



**M.A.  
SEMESTER - I  
SOCIOLOGY  
PAPER - II**

**COMPETING PERSPECTIVE  
ON INDIAN SOCIETY**

**SUBJECT CODE: 73465**

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**Syllabus Paper 2**  
**COMPETING PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIETY**

**Course Rationale:** From 1960s the developments in social sciences exhibit knowledge as contested engagement. In Indian sociology too the view that Indian society could be approached and understood by the commonly agreed criteria and perspectives is contested by the Dalit, feminist, tribal and other margined locations. As a result there has emerged a rich body of critical knowledge expounding diverse and competing perspectives in understanding the crucial theme such as Nation, Caste, Gender, Tribe, Ethnicity, Religion, State, and Globalization. The debates are also about the very nature of the practice of sociology and the centrality of the politics of locations in producing sociological knowledge. This paper aims at exposing students to these exiting debates and critical perspectives and varied ways of engaging with society and self in India.

**Unit I: Introduction-brief overview of Sociology in India**

- Schools of Sociology in India with special focus on the Bombay “School”
- Approaches: Indological, Civilizational, Historical and Field-work
- ‘Indianizing’ and ‘Indigenizing’ Sociology
- Non-Brahmin Perspectives on Indian Society

**Unit II: Theorizing Caste**

- Ambedkar’s theorizing of Caste and the ‘Caste Question’
- Dumontian and Post-Dumontian approaches to theorizing Caste
- Gender and Caste (Gail Omvedt, Leela Dube and Sharmila Rege)
- Caste Today: Power, Hierarchy, Difference and Identity (works of Beteille, D. Gupta and Ilaiah)

**Unit III: Constructing the Nation and Nationalism**

- Nation as spiritual and Political (Partha Chatterjee)
- Critique of the “Project Homogenization” (T K Oommen)
- Nationalism sans Nation (G Aloysius)
- Women and Nationalist Discourse (Victim, Mata and Sevika)(Tanika Sarkar and others)

**Unit IV: Critical Perspectives on complex Social Transformation: Globalization and Indian society**

- Social Consequences of changing State-Market relations: Education, health, employment
- Traditional Hierarchies in Globalizing Society: Multiple, Intersecting and complex

## Marginalities

- Economic Transformations and Tribal Communities: Marginalization, claims and struggles
- Identity Politics: Region, religion, class as contexts of homogenized and fragmented identities.

## Readings:

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## **SCHOOLS OF SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE BOMBAY 'SCHOOL' APPROACHES: INDOLOGICAL, CIVILIZATIONAL, HISTORICAL AND FIELD WORK**

### **Unit Structure**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Historical Development of Sociology In India
- 1.3 Different Schools in India
- 1.4 The Bombay School
- 1.5 Approaches Used In The Study of Sociology
  - 1.5.1 Indological
  - 1.5.2 Civilizational
  - 1.5.3 Historical
  - 1.5.4 Fieldwork
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Unit End Questions
- 1.8 References and Further Readings

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### **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To explore the development of different Schools of Sociology in India.
- To learn about the historical development of Bombay School
- To learn about the different approaches followed in Indian Sociology.

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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A school can be said as an Institution which has certain scholarly enterprise. Some characteristics of the it need to be like several scholars work on some common areas. It has to functional for some years and is popular because of its work. In the field of sociology, the term school was initially used with Chicago and Los Angeles. The present chapter will focus upon understand the different schools of sociology in India and with special focus to the Bombay school. In addition, the different approaches in sociology would also be discussed in the later sections.

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## 1.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA

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

- i) Proto-professional stage of sociology which existed before the twentieth century
- ii) Professional stage of descriptive and explanatory sociology practised in the first half of the present century.
- iii) Stage of diagnostic sociology.

On the other hand, some other scholars have distinguished the development of Sociology in India as follows: i) 1773-1900 A.D. here the foundations was laid; ii) 1901-1950 A.D., when professionalized (pre-independence years) iii) the post-Independence years, when a complex of forces including the under taking of planned development by the government, the increased exposure of Indian scholars to the work of their foreign colleagues, and the availability of funds which resulted in growth in research activity (Srinivas 1973). This period can be again sub divided into the following phases: a) Developments in the Seventies b) Perspectives in the Eighties c) Imperatives in the Nineties iv) Sociological Research in India (Nagla, 2008)

### Check Your Progress

1. How could Sociology division be seen in seventies?

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2. State the three stages of development as discussed by Ramkrishna Murkherjee?

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## 1.3 DIFFERENT SCHOOLS IN INDIA

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Teaching of Sociology started with 1914 at the University of Bombay when the colonial government offered a special grant to the institute for teaching posts. A separate Department of Sociology and Civics was established in 1919 and Patrick Geddes, the English Urbanist was the first professor. G.S Ghurye joined the department and took over Geddes position in 1924 (Patel, 2002). M.N. Srinivas headed the Department of Sociology in Delhi where Sociology and Anthropology was

given importance. In Mysore sociology took a social philosophical orientation. At Lucknow school sociology turned to focus on interdisciplinary indigenous approach. Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherjee introduced anthropology in department of economics in 1922. In 1947 sociology was seen as an independent discipline. Initially it was Bombay University which played an important role then Lucknow then, from 1960s Delhi university played a key role. There are several