, 12, Vadar, 13. Waghari and 14. Chhapparbandh

Nomadic

1.Bawa,2.Beldar,3.Bharadi,4.Bhute,5.Chalwadi;6.Chitrakathi,7.Garudi,8.Ghisadi, 9. Golla, 10. Gondhali, 11. Gopal, 12. Helwe, 13. Joshi, 14. Kasi-Kapadi, 15. Kolhati, 16. Mairal, 17. Masan-Jog, 18. Nandi-Wale, 19. Pangul, 20. Raval, 21. Shikalgar, 22. Thakar, 23. Vaidu, 24. Vasudeo.

G. N. Dewy on Branded Tribes Of India:

G. N. Dewy has given a detailed account on tribes in India who even now are known as "criminal tribes." The social category generally known as the Denotified and Nomadic tribes of India covers a population approximately 60 million. Some of them are include in the list of Scheduled Castes, some others in the Schedule of Tribes, and quite a few in other Backward Classes. But there are many of these tribes, which find place in none of the above. What is common to all these Denotified- and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) is the fate of being branded as 'born' criminals.

The story of the DNTs goes back to the early years of the Colonial rule. In those times., whoever opposed the British colonial expansion was perceived as a potential criminal. Particularly, if any attempts were made to oppose the government by the use of arms, the charge of criminality was a certainty. The British in their list of criminal groups included many of the wandering minstrels, fakirs, petty traders, rustic transporters and disbanded groups of soldiers. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the tribes in the North West frontier had been declared 'criminal tribes.' This category became increasingly open ended, and by 1871 the British had prepared an official list of Criminal Tribes. An Act to regulate criminal tribes was passed in that year. For instance, Bhils who had fought the British rule in Khandesh and the banks of Narmada and were convicted under section 110 of the IPC were to be recognized as criminal tribals. The CT Act made provisions for establishing reformatory settlements where the criminal tribals could be kept in confinement and subjected to low paid work. They were required to report to the guard rooms several times every day, so that they did not escape the oppressive settlements.

By 1921, the CT Act had been extended to cover numerous other tribes in Madras Presidency, Hyderabad and Mysore. Thus, about the time Indian politics saw the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the freedom struggle, the Indian society mutely witnessed the emergence of a new class of people who were branded as born criminals.

Soon after Independence, the communities notified as criminal tribals were denotified by the Government. This notification was followed by substitution of a series of Acts, generally entitled 'Habitual Offenders Act.' The HOAs preserved most of the provisions of the former CT Act, except the premise implicit in it that an entire community can be 'born' criminal. Apparently, the de notification and the passing of the HOAs should have ended the misery of the communities penalized under the CT Act. But, that has not happened. The police forces as well as the people in general were taught to look upon the 'criminal tribes' as born criminals during the colonial times. That attitude continues to persist even today. One does not know if the police training academies in India will teach the trainees that certain communities are habitually criminal; but surely the CT Act is a part of the syllabus leading to the discussion of crime-watch. The result is that every time there is a petty theft in a locality, the DNTs in the neighbourhood become the first suspects. The ratio between the arrests and the convictions of the IDNTs needs to be analysed to see the extent of the harassment caused by the police to these most vulnerable and the weakest sections of our society. The land possessed by the criminal tribes was already alienated during the colonial rule. After independence, various state governments have done little to restore their land to them. Schemes for economic upliftment do not seem to have benefited them. The illiteracy rate among the DNTs is higher than among the SC or the STs, malnutritions more frequent and provisions for education and health care almost negligible since most of the DNTs have remained nomadic in habit. And above all, there is no limit to the atrocities that the DNTs have to face.

Being illiterate and ignorant of the law of the land, the DNTs behave credulously with the police authorities, often getting into difficult situations. The onus of proving innocence rests with them. I have known many of these people who are scared to wear new clothes for the fear of being arrested and therefore spoil them by patchwork before using them. Moblynched, hounded from village to village, starved of all civic amenities, shorn of the means of livelihood and gripped by the fear of police persecution, the DNTs of India are on the run. Freedom has still not reached them.

It is time that the Census authorities take up the work of deciding on a procedure to count the IDNTs as a distinct category in the next Census. Similarly, the police training academies will have to make special efforts to sensitise the new trainees to treat this unfortunate lot with less brutality and greater understanding. They will have to be brought under the provisions made for the STs in the Tribal Sub-plans. Moreover, the people of India will have to raise their voice and alert the authorities at local and National level to the kind of silent genocide that the McNees are facing. It is then that, someday, these first freedom fighters of our country will receive the benefits of Independence for which they have carried the stigma of being branded for over a century.

This is a direct extract from G. N. Dewy and his work on DNTs in his book "The Branded Tribes Of India."

Mahashweta Devi on Tribes

Indian society is thoroughly indifferent to the word "tribe". Then comes the ultimate truth as it exists. For India's millions of deprived ones living either below the poverty line, or on the fringe of it, the word "human rights" is non-existent. Right to have a living, proper housing, drinking water, education, electricity, health facilities, communication, right over the land, they are denied everything. And they are the people whose poverty is really a big capital for the Country's ruling powers. Their poverty, depravity of their lives, the non-development of their areas forms this capital. Showing this, the ruling powers make big projects and get money. Naturally nothing is ever done.

Tribes have been denied fundamental human rights, they have joined the floating population of the other poor who follow the contractors and go anywhere for a pittance. The mighty tribal culture, their fantastic dances, music, painting and wood cuttings are lifted by middlemen for a handful of coins and sold at high prices at home and abroad. The artisans receive next to nothing.

In Indian history they are seldom mentioned. So many mighty tribal peasant rebellions against the British in the 18th and 19th centuries never got a mention in the history of the Indian Freedom Struggle. And, to the caste hierarchy, the tribal were, and are, still untouchables. The Central and state governments make special budgets for their development. People who know next to nothing about the tribals make such schemes. One instance, KAILAHANDI of Orissa. Famine and Starvation death among Kalahandi tribal are quite regular, yet kalahandi is fertile, grows regular crops. Of course non-tribals have usurped the tribal land. During famine the tribal, government will say, are supplied with rice and wheat. Yet, no one ever made any effort to know the truth about this disjunction between a good harvest and starvation deaths of the tribal, For the Kalahandi tribal like many other tribal groups, the staple food is not rice or wheat, but according to government jargon "lesser food grains" like "Marwa, Kurthi, Kodo" etc. Tribal land gone, they cannot grow what they eat, so they starve.

The "KORKU" tribe of Dt. Amravati of Maharashtra, are a forest tribe. They were foodgatherers. The rich teak forest, their home, has been depleted. Plenty has been written about them. Many good organizations and persons are sending them processed and unprocessed food in mountains. The Korkus do not touch such food. They scour food from the vanishing jungles. This tribe is shrinking in size, losing weight and 2/3 years ago a bureaucrat summarized the Korku-question in one sentence, "This tribe is congenitally unfit to survive."

Take the Korku as the representative of Indian tribals, and the bureaucrat as Indian mainstream. The gulf is unbridgeable. And think of the big industries in pre and post-independence India. In each case there was large-scale tribal land eviction and the tribals received neither land, nor money in exchange. From the time of the Tata Iron & Steel factory in British India, down to Narmada dams, the tribal are distant spectators. Their role is to see how their land is making India's wealth and they like always living in isolation...

Yet, the Indian tribes constitute 80% of India's population, according to 1991 census. This too is misleading, as the last listing of tribal groups was done in 1976. Anthropological Survey insisted that there are 635 tribes in India. Yet Govt. of India recognized only 426 as tribes. 209 tribes were, and still are left out. If the total population of 635 tribes was counted, the percentage would go up.

India is caste divided, upper castes and lower castes. The tribal are lower than the Hindu lowest class. Government of India's sole drive is to "develop" the tribal, so that they can become like the "main stream." The privileged tribal have become like the mainstream where they have not received equal-acceptance and also, have become "Detribed."

"Such people were notified, who, according to the British, were nomadic cattle grazers, wandering singers, acrobats, etc. Also those who resisted the British aggression from time to time. The logic was simple. These people lived in forests, or were nomads. Only the criminals would do this. As Indians follow caste professions, these mysterious (to the British) people too are hereditary criminals. Thus history's most heinous crime was perpetuated in this Act.

This stigma is the curse of their life. All over India, the de notified communities are jailed, mob-lynched, tortured to death in police lock-ups.

Worst of all, even India's tribal, treat the de notified tribes as "expendable ones."

The 3 de notified tribes in Bengal are Lodha, Kheria Sabar and Dhikaru. In other states, killing of denotified tribes is a regular affair.

(Some of the Killings of Tribes are given By Mahashweta Devi as Reference:

(Various Cases All Over India)

1 February 98 -

West Bengal. Budhan Sabar was tortured by police from 10-2-98 to 16-2-98. On 17-2-98 he was taken to prison, where he died. A case was filed in the Calcutta High Court,

which was concluded in July.

2. June 98 -

Maharashtra. Pinya Hari Kale was killed in police custody in BARAMATI. He be-longed to the de notified Pardhi community.

3. May' 98 -

Maharashtra. Ramesh Kale of de notified Pardhi community was killed in police custody of FALTAN.

4. May' 98 -

Maharashtra. At Dhoki village in Osmanabad district, a Pardhi woman was raped by police and her husband's genitals were crushed.

5. October'98 -

West Bengal. Mathur Sabar of denotified Kheria Sabar the villagers speared community to death.

6. June'97-

West Bengal. Lalit Sabar of denotified Kheria Sabar community was sent for some day-labour job. Then he was tied to a tree and his right arm was chopped off.

7. August'98 -

Maharashtra. The railway police attacked, at Diksal village a group of Pardhi fisher-men, women and children. A pregnant woman lost her child as she was kicked on the stomach.

8. August 98 -

Rajasthan. Alice Garg, a social worker, runs hostels for the children of the de notified Sansi community. The State Government is victimizing her. She has been framed in many false criminal cases and has been forced to go underground.

9. October' 98 -

Bombay. Raja Rathor -of Ahmedabad had gone to Bombay. He belonged to the de notified CHHARA community. Railway police dragged him to lock up. He died. No details available.

10. November98 -

Baroda. A man from the Bajania de notified community was lynched for stealing a gourd.)

Mahashweta Devi concludes by saying that she has met these unfortunate People they are innocent but still a certain notion such as criminals are attached to these tribes of India.

Mahashweta devi have known some of the nomadic de notified communities in Maharashtra who sell herbal medicines fleeing from village to village as they have to obtain passes from the police to stay in one place for 4 days only. Women are tortured and mishandled by the authorities.

Only in October' 98, a popular TC Channel showed the de notified destitute Pardhi children on Bombay streets. The commentator said, "They look innocent, but they are Pard his. Born criminals."

India is keeping the colonial legacy by treating hundreds of communities as born criminals. With India's history of post-independence decadence it was bound to be like this. When independence came, land reform was introduced to two states, West Bengal and Kerala. The feudal land system was allowed to stay in rest of India. A feudal land system nurtures a feudal value system.

India's feudals were very loyal to the British. Loyalty to the colonial legacy still persists.

That is why these de notified communities are still under a death sentence. A Budhan Sabar is killed because he is born to the Sabar community. In the old India, only the upper castes had right to literacy. The lowly born ones lived outside the city. The de notified ones live outside the society. They have no right to anything.

In India, crores of Indians are still treated as born criminals. At the end of the century, they are denied all human rights because of their birth. The world should know that it is time, from the De notified Communities.'

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AGRARIAN REFORMS

Introduction

Early nationalists like Ranade and Dutt did not regard the end of British rule as a necessary condition for independent economic development. But Nehru who did, saw all the major problems in India as a consequence of British rule; whether it be lack of industry, neglect of agriculture or the tragic poverty when India was reduced into a colony as a source of raw material and market for British manufactured goods. Our concern here is with land which was reduced to a colonial category.

Both radical Nationalists and Marxists brought to light the conflict of interest between different rural classes, the land-lords, the money lenders, the traders on the one hand and the peasants and the landless masses on the other. These cleavages which existed in a latent form in the traditional social structure were sharpened by the colonial regime. Both the radical rationalists and Marxists supported peasant-oriented land-reforms; the former gave greater weightage in their analysis to the interest of rich and middle peasants and latter in their analysis to the poor peasants and the landless classes. The Indian Marxist did apply theory to analysis of the class structure but it lacked the robust empirical basis which Mao Tse-Tung used in his analysis of the Chinese situation (p. C. Joshi 1975 p 20-21). The communist backed and gave leadership to major peasant movements in Telangana and elsewhere, which indeed speeded up the decision to initiate land-reforms in India (Sundaryya, 1972 p. 3). And when land reforms began to go away, the rise of Naxalite during late sixties and early seventies gave a sense of urgency with which the ruling elite revived the question of land reforms. But one has to first go into the question of the land reforms initiated by the government and why it petered down to half hearted measures of tenancy legislation,

It is important to remember that the Indian bourgeoisie had joined the nationalist movement against British imperialism and was bent upon carrying India along an independent capitalist path. This included capitalist agriculture too. But this was out of question as long as the country-side remained semi-feudal under zamindari which was introduced by the British. The Congress was aware of it at the time of transfer of power, and the AICC passed the following resolution in November 1947. 'The land with its resources and all the means of production as well as means of distribution and of exchange should belong to the community and be administered in its own interest.'

Economic Programmes Committee with Nehru as the Chairman was then set up. The committee submitted its report to the President in January 1948. Its salient recommend action was: "all intermediaries between the tiller and the State should be eliminated and all middle men should be replaced by non-

profitable agencies, such as co-operatives." (H. D. Malviya 1955 p 79, 80-81) But this was not to be. It was watered down. A new committee under the chairmanship of JC Kumarappa was set up which submitted its recommendation in July 1949. it restates the principles that land should belong to those who work it and proposes that hiring out of land should be stopped except in unusual circumstances, and demands "full occupancy rights" for those who have worked their lands continuously for six years or more. It suggests that the tenant should be able to buy back the land he works for a reasonable price. The report also recommends that ceiling be fixed for the size of agricultural holding the proposes figures for the ceiling equivalent to three family holdings. This works out, says Bettelheim, to 30-50 acres of good irrigated land.

There were several factors for this regressive step. Agriculture is a State (provincial) subject and the local and the state leadership of the ruling Congress party were much more seriously compromised with the landed interests than the national leadership. Secondly, there were widespread mass struggles in the countryside at the time of transfer of power and the necessity of undertaking the reform was to eliminate the stark exploitation in the country side, and on the other hand, it did not want it go too far in this for fear of antagonizing the powerful vested interests who could be its allies when faced with popular upsurge. Consequently, the land reforms measures did not come to much. In April 1950 a new resolution was passed on 'Agriculture and Agrarian Reform' which was more conservative than the previous text (Bhavani Sen 1955 p 81-82).

After 1950, different States began to pass agrarian reform laws. The first difficulty is that the laws do not completely do away with the innumerable privileges which the big landlords enjoyed. Instead they were aimed at reducing their extent or changing their application. The laws proudly state 'radical' principles and then proceed to nullify them. The third difficulty is that laws themselves differ in content and in some states they alter nothing and in others there are far reaching changes. First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of laws'. The one tending to eliminate the worst form of feudal exploitation (viz. zamindari applicable to certain regions only); the others tending to eliminate exploitation by big landlords in general in all regions. In both cases the object of reform was first to reduce the hold of big landlords and middle-men on peasants who work the land; secondly, to give peasants greater economic security. His insecure economic position made agricultural development impossible. The reforms were also aimed at reducing feudal, semi-feudal relationships and increase the power of independent producers on capitalist basis on the implicit understanding that capitalist production is the only method of agrarian development, and unless such a class arose the urban bourgeoisie would remain isolated.

Elimination of Intermediaries :

The above was the first aim which was mainly in the Zamindari regions; the review of the First Five Year Plan (p315) states that it was almost achieved between 1947 and 1956. The true situation is more complicated. It is true that

in all states where intermediaries existed in large number legislation had been passed. These were only reforms in theory and the situation for the peasantry had not improved, in some places it had even deteriorated, as in the case of Uttar Pradesh one of the largest Zamindari states.

The UP Zamindari Abolition and Land Reform Act was adopted in early 1951 and was ratified by the Supreme Court only in May 1952. It declared that zamindari and other intermediaries should be dispossessed of their lands, which should be handed over to the state upon payment of compensation. The same law defines a new system of land tenure in Zamindari territory. a) The Bhumidhar - (the most powerful tenure) they cannot be turned off their lands, but they have a right to sell or mortgage their land and are permitted to use their land for nonagricultural purposes. The former Zamindars and other intermediaries alone came under the legal appellation of Bhumidhar and have rights to all their lands which come under 'personal cultivation.' The power of intermediaries is so great that most of them have become Bhumidhars, holding 7 million acres of land (Bettelheim 1968 p 184). The permanent tenants of such lands have become Sirdhars with the second type of tenure. b) Sirdhars cannot sell or mortgage their land and must use it for cultivation. They can buy priority rights to their land from the State and then pay the revenue. The main result of the agrarian legislation in UP and elsewhere has been to bring large tenants into direct relationship with the State and paved the way of rural capitalism. They are mainly dominant agricultural castes and now along with the rich landowners are the dominant class in rural India. Suppression of Zamindari rights is common to most other states where similar system existed, as in West Bengal, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa and were even less progressive than UP. Here again, only the larger tenants, the dominant agricultural castes benefited, as they were able to buy their land and enter into direct relationship with the State and increased their legal security by curtailing the power of the feudal landlords. The agrarian reform has not suppressed big property but has limited it and have substituted a system of USLIS, *abusus* and *fructus* for a feudal system.

Land legislation has been introduced to some extent only in Kashmir for political reasons, and Kerala by the Ruling political party, and in Karnataka. Elsewhere apart from the benefits to large holders and formal tenants with large holdings the impact of legislation comes only in the form of regulation of rents - that is rent reform.

Regulation of Rent:

As a consequence of compromises made in land legislation other types of laws had to be passed as a part of agrarian reform to increase the peasants legal security. These are mainly in the form of tenancy regulation and regulation of rent. As Zamindars have in general retained not the appellation but immense properties, and not just what might be considered personal cultivation by formally assigning lands to other members of the family the old system of agriculture continues to exist. In Bihar for instance Daniel Thorne writes, 'it is not unusual to find estates of 500, 700 or even 100 acres after the abolition of Zamindari system. The old structure of landlord, occupancy raiyat, non occupancy raiyat, under raiyat and bataidar (share cropper) persists.

Although in some states like UP it is theoretically forbidden to let out land share cropping persists. In Bihar, Bombay and Punjab for example both tenant farming and share cropping is legally permitted but are controlled by law. Such laws often complement legislation that existed before independence. These were meant to give greater security of tenure to the cultivator and to fix maximum limits to the demands which can be made on the tenants.

The maximum that can be demanded varies from State to State. In West Bengal the share cropper must hand over 40 percent of his produce, in Punjab maximum is one third and in Bihar seven -twentieth; in Bombay the rent is fixed as one third of the gross product in nonirrigated land and a quarter in irrigated land, In Madras (TamilNadu) it varied from 33 1/3 per cent to 40 per cent of the gross product. But there is a great degree of differences in theory and practice, although in Bombay (Maharashtra) there were no big land lords, yet the statutory rents were almost entirely ignored; most share-cropper gave half their produce to their land-lord, nor was there any secret about this.

Agrarian laws have not followed the lines set by the Planning Commission in the First Plan, and new recommendations was made in the Second Plan. Planning Commission defined personal cultivation in terms of the person who accepts 'the whole risk' for the crop, provided he or a member of his family supervises cultivation. He need neither live on the land or take active part in cultivation, The State was interested in agricultural capitalism, not in "Give land to the tiller.

The Mirasdars - the big land lords, of Southern India have vindicated the Planning Commissions stand, they protested against the notion of cultivators presence on their land.

The planning Commission was critical of the agrarian legislation which usually denied the rank of a tenant to the share cropper. The Planning Commission holds that they should be given that rank: if they were tenants if would give them some security and they would no longer be at the mercy of their landlords.

Legislation has been of little advantage to peasant workers. K. N. Raj found "a large proportion of total area under cultivation still under tenancy and rents much higher than the stipulated ceilings. And land legislation has had in fact driven underground some forms of tenancy and promoting informal and oppressive crop sharing arrangements, since landlords were now afraid of rights accruing to tenants recognized as such."The high pressure of population on land made it possible for land-owners to impose such arrangements on landless agricultural population, where socio-political forces made it difficult for the landless to secure in this kind of situation the rights which they are entitled to by the letter of law.

In the 1970s for irrigated, lands the rents were as high as 50 to 60 per cent of the crop or more of the gross product, and on account of prevalence of share cropping resulted in insecurity to the tenants. Oral leases flourish since there are no complete records of land holdings in many regions of the country and there is no way in which any kind of administrative check up is possible.

Till the 1970s agrarian legislation of this kind had not benefited either the share cropper or the agricultural labour. The only ones who have gained are those old tenants, the middle and large peasants who were able to buy their right to their land. They have now become capitalist farmers. This class can also invest in commerce and money lending which are favourable spheres of investment. This class, therefore, as Bettelheim puts it, has become rural capitalists and rather than agricultural capitalist class. Agrarian legislation has strengthened the rural upper classes. These categories which were formally dependent on big landlords with secure tenures are equals of former land lords. There are regional variations.

Another contradiction that arose in the crop share's opportunity to land owning by acquiring rights was a threat to upper rural classes, and it led to eviction of share croppers. This in one sense accelerated development of rural capitalism and the reforms have therefore harmed the share croppers. So quite early the old big landowners have suffered some loss of power.

Agrarian reform has not solved India's two main problems, the social problem caused by massive rural unemployment and the economic problem of how to use the enormous productive potential of the unemployed work force for the good of the people.

Empirical analyses have not indicated the major changes in the caste structure mainly in the new upper classes that the so called land and tenancy reforms have brought about.)

Trends in Land ownership:

In recent years, the demand for relaxation of land reforms has surfaced with some force, in context of the environment created by the new economic policy. The obvious comparison is with USA, where the trend is towards larger but fewer farms with a dramatic increase in concentration in ownership and use of land. Whereas the number of land owning households in India increased from 63.63 million in 1953-54 to 116.40 million in 1992, an 80 percent increase in 40 years.

The land owning households showed an increase from 49.90 million in the 1950s to 103.32 million in 1992. The landless households which showed a decline in the first two decades showed a steady increase from then to 1992. It declined from 14.71 million, in the fifties to 8.71 in 1960s and 7.56 million in '1971-72. Then it rose to 10.64 million in 1982 and 13.08 million in 1992 reaching almost the 1953-54 level- and this increase was true for 9 states. Only Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana show a decline.

An Average area owned is an important indicator of structural change. And there was continuous decline per household. Per capita land owned declined from 0.96 acres in 1953-54 to 0.47 acres in 1991.

Since land rental market is a prominent feature of agriculture in India, it is important to measure the magnitude of tenant holdings. The tenant holdings which was 40 per cent in 1953 declined to 15 per cent in 1982-83, bulk of the tenants belong to small sized holdings, 80 percent of total operational holdings belong to them.

Types of Tenancy:

Of the two types of tenancy fixed and share cropping, the second form is on the increases, these are small and marginal holdings.

In 1992 the highest percentage of tenant holdings are reported in Orissa, followed by Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Assam. At the other end of the spectrum are J & K, Bihar and Kerala. At the all India level nearly half of the landless lease-in land.

The figures for 1995 show the progress on ceiling on land holdings continues to be poor. Although the area declared surplus is less than 2 per cent of the country's cultivated area, only two-thirds of this is distributed, and the beneficiaries are very small and compare very poorly with Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Planning Commission's Task Force identified lack of political will, absence of pressure from below i.e. from the potential beneficiaries, inadequacies of administrative machinery and judicial intervention, absence of correct and up-to-date land records and lack of supporting facilities to the beneficiaries, as the major reasons for poor performance.

One school believes that agrarian constraint no longer exists in the old form, except in some pockets and can be effectively countered by adoption of modern technology, institutional support and credit - the major proponent of this view is V M Dandekar. The Green Revolution in Punjab belied this.

P. S. Appu argues strongly against removal of ceiling limits as the size and distribution of land is already highly skewed. With rising productivity and soaring land prices farm lands would pass into the hands of rich farmers and speculators causing great hardship to small and marginal farmers; Government should instead concentrate on better implementation of ceiling laws and quick distribution of surplus lands. In fact there are arguments in favour of implementation of land reforms for a rounded development.

Questions:

- 1) What were the reasons for introducing land reforms in India.
- 2) Why did land reform remain an unfinished business in India.
- 3) Why were land reforms watered down to tenancy reforms. Was the programme successful?

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INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction:

The global economy had been undergoing some major changes from 1980s; during this period there were major shifts in the Indian economy too. After two decades of industrial growth in India, production was stagnating and faith in state planning had began to erode. Global recession of the 1980 started in USA; putting up interest rate and restricting money supply were considered necessary to curb inflation. But it led to slowing down of the economic activity in US and recession started spreading and lasted till 1983. There was a recovery for 5 years but recession returned in 1988 along with unemployment that lasted till 1993. CT Kurien (1995 p56) points out, however, in the sphere of finance there was a tremendous expansion, and an increase in foreign direct capital investment through out the world that were freely crossing national boundaries. Such investment tripled in the 1980s and by the end of 1990 stood at \$1.5 trillion. During these years, many boundaries between national financial markets dissolved and truly global capital markets began to emerge. It brought to the fore transnational or multinational corporations. They grew rapidly in the 1970s and emerged as power to be reckoned within the 1980s. It is important to remember, multinationals, essentially, are a further transformation of capitalism and will therefore show the dynamics of capitalism.

Transnation all or Multinational Corporations (MNC):

During the colonial period there was considerable flow of capital from metropolis to the colonies, they went primarily into extractive industries, plantations and oil. After the World War II, especially from 1960s there was a quantum leap but foreign corporation retained their national identities till mid- 1970s. General motors for example, was seen as a US corporation; Philips as Dutch; Siemens as German and Sony as Japanese.

The period saw active promotion of American private investment in Europe. Europe needed capital and its Common Market made investment there attractive. The growth of MNCs peaked when the growth of industrial output and trade had slowed down.

Reasons for Radical changes in Industrial Production Process:

MNCs show the dynamics of capitalism viz. in technical progress, concentration of capital, desire to control markets and accumulate profits.

Changes in the production process are made through changes in technology. Science and technology are brought together as a continuing process into the manufacturing plant as R & D (research and development) and as an essential part of production activity. But technical revolution does not spread without the support power of resources and liquid capital. Machinery and equipment become rapidly out of date and so funds have to be built up for their replacement. Secondly, the power to purchase latest equipment and skilled personnel has now become more important than sinking capital in fixed forms for long duration (Note Indian industrialists has failed to do so as they claimed they lacked resources for continuous process of modernization) Elsewhere, technological

innovation had led to an enormous increase in productive capacity and it often exceeds the demand.

Henry Ford had introduced assembly line for mass production, yet production remained rather limited. C. T Kurien (1994 p 61 ff) explains: Today, production of a motor vehicle involves manufacture of more than 4000 components for each unit, in a number of stages. Many of those stages are subject to economies of scale to different extent. It is estimated, for cars the efficient scale is something to the order of 200,000 to 250,000 units per annum for mechanical parts and over 1000,000 for body panel. It is in such industries that MNCs emerge, as production exceeds the demand; few nations can absorb a million cars a year, markets have to be found in different countries. In such a situation, there is no rationale in locating production in one country, rather production of plants can be located in places where there are specific advantages of production and can be transported to a central place for final assembly. This is possible now with highly developed information technology to transmit designs, information and instructions in a matter of seconds to any part of the world. Ford Escorts, for instances which is assembled in UK and Germany is actually done in fifteen different countries viz., France, Canada, USA, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Japan, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden as well as UK and Germany. As Reich (1991 p 113) points out that when an American buys its General Motor's (GM) Pontiac it is not a local but an international transaction of \$20,000 paid to General Motors, about \$6,00 goes to South Korea for routine "labour and assembly operations; \$ 3500 to Japan for advanced components (engines, electronics); \$ 1,500 to Germany for styling and design engineering; \$ 800 to Taiwan, Singapore and Japan for small components; \$ 500 to Britain for advertising and marketing services; about \$ 100 to Ireland and Barbados for data processing. The rest - less than \$ 8000- goes to strategists in Detroit, lawyers and bankers in New York, to lobbyists in Washington, to insurance all over the country and to GM's shareholders who live in US, but an increasing number of whom are foreign nationals.

Reasons for International Divisions of Labour:

There are manifold advantages to MNCs which resort to international division of labour in production of any commodity. They are primarily by taking the best advantage of conditions prevailing in different parts of the world, such as, inexpressive labour in South Korea, skilled workers in Britain and so on. Besides, tax laws are different in different countries, which MNCs try to take advantage of. The most important reason for all probably is risk diversification: if for instance there is a strike in one country, or rise in wage rates in another, or devaluation in the third, then the spread of plants gives the MNCs a chance to cover the risks. Such an international division of labour may bring about changes in the fiscal policies in some host countries. MNCs may get concessions as they do in India, in return for bringing capital, technology, and prestige to these countries; they play a perceptible role in the working of the global economy.

The global context shape the organizational forms of the MNCS. Some go in for verticle integration, bringing under single centralized control different stages of production like a motor car, while locating the plants in different countries. Still others go in for horizontal integration, with several plants in different places

producing the same goods or the same part. Others become conglomerates, producing several related items such as chemicals, cosmetics, photographic and audio-visual equipment and the like. An MNC has the option of subcontracting its operations to other national or multinational agencies, thereby becoming an "enterprise web." Many MNCs are of this type operating in India today.

MNCs control marketing. They become monopolies or oligopolies. They set the prices to producers, and to sellers advantage. They also resort to 'transfer pricing'. When plants are located in different nations, an MNC has the freedom to move its goods from one plant to another as an internal manner. MNCs liberally make use of this opportunity pricing the items they transfer from one country to another in such a way that gives them custom duties and taxes on profits in different countries, they are able to maximize their profits; They combine their oligopolic power for this purpose. Under these circumstances it is doubtful whether international prices are competitive (Kurien p. 63-64) for the host country.

The function of GATT in the 1970s and early 1980s was meant to deal with gross distortions of international trade created by MNCs; yet, MNCs found it easy to make an entry into GATT in the 1980s and succeeded in getting heads of strong national states like Regan and Thatcher accept their agenda as 'national' agenda and push it into the GATT rounds. Several nations including India, resisted in vain, and were forced to accept new items - for discussion atleast. Once negotiation began, the real intention of liberalization of trade meant member countries "were to provide unrestricted freedom to MNCs, not only in manufacturing and trade but also in sectors like banking, insurance, transport and telecommunication. Once under this purview meant that political power of strong national government can be used through a wide range of retaliatory measures to make smaller and weaker nations fall in line. The Uruguay Round therefore presents a strategic move of giant MNCs to penetrate into global forum through the courtesy and co-operation of national governments. The infamous Dunkel Draft was one method of promoting international trade. It gave no real opportunity for detailed discussion. It was a matter of great concern for the Third World countries for the Draft's full endorsement of the MNCs position on Intellectual Property Rights, Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights and Trade Related Investment Measures.

International Finance: Integrative Trend :

Integration in the 1980s proved most effective in the realm of international finance. Finance ceased to be a facilitator of real economy and acquired an autonomy of its own. Thus came the strange phenomenon where trade grew faster than the World output between 1970 and 1987 and international banking grew twice as fast as international trade. For this reason, MNCs pushed for freedom of movement of capital. Besides, it increased its propaganda in favour of free trade and free markets, ignoring the fact that much had been done to restrict and regulate international trade since the beginning of 1980. Free trade meant freedom of capital to move in and out of national territories in quest of profits.

The problem facing developing countries was manifold. Because of recession in the developed countries, there was a fall in demand. Prices of all commodities except oil exported from the Third World Countries fell to the lowest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s and terms of trade turned against them. The 1980s was period of intense price instability. It was particularly acute in the case of sugar, coconut oil; and it also affected jute, nickel, tea, tin and lead.

It is important to remember that capitalism has integrated some markets but segmented others. It has linked up national economies but fragmented economies within national boundaries. MNCs have no desire to see national boundaries removed. They thrive on a variety of conditions that prevail in different nations and seek to take advantage of that variety, such as tax laws, labour costs etc.

Changes in Indian Economic Policies In 1980s - Precondition for the Globalization Process:

India's first and second industrial policies aimed primarily at self reliance through import substitution policy was successful, but the beneficiaries were big industrialists who had considerable resources and clout. This class (as indicated in Unit 11 and 12) had grown out of traditional trading communities, and still bore the ethos of the trader, eager to make a quick buck out of an existing economic situation rather than like capitalist entrepreneur creating profits through continuous process of modernization. Their business firms remained tightly controlled, family business houses rather than professionally managed corporations (unit 120). They used their resources to capture the licenses in order to capture the market and started a wild process of diversification in the seventies into all kinds of unrelated fields (Savur 1990) rather than intensive development in selected industries which led to a flabby industrial structure of agglomerative firms with fragmented capacities without economies of scale and obsolete technology. After two decades of planned development 50 per cent of Indian population remained below the poverty line and Congress lost its power at the Centre. It was back in power in early 1980s, Indira Gandhi returned with the conviction that major changes in economic policies is needed to sustain industrial growth and eradicate poverty. Growth would be the responsibility of those who controlled resources, while poverty eradication would be taken over by the State, partly through poverty eradication programmes. The major task of State policy to stimulate growth was to remove the many controls that had been imposed on production in earlier decades. In part, these controls consisted of restrictions on import and in part that related to the determination of priorities. Henceforth purchasing power would be the determining factor, not administrative regulations. It was a process of liberalization. The rationale was: Controls and regulations were necessary when the economy was weak, and it was now hampering productive activity. Secondly,

the economy was sufficiently monetized and the growth of the financial assets was considerably higher than growth of income indicating the growth of the financial system. The social direction the economy needed, could be achieved through monetary and financial management without resorting to physical regulations and controls. The accent was on managing the economy and away from planning the economy. (C. T. Kurien)

The New Economic Policy (NEP):

The NEP was started by Indira Gandhi in the early 1980s and continued by her son Rajiv Gandhi as the Indian industries had stagnated after an impressive performance in the first two decades. Hence a new industrial policy was announced in early 1980s providing private producers and investors with a greater role. Tax concessions were given to the corporate sector and higher income groups. Salaries were substantially increased for those in 'higher levels in the government and government related sectors like the universities. There was an unprecedented expansion of employment in the public sector, This raised the purchasing power to create a vast flourishing domestic market which new MNCs viewed with great interest. Although this segment constituted only 10 per cent of the total population, yet it accounted for 75-85 million well endowed consumers. As a result of the new policy consumer durable goods, cars, motor cycles, televisions, domestic equipment grew at a phenomenal range from 8 to 22 percent per annum. Agricultural sector also performed well, as a result the growth rates of the economy rose to an average of 5 percent.

The new growth path was hailed, Yet sober analysis indicated that this growth was achieved through colossal increase in public expenditure and through deficit financing, especially of the central government. The total expenditure of the central government moved from Rs. 17,800 crores in 1979-80 to Rs. 22,000 crores in 1980-81 and to a massive Rs. 82,000 crores in 1988-89. Since reduction of taxes was a part of the new strategy, the increase in expenditure could be met only, by public borrowing and an equally sharp increase in deficit financing.

Worse still was the alarming growth of the interest surplus and the alarming external borrowing that went with it. It was no longer financed by concessional loans from foreign government and international agencies. India turned to commercial borrowing at high interest rate from 2.4 percent in 1980 to 6.1 percent in 1982. Earlier in 1979-80 when India felt the second oil shock it had turned to IMF for a loan of SDR \$ 5 billion disbursed over 3 years. Only 3.9 billion of the loan was drawn and the arrangement terminated in 1984. External borrowing went on merrily till it reached \$ 56.3 billion in 1989, this constituted 21.5 percent of the GNP. And India became the largest debtor among the developing countries by 1989. Unfortunately the high growth rate also showed the lowest employment rate. It was as low as 1.55 percent from 1983 to 1988. In other words 1980s was a period of 'jobless-growth', an unsustainable growth and huge debt.

Liberalization and the New Industrial Policy - 1991

The New Economic Policy of which the New Industrial Policy of 1991 is the most important part was launched against this background. Liberalization is a process of economic policy changes initiated as a State policy. It was initiated

with the help and financial support from IMF and the W. B.¹

Liberalization relates to macro economic stabilization measures and major structural adjustment reforms which include reform in (a) Trade Policy, (b) Industrial policy, (c) Policy relating to public sector, (d) policies to attract FDI, (foreign direct investment) including NRI technology and equity participation, (e) tax structure, (f) tariffs for both capital and consumer goods etc.

There were some fundamental policy changes, such as near abolition of licensing, easing of rigorous of MRTP and FERA, reduced list of industries reserved for the public sector, automatic agreements, and for 51 percent foreign equity (and in some cases even 100 percent), defining a new role of state electricity boards, private investment in infrastructure, protection of consumers interests, new liberal locational policy for industry, free import of capital goods, reduced tariffs for consumer goods, transport subsidy for backward areas, rational renewal fund, deregulation in small-scale industrial units, and radically new policy measures for attracting direct foreign investment (FDI), new technology and NRI investment. The sole objective of these highly liberalized policy measures was to enhance productivity and efficiency in Indian industries by creating a competitive environment.

Impact of Liberalization on Indian Industries:

Liberalization was not undertaken by the State in response to the entreaties of big business, but under its own compulsions in an economic crisis. It has had very negative consequences on Indian industry. True, Indian business had in preliberation era seen collaboration as a means of its growth through technical and financial supplements. But the 1991 liberalization policy was introduced so swiftly when Indian industry was still not prepared for competition and exposed Indian firms to competition with the ruthless and predatory MNCs.

Baldev Nayar (1998 p 2456 ff) notes: To begin with Indian firms are small in size in comparison with MNCs and suffer from structural deformities. The cost capital for Indian in firms is higher, with a interest rate of 16%, where as, the real interest rate in US is 8.5%. MNCs have huge financial resources which not only enables them to set up industries, bear losses for sustained period and muscle out Indian partners from joint ventures, grabbing control of their companies and in the process ousting Indian partners from the market. Coke's ability to bust Ramesh Chauhan of Parle from his premier position as a soft drink maker to mere bottler for Coca-Cola demonstrates the power of MNCs as well as the need for the domestic entrepreneur to delink from global MNCs. Proctor and Gamble's attempt to utilize Godrej's excellent marketing and distribution system of soaps and manufacturing facilities, technology and expertise in vegetable oils in place of tallow for its own benefit and leave Godrej in the cold, shook up Godrej into reality of the unethical practices of MNCs.

Indian firms continue to suffer from various handicaps, vis a vis MNCs, for instance, downsizing is made difficult except at the cost of expensive voluntary retirement. On the other hand MNCs start their enterprises with reduced requirement of labour and resort to putting out system. Again, though direct personal and corporate taxes have been reduced in recent years, the indirect taxes continue to be unreformed, so the high, multiple and cascading taxes

especially at local levels make Indian-goods uncompetitive as these taxes are not applicable to foreign imports. The tariff structure at times contain serious anomalies, such as when finished goods attract tariffs which are less than raw material and components. For instance, the electronic industries thus burdened by import duties on raw material at 40-50 per cent as against 25 per cent on finished products, and components is losing its strength in manufacturing and is changing into an agency which merely markets imported goods (ET 20-6-96). Again, the government has, allowed imports from MNCs in areas reserved for small scale industry; whereas, Indian big business is not allowed to produce in this area (Hindu 8-12-97). The State has allowed profit margins of domestic firms to be squeezed by cheaper imports.

The State Policy has discriminated in favour of the MNCs, in the poer sector it is offered counter guarantees for fast tract projects but not to Indian firms. MNCs are allowed 100 percent subsidiaries but not the Indian promoters-, it is a creeping 2 percent per annum (Baldev Nayar 1998). Indian business is naturally sore that the state has not provided "an even playing field". but is biased in favour of MNCs. The present position is a strong contrast to the preliberation days when the Indian partners in foreign collaborations were provided with considerable security against foreign domination, control and take over. But in the port-liberation period the Government has raised the foreign equity ceiling to a dangerous 51 percent and now to a 100 percent. As Baldev Nayar puts it the domestic corporate sector, for the first time, saw itself as a target rather a benefactor of liberalization. The swiftness, vigour and the aggressiveness with which foreign investors sought to penetrate and capture domestic market along this broad front -crucially to side line or oust earlier local partners in joint ventures... has spread consternation among...the members of the Indian corporate sector". In joint ventures investment occurred in 5 industry groups whose order of rank is: (i) Chemical 17%, (ii) textiles, 13% (iii) processed food, (iv) non metallic mineral products 9%, (v) electrical machinery 7% totaling to Rs. 2,56,158 crores by the end of 1993. The total DFI was Rs. 13,200 crores. As a result of delicensing there was a growing trend in number of foreign collaboration and the foreign equity investment rose from Rs. 12 bn, in 1990 to Rs. 108.9 bn. In 1993 in just three years. The industries have become more capital intensive than before. But the degree of competition is miserably low-which is due to oligopolic structure in the Indian industry and the basic purpose of liberalization to create competitive environment has not been fulfilled (See Wadhwa 1994) Again despite foreign collaboration and technological collaboration there is no indication of rise in productivity and efficiency during the port-reform period. Even more damaging is the fact that only a limited number of big firms are lying on the frontier level while most firms are gradually losing out on the market (Neogi and Ghosh 1998).

Growth of the Informal Structure:

The new small structures which offered no protection to its emerged labour force grew not in the period of liberalization in the 1990s but date back much earlier to the 1970s and the 1980s. The Indian government had set the ball rolling in the 1970s by assigning special export

promotion zones where electronic goods or parts of these goods were

manufactured by MNCs. exclusively for export. These were walled in areas with tiny units where women alone were engaged to work under tight control, where little interaction within or with outside labour force was permitted. They worked for a pittance as the labour market was saturated.

Small units began to make their appearance outside the zone to produce a whole range of goods, more often parts of goods for example for Godrej, Standard Batteries, Philips, who are Videocon etc. who are well known for this. Since the share of labour costs in production is large, both Indian and international firms started decentralization and closed specific departments or specific production or specific production processes and began sub-contracting either to large or medium and sometimes even to very small units.

Independent sub-contractors also began to take orders from many different companies and maintained various product lines and links with parent corporations. In the plastic industry for instance where the dye, the most expensive part of the machinery in the manufacturing process, is supplied by the parent firm to the sub-contractor.

Shah and Gandhi (1998 p14) refer to commercial sub-contracting for export firms who have only export licence for marketing specific commodities but not for manufacturing them. There are tiny units in slums producing a variety of commodities which range from leather to plastic goods which have no infrastructure costs to bear. In these plastic units manufacture goods for the cheap market, some of the leather goods are for the up market in the metropolis.

Large and small units which have the flexibility of decentralization give out work to be done at home. They range from finishing and assembly work for electrical goods, switches, toys, tooth brushers, scooter parts etc. The home based workers are mainly women who get their work from middle-men and traders. The majority of such women workers are from low income groups who are already saddled with house-hold chores. This double burden is made intolerable as there is no interaction with co-workers and they are unprotected by labour laws, (Vide J. Ranade 1994)

Power Looms replace cotton mills:

The structure of textile industry has changed in India. The cotton mill industry, one of the largest in the World gave way to small power loom industry. The composition of the power looms began to change in 1980s, their production peaked in early 1990s and began to decline in 1995.

Some of the major causes for the rise and proliferation of power looms in 1980s can be put down to decline of the composite mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad which had failed to modernize; combined with this were organizational changes, such as growing power of the wage labour and the increasing demand for fabrics of man-made fiber since 1970s. Meanwhile, there were changes also taking place in the hand-loom industry where weavers had worked their looms with their family labour in many textile centers like Bhivandi. Its structure began to change when the exports began to rise in mid 1980. In Bhivandi, as elsewhere too, the owners of the units were now traders

who carded on the work with impoverished immigrant

labour; they began to work on power looms which are capable of easily changing the product like and take on man-made fibers as well as cotton.

It is important to note, the power loom units work in two shifts of 10-12 hours each and the wages are very much lower than in textile mills, and the workers cannot form a union although theoretically the factory Act is applicable to any unit which uses power-and engages more than 10 persons. The workers's -the weaver's wages is on an average Rs, 100 per day (in 1997), they have no family life. The migrant worker's food is cooked in a collective kitchen and he 'hires' a bed. This frugal living is necessary to send his saving to the family. The savings of these skilled weavers compares with the wages of semi-skilled workers in the formal sector of the industry. (Tirtankai Roy 1997 p 901).

There are several reasons why the power looms have flourished and forged forward, a) The state has turned a blind eye and did not impose the Factory Act even when a unit engaged more than 10 workers. Since 1980s the average size of the units have been increasing, some units now have 40 to 100 looms b) The 1985 textile policy made import of machinery easier, by 1987 Ruti machines were introduced - for the first time in India - and it became especially popular in Surat power loom sector. Incidentally Ruti machines were introduced in profitable mills only in late 1980s. exports demanded new technology, this was done by the power loom sector via collaboration with European and East Asian firms (Roy 1998 -p 904).

In mid 1980s exports surged in cotton garments, cotton fabrics and cotton knitwear, half of there were from power looms. Economic reforms induced major transition. On the one hand it encouraged exports of fabrics and garments, made new technology available, which enhanced power looms' capability and quality. I Roy (1998 p 903) points out competition in the World market has exposed some very serious weaknesses of both technological and organizational kind in power-loom production. As long as there was excess demand for cloth in the market, roughly between 1992-95, power looms did well. In the last two years however power looms no longer kept pace with addition in capacity. Export demand is for cotton and there are a number of cotton based complexes in South India.

Mills hold fabric brands. The local demand today is ready made garments. Buyers often go by brands of the garments. This has made fabric brand unimportant. Such a situation has now made it unnecessary for power looms to co-operate with mills. Economic. reforms have not only induced expansion in scale but have also affected technology and organization in the power loom industry.

Summary and Conclusion:

Globalization or movement of capital from the West coincided with major internal changes introduced in India in 1980 in response to an economic crisis. The policy makes assumed that competition would shake up the powerful private corporate sector which had grown sluggish under the State protection. It is important to remember hat understated protection, large industries developed and grew rich but were unfit for competition since they had not cared to continuously invest in newer technologies. Meanwhile the other half of India

reeled under unemployment, poverty and deprivation. Some temporary measures, such as, new enhanced pay scales created a new middle class with a new buying power -and the demand for goods went up, and with it industrial production rose.

Although this new middle class with enhanced buying power constituted no more than 10 per cent, yet it created an enormous market, which attracted MNC to enter India, now in a big way.

It is also important to remember that the nature of production of large corporation had changed drastically in US since economies of scale was so large that the product could not find large enough national market - it had to be international. Capital having been cut from its mooring, the corporations found it profitable to have new international, country-wise division of labour in manufacturing their commodities. India was particularly attractive for some of its raw material and cheap skilled labour power. MNCs indulged in both putting out system to save labour cost and entered into collaboration with Indian corporation to get quickly at their established market and learn to use new unfamiliar raw material and techniques in production. MNCs with their financial clout and cunning and the Indian State bending backwards for foreign direct investment, are driving the Indian partners up the wall, while some have succumbed, others are trying to fight back and are desperately asking for "a level playing field" in its own country and from its own national government. The new economic policy and the new industrial policy has rendered a cruel blow to the working class. The conditions of the labour in the new small units are appalling. The rise of power-looms is an unexpected by product of failure of India's first industry, the textile mills having failed to modernize its production technology. Public sector industrial units which are highly profitable and with the most modern technologies are under a threat of disinvestments - as a part of liberalization and globalization.

Questions :

- 1 . Discuss the conditions in India which permitted large scale entry of MNCs into the country. Also discuss its consequences.
2. What do you understand by globalization? Discuss its consequences on Indian industry.
3. What are the consequences of the New Industrial Policy (1991) on the structure of the Indian industry?

Readings:

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GENDER, MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Objectives:

- a) To understand the meaning of kinship with specific reference to north India
- b) To study the unequal status of women in social and professional life
- c) To explore the changes in the Indian family.

Concepts:

Levirate: it implies the marriage of a widow to the husband's brother

Sororate: it implies the marriage of a man to his wife's younger sister

Affinal relationships: Relationships established by marriage which ' form alliances between groups of persons related by blood (or consanguineous ties), are usually referred to as affinal relationships.

Introduction:

Marriage and family play an important role in the lives of all human beings and more so in India. People are dependent on their kinship relations both in their personal life and work field. With industrialization and urbanization there have come a lot of changes in families and the status of women. However certain basic characteristics have remained the same. This chapter will- explore the interlinkages between marriage, family and the status of women in India.

Meaning of Kinship:

Kinship is one of the main organizing principles of human society. Kinship systems establish relationships between individuals and groups on the model of biological relationships between parents and children, between siblings and between marital partners.

Kinship and Marriage in northern India:

In order to understand the cultural phenomenon in India one will have to understand a) the configuration of the linguistic regions, b) the institution of caste and c) the family organization. In the northern zone of India, kinship behaviour changes slightly from region to region and within region, from caste to caste. The following description attempts to give the ideal northern pattern

by referring to practices and attitudes found most commonly among a majority of the castes in the northern zone.

The organization of the family is essentially similar throughout northern India and most of the castes conform to the same basic pattern which also has its roots in the Indo Aryan patriarchal family. It is therefore not surprising to find that the marriage regulations are based mainly on considerations of consanguinity. The actual rule of marriage is that a person 1) must not marry in his part family which can be called the patri clan in some cases 2) must also avoid marriage

- a) with the children of his mother's siblings and cousins
- b) and with the children of his father's sisters and the children of his father's female cousins. In almost castes in the northern zone the marriage of cousins (removed even by 2 or 3 degrees) is viewed with great disdain though a few cases occur as exceptions.

If a daughter is given into a certain family of a certain Village, a second daughter is generally not given into the same family or village in that generation. There is also a prejudice against exchanging daughters.

In Rajasthan, Rajputs are divided into hypergamous clans but apart from clan hypergamy a new kind of hypergamy has resulted through their spread all over northern India. Wherever they spread they are supposed to have mixed with local people so that the status of the Rajputs becomes lower and lower the more easterly they are. In the Gangetic plains it is therefore customary for eastern brides to seek western grooms. A record of Rajput marriages over areas in the north show that western villages provide grooms while eastern villages provide brides and that there is a direction in the transaction of circulation of women. Not only is the family which gives daughter in marriage supposed to have a status inferior to the family which receives a daughter but even a village which gives a daughter is inferior in status to a village which receives one. There is thus a wider and wider circle for seeking marital alliances but there is always an outer limit for this expansion which is different for each caste. The limitation of the field for marriage is due to the fear that the bride or groom of a distant village, though claiming to belong to the same caste as one's own, maybe inferior in some ways.

In the northern zone girls and boys are generally married when they are but children. The bride is not finally sent to the groom's house until she reaches puberty. Till that time she goes to her parents in laws house for a few days as a guest. The groom is called to take away the bride on an auspicious day after the bride has her first menses and a ceremony called gauna is performed. Between the marriage and gauna ceremony a period of anything from a few months to a few years can elapse depending on the ages of the groom and bride.

Though the system of levirate marriages is found among a large number of castes it doesn't have the sanction of the present day Brahminic religion. Higher castes and ruling families generally prohibit levirate and prefer that the widow should adopt a boy. In majority of cases however it is the man who adopts a child, if he finds himself childless. In spite of marrying

again and again. The most powerful motive for polygyny besides the display of social status and wealth is the desire for male children. Not only does the man marry again if the first wife proves to be barren, but the author has known cases in which the first wife has insisted on a second marriage of her husband in order that children should be born in the house. The reason being that the adopted child is a complete stranger while the co wife's child would be that of the husband, so at least they would love him/he as their own.

The behaviour patterns of the kin group in the northern Indian family is like that of the patri family in ancient India. The man lives with his patri kin among whom he is born and brought up. He comes in contact with his wife's relations but rarely. The woman on the other hand spends her life, except for the few childhood years with affinal kin with whom she is not acquainted up to the moment of her marriage. A woman must stand up and cover her head and face if she is in the same room as her parents in law. Except on ceremonial occasions, she must never be in the same room as her father in law or the elder brothers or cousins of her husband.

When a bride comes home, all the women neighbours come to see her bride when she takes off the end of her sari from the head. This ceremony is called mukh dikhai. If the husband dies when the bride is but young she is branded as an inauspicious woman. Generally a woman is so dominated by the affinal kin or by the husband that she rarely makes a positive impression except as a mother. It is not rare to see women, who were nothing but meek nonentities, blossom out into positive personalities in their middle aged widowhood or boss over the weak old husband in the latter part of the married life.

In the whole of north India, women rarely go out of their houses or take part in marriage processions. In the central and southern zone women in their coloured saris and rich ornaments are conspicuous members of marriage processions. In the north the women's sphere however, is much more isolated from that of the men than in the south and this is due to the fact that the family is not only patrilineally oriented but dominated by the patri kin. Girls are always given in marriage to people with whom they are not acquainted. The southern patrilineal families on the other hand prefer marriages of the cousins so that the orientation is not entirely patrilocal.

Since the establishment of the British rule government service and work in industrial areas has given rise to single units of husband wife and children. In such families the wife has a position of responsibility and respect but in majority cases it is not a true single family because it has economic and ritual ties with a larger patri family whose member the husband is.

The present north Indian family is thus patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Marriage is generally outside the kinship and local group. It is a joint family in which the brides are given away. The behaviour is strictly regulated according to generations, according to whether one is born in the family or married into the family and finally according to whether one is a man or a woman. A tathgr does not eat in the house where his daughter is given as bride. Sometimes even the village in which the daughter's husband's people live is avoided for meals. Customs like levirate and sororate show that marriage is very much a relationship between two families rather than two individuals.

Family and Kinship:

The family forms a very important part of the social environment of the infant, the child and the adolescent. The family has its own internal dynamics and these are not dependent entirely on its capital. What is remarkable however is the extent to which family particularly in the service class does succeed in transmitting its cultural and social capital to its younger members, despite psychological failures of many kinds.

The family has been and continues to be one of the strongest institutions of Indian society. Despite the persistence of a basically conservative attitude to marriage and parenthood, some changes are taking place in the Indian family. There is reason to believe that it is undergoing a process of nuclearisation, atleast in the sense that the small group of parents and unmarried children is acquiring a sharper identity within the wider kin group. Important demographic changes have begun and are probably quite widespread in the higher occupational strata. The age of marriage is rising for both men and women and the limitation of family size has become a common strategy. These demographic changes are probably being accompanied by more subtle changes in the relations between spouses, between parents and children and between siblings. Despite these changes, Indian family is at this social level much more stable than its counterpart in the West. The upper middle class Indian family has shown its strength by the manner in which it has adapted and retained control over a changing social environment.

The family plays an active role in transmitting to its younger members all the advantages it has at its command. Among doctors, engineers, accountants and others, parents do not simply wait for their children to soak up cultural capital that is a part of the domestic environment. They take an increasingly active part in their education and training. Middle class parents have become career conscious and this consciousness is implanted in their children at a very young age. The idea that a child will step in automatically or effortlessly into his parent's occupation has ceased to be a secure basis for socialization. A different kind of preparation is now required for his success in the future. Families have variable amounts of not only cultural but also social capital. The

social capital of the family consists of networks of relations that may be activated in maintaining and furthering the interest of the family as a whole or of its individual members. These networks are made up of many strands. Ties of kinship and marriage are important everywhere. In addition and particularly in the service class other ties, developed in schools, colleges, office or profession and association of diverse kinds also play an important part.

Recent research has shown that the modification of family functions in the industrial era is much more complex than hitherto assumed. Samita Sen has pointed out the crucial role that the families played in maintaining the flexibility of the working force of the jute mills in Kolkata by making it possible for the men to migrate while the women remained in the villages, taking over the male tasks in the rural economy, maintaining the claim to property and thus permitting the men to return to the villages in times of economic distress illness or old age. Studies have shown that family and kinship relations are an important factor supporting the migration pattern.- People generally migrate for work to a place where they have some kith or kin or someone from their village. Often the kinship relatives help an individual to get a job in a factory. So while the man stays in the city and sends the salary back home to the wife and children, his stock of food grains comes from the village. In such a scenario the man has the option of going back to his home in case of illness.

Women and Work:

In the 1920s and 30s as Indian industries faced serious economic challenges, a gendered nexus among the management, the unions and a privileged (male) section of the workers began to fall in face. This nexus was to be of enormous significance since the factodes mills and mines which undertook the first large scale retrenchment of women in the 1930s were to be the nucleus of the 'formal' sector covered by state regulation. These comprised the 'organised' sector not only because they were subjected to record and registration by the state but also because by 1960s their tabour grew to be almost fully unionized with considerable bargaining strength vis-&-vis the employers and the state. The process of unionization and successful collective bargaining were however far from gender neutral. It were male workers who were successfully "organized" unionized and brought within the purview of regulated wages and working conditions. These men strengthened their strangehold over prized jobs in the organized sector through various exclusionary strategies. The process of organization went hand in hand with masculinisation. Indeed it could be argued, women's marginalisation was seen in the nature and development of organized working class politics.

Women were never quite eliminated from the formal sector. Indian factory workers were only predominantly male. In the early 1920s women were 15-20% of the work force in textile mills, nearly half and more than half of the workforces of mines and plantations. Their proportions began to decline from the 1930s. Even in the 1930s women were not'docile' or compliant workers. They also forged solidarities, sometimes with men workers, sometimes against them and they undertook collective action, sometimes separately and

sometimes in alliance with male dominated trade unions. However in a period of thirty years women became irrelevant to the male dominated unions.

From the 1940s interest in labour concentrated on the twin aspects of modernization industrialization problem and on the issue of progressive class consciousness. The earlier prominence given to women workers as a special category eroded with the decline in their proportion within the workforce. Women workers were being marginalized on multiple fronts: actual exclusion from rapidly improving organized sector employment, from the political space that unionized labour aspired for and eventually occupied, and even more from general public and 'social concerns' of the earlier decades. There was a diminution of women's identity as workers. The organization of industry and labour became directly related to the decline in women's employment. On the one hand employers became less interested in women as the progress of welfare legislation reduced their cost advantage. On the other the nature of legislation helped to bring their reproductive roles into prominence and created a climate of public opinion against women's employment in the industry. Employers could then target women for retrenchment as a means of "rationalizing" the workforce. Even as the process of organization created a relatively more secure enclave of employment approaching a 'family wage', working class family strategy changed. In working class households where many members previously worked in the industry, the trend turned towards a single male bread winner. But this was a tiny enclave and the proportion of families who secured a foothold in this sector was on the decline.

In the less advantages agricultural and/or the 'unorganized' sectors, the participation of women and children remained steady and often increased during downturns in the economy when the 'security' of the 'organized' sector failed. Such adjustments within the family economy were made possible by the continuing authority of male heads of households who were able to command the development of women, of women's labour in consonance with 'family needs.' The male workers over 'their' women's productive/reproductive activities came to be reflected in trade union policies. The unions were also participants in the merging public and state emphasis on women's reproductive roles. The significance of such a convergence lay in the development of national level federated trade unions by political parties, which contributed to the process of 'organization' of registered industries. Labour thus 'organised' earned not an inconsiderable voice in labour conditions. This voice, when just emerging in the 1930s, accepted female retrenchment as a necessary strategy in the face of spiraling male employment. From the 1950s, the union played an active role in eliminating existing women and hindering women's recruitment. Such policies were only in part due to the prejudices of the middle class leadership, reflecting, much more importantly, the adult male workers' status aspirations and desire for maintaining family authority.

Notably, there have always been some women and in different industries at different points in time, who do not fit the stereotype of low paid, irregular casual workers. The stereotype is true for the majority of women, but in some industries

unionization and worker's struggles have won better wages and security for women workers as well as the men.

From the 1950s the working class has been an active participant in the process of its own 'housewifisation' as a means of upward mobility and approximating middle class family norms. Recent economic policies may undercut the 'domestic' aspirations of the women of hitherto more secure and upwardly mobile working classes. Women's own access to such employment has always been restricted and likely to be more elusive. But these are not monolithic attitudes. There are other groups of women who are now able to access employment before marriage - though poorer women's access to such employment, which emerged significantly in the 1970s, may now be under some threat. For a vast majority of poor women their work remains in the most vulnerable and insecure sectors. A majority of women continue to respond to 'family' imperatives, regarding when and where to work.

The work arrangements are getting informalised. So though women are getting more opportunities, they are being forced into short term low pay temporary jobs. 93% of India's work force is in the informal sector. With mechanization, women have lost out. It is the men who get jobs which involve sophisticated machines. There is increasing competition in the traditional sectors where women had more hold. For example in dress making a student from NIFT would get more preference. The flexible time schedule which enables women to work from home deprives them of the rights that they may have got at the workplace. It is being seen as a great favour to say that women can work from home. What is happening is that MNCs are subcontracting their production to middlemen who then farm out work to women based in homes. So women have to bear all the overheads of electricity, work space, cost of raw materials and equipment. The contractor bears none of the non wage costs. Then once the consignment is delivered payments are delayed. The women have no one to turn to, The manufacturer is often in another country operating through shadowy contractors. But the working from home concept is being pushed by companies as it enables them to get out of giving benefits to women. Somehow it is being sold as an attractive option which enables the women to both work and look after her home.

It is likely that the recent changes in the labour market will reinforce rather than erode the pervasive value of dependence, which continues to inhere in the definitions of Indian femininity.

Summary:

The behaviour patterns of the kin group in the northern Indian family is like that of the patri family in ancient India. The man lives with his patri kin among whom he is born and brought up. He comes in contact with his wife's relations but rarely. The woman on the other hand spends her life, except for the few childhood years with affinal kin with whom she is not acquainted upto the moment of her marriage. The women are generally dominated and not really given much freedom.

With industrialization and increasing competition parents and family in India is much more prepared about their child's future prospects than before. They take an increasingly active part in their education and training. Middle class parents have become career conscious and this consciousness is implanted in their children at a very young age. At the same time, family and kinship relations play a big role in the kind of work place chosen by the individual. The kinship bonds provide a support system to an individual in a fast moving industrialized society.

With constant competition and mechanization, women workers are losing out on jobs and opportunities. For a vast majority of poor women their work remains in the most vulnerable and insecure sectors. A majority of women continue to respond to 'family imperatives, regarding when and where to work. The working from home concept is being pushed by companies as it enables them to get out of giving benefits to women. It is being sold as an attractive option which enables the women to both work and look after her home.

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Questions:

- 1) Discuss the changing trends of family in India
 - 2) What are the problems women workers face?
 - 3) Explain the patterns of kinship and marriage in India with an example.
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PERSPECTIVES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

CURRENT DEBATES

This section is a brief introduction to the term pluralism and the debate on the nature of politics, religion and state in India. The debate on pluralism reveals the significance of primordial ties and identities in people's lives, while simultaneously reiterating the importance of a general consensus in society over the acceptable and unacceptable limits to the exercise of cultural and religious difference. The debate thereby focuses on the critical nature, role and rights of the individual, community and the state in the establishment of pluralism in India. The section on politics, religion and state puts across the various perspectives on the relationship of the state and religion in India as well as the growing religious intolerance in public life. The attempt is to relate, and reflect upon, the growth of religious fundamentalism in the context of the debate on the theory and practice of secularism in India.

Pluralism:

We have often come across the term 'pluralism' with reference to India. It is commonly mistaken with the term diversity. In as much as diversity is a precondition of pluralism, it is not synonymous with diversity. While diversity suggests differences and dissimilarities, pluralism seeks to reconcile diversity and differences with equality. Pluralist integration therefore does not subscribe to the melting ideology, wherein differences are dissolved to form a unified and a uniform culture, nor does it believe in segregation and isolation of differences. Pluralism seeks to mediate between one and the many, and establish equality with heterogeneity as well as reciprocity with difference.

India is a diverse country, with differences across cultures, religions and regions. The biggest challenge for India at the eve of independence was to accommodate and synchronise these differences in order to progress as a nation. The main dilemma has been in determining the framework for the practice of pluralism: the role and rights of the state, community and the individual in the context of pluralism. For example, even though the caste system in India manifests diversity in terms of occupational specialization and skills, this diversity that we appreciate is a part of the same system that is hierarchical and exploitative. Herein we cannot ignore the position of the disadvantaged castes against the

caste system and their struggle for a life of dignity. Similarly, how does one ensure that the religious practice of one community does not impinge on the rights of others? Also, how does one protect the rights of individuals to protest against discriminatory practices within the community and religion? Does pluralism provide the right to redress or the right to protest against tradition (assuming that tradition, social beliefs and practices are not static and change with time) and religion or does this go against the fundamental percept of pluralism of non-interference in and respect for cultural differences?

As a modern democracy, India was committed towards respecting the rights of citizens to practice their culture and religion, although it was also committed towards introducing social reform to build an egalitarian society. Social reform, whether on behalf of the marginalized communities such as scheduled castes and tribes or women, necessarily involved interfering with social practices and belief systems of the people. In this, there was an attempt by the state to redefine appropriate and inappropriate social beliefs and practices, which invariably went against the principle of respecting diversity. The debate on pluralism came into prominence in the context of the diminishing rights of the community and the individual vis-&-vis the state. Thus there are three sets of rights that are debated in the context of pluralism:

1) The rights of the individual as against the community and the state - This includes the rights of persons who are convicted as defaulters against the state, that is, political prisoners who have fought against the violation of their cultural and political rights by the state (e.g. Naxalbari movement) as well as those who are denied the status of full fledged citizens such as refugees and migrants. The latter infact have been victims of state agendas and activities and, as an unorganized and a mobile category, have been denied basic human rights. In such cases, what are the powers of the individual in determining her/his rights against the state? Can these rights question the very existence of the nation-state? Also, there has been a growing resentment among the host population against migrants who have taken over their share of material and economic resources. In such a scenario, the rights of the migrants are in direct conflict with that of the local population.

The community is not homogenous and it also changes with time. There are differences within a community, just as there are dominant forces within a community, which may seek to subordinate those who do not conform to the status quo. The issue of women's rights within a community (dominant, marginalized or the minorities such as the Muslims), whether it is the issue of property rights to women or the sustained legal campaign against discriminatory social practices against women such as dowry, sati, sexual exploitation, etc, forms one such area of recognizing heterogeneity and pluralism within a community.

2) The rights of the community against the individual and the state - There are numerous examples of how community rights have been disregarded by the state to serve its own interests. For instance, tribes have been denied the right to practice their culture by the state taking over tribal rights and control over

land and forests. The state's commitment to industrialization and economic growth has led to the over exploitation of resource rich tribal areas and has displaced tribal communities from their habitat. Various resistance movements among tribes have drawn attention to the disrespect for tribal culture and way of life as well as the violation of community rights by the state. It has also brought to light the fact that communities have no legal status in India, except in the case of communities that have been provided special status vis-&-vis the constitution. However, even in the case of the later, the rights are vested in the individuals belonging to these communities and not to the communities themselves.

3) The right of the state, whether as an arbitrator between communities or as a provider of appropriate values for the maintenance of peace and order - Here the reference is to situations of conflict as in the case of the Ram janmabhumi - Babri Masjid issue, which is highly volatile and has put the secular credentials of the state to test. There is no consensus among scholars and political analysts on what should be the role of the state in resolving such conflicts. On the one hand there is skepticism about the role of the state in resolving the conflict, as it would vest unlimited power in the state and be misused by political interests within the state apparatus; on the other hand, the state has been accused of its weak stance (or the non-committal attitude, which again could well be read as a political position on the matter) on the issue, which allowed popular sentiments to run riot and consequently led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

Clearly, pluralism is as important within a tradition and a community, as it is between traditions, communities and between communities and the state. It is both internal and external. Also, while the rise and spread of ethnic and religious mobilization as well as resistance and separatist movements in the country reflects the growing discontentment among communities with pluralism, it also suggests the changes within the social and political fabric of society and the state. It articulates the need to modify and redefine cultural and political rights of the community vis-A-vis the modern democratic set up. In so far as these demands are placed in the public arena and are political in nature, the question on whether pluralism is just about ascertaining difference and rebellion, or asserting difference with a will to dialogue and negotiate ways of accommodation in the midst of differences becomes increasingly relevant.

Politics, Religion and State:

The relationship of politics, religion and the state is one of the most controversial and complex issues, not just in India but also all over the world. The history of religion, of the West or India, is full of political intrigue, violence, and the struggle for power. Religion and politics therefore have been intrinsically interconnected. As a country of many faiths, the issue of religion and politics has been a particularly sensitive one in India. In recent times, the issue has gained prominence even more after the communal riots in Gujarat, where the BJP led state government has been implicated for abetting violence against Muslims and instigating the riots. Communal riots in India, whether the 1984 riots against the Sikhs following the death of Indira Gandhi and at the behest of some

prominent Congress leaders of that time or the regular series of Hindu-Muslim riots in communally volatile areas, have focused on the role of politics in fuelling communal violence. Although the role of politics in religion and vice versa has never been doubted, the active role of the state in furthering religious ideologies and political interests has rekindled the debate on the supposed 'non-partisan' role of the state vis-à-vis religion and politics.

Of late, the role of the state in religion has come under scrutiny with the sustained campaign of the BJP and other affiliated right wing organizations against what it calls the 'appeasement of minorities' in the name of secularism as well as the consolidation of the political, militant and aggressive front of Hinduism, i.e., Hindutva. This campaign has grown alongside their movement against, what they term as the 'distortion' of history by the Marxist and Leftist scholars (who for the right wing are their worst opponents as they are anti-religion), which apparently purposefully makes no mention of the Hindu rulers and leaders' contribution to Indian history and omits portions of history that implicates Muslim leaders of discriminatory practices against the Hindus. The BJP government introduced changes in the school syllabi and textbooks in its attempt to correct the supposed errors in the presentation of historical facts. With the Congress and its allies coming to power, this project has been stalled, though the issues are still unresolved. These claims could well be dismissed as political propaganda, but the accusations have revived countrywide debates on secularism and the power of the state in selective dissemination of knowledge and a particular ideology. It has questioned the sole right of the state to present or deny a certain interpretation of history as facts and the truth about India.

As a secular state, India has no state religion. Secularism in India, in the broadest sense, has meant respect for all religions. In this sense, it steers clear from defining what secularism actually entails in terms of state practices vis-à-vis religion. 'Secularism, to the extent such an "ism" exists at all, it is an orientation and a set of practices based on two principles: separation of state and religious institutions, and the exclusive authority of state institutions in deciding about public good' (Brass 1999: 361). Secularism in popular parlance, however, has stood for state's commitment to religious pluralism. This understanding underlies the debate on minority appeasement and, conversely, the control of state institutions by the majority. The popular argument of the Hindu majority is that the state is biased towards minority religions and does not subject these groups to reforms of the kind introduced among Hindus. Similarly, minorities argue that the state is under the control of the Hindu majority and that minorities, especially Muslims, are looked upon with suspect and are discriminated against with regard to employment, holding of important public offices, etc. thus there is a general air of confusion regarding the state's position on secularism, whether it is the formal separation of religion and state institutions with the state dissociating itself from religious matters -or a paternal attitude towards religious pluralism.

Non-interference in religious matters or the separation of state and religious institutions is another issue that has been regularly questioned. State

management of temples and religious sites is an obvious example of state directly managing religious centers. Moreover, religion is not just about faith in the supernatural; it is fundamental in the organization of life itself. The state as a producer of facts about the private (sexuality, marriage and reproduction) and public (community and the market) aspects of its subject population through regular censuses and surveys sets its modern, reformist and developmental agenda for the country and as a consequence redefines the desired course of personal and public growth of its citizens. This role of the state is at odds with the role of religion as a repository of values in the conduct of everyday life. For example, social reform measures such as abolition of child marriage, sati and the introduction of constitutional measures to empower and protect rights of women directly challenges social practices sanctioned by religious heads of authorities. The secularization and rationalization of life necessarily seeks to reduce the sphere of influence of religion within society. Thus the relationship of religion and the state is complex and multi-layered.

The divide between religion and the state in the Hindu tradition is notional. Both the king (at the helm of secular power) and the priest (as the upholder of Dharma or religious duties) have complimented each other in the maintenance of their respective field of power (Dumont 1966). But with the ideological clash between the modern state and religion In India, this relationship has become precarious. The growing incidences of communal violence in India have been attributed to the tenuous relationship between religion and the state, with both seeking control over life of individuals (Nandy 1999).

The tension is visible in politics, wherein the religious expression of conflict is less about politicization of religion as it is about remodeling of religion (e.g., the militant, intolerant rendering of Hinduism) and inventing fresh parameters for a religious identity to reclaim its share in power. The entry of religious leaders in to active politics and their election to positions of power is a recent phenomenon and is an indication of a public disavowal of the divide between religion and politics.

The spate of communal violence also reflects the disenchantment of both the majority and the minority religious communities in India with the state's secular and modern vision of a good life. It is therefore no surprise that communal riots are more an urban phenomenon than a rural one, with conflicts being sparked off on secular issues of unemployment, poverty, dispossession, and territorial and cultural uprooting. The rhetoric of religious pride therefore has a mass appeal in terms of resurrecting the deflated self and the use of religious symbols in political mobilization cuts across all political parties, even by those parties that ostensibly claim to be secular. However, these political strategies also are not infallible and looked upon with suspect, evident in the fluctuating performances of political parties in electoral politics in the last decade and more.

Whatever be the arguments on the nature of secularism in India and the reasons

for the rise of religious fanaticism, the debate has reached a critical juncture as now the deliberations are on whether the state should continue to arbitrate between religious groups in India or whether the locus of power should shift from the state, which has mishandled and further confused the issue of secularism in India, to the public arena, that is, to the people themselves. The latter suggestion is as susceptible to manipulation, as the public arena is not homogeneous and is also constituted by a myriad of public representatives. However, the thought that good sense would finally prevail and the nonviolent and tolerant aspects of the religious traditions in India would overcome the present scenario motivates concerned citizens to keep striving towards building bridges across ideological divides on the issue.

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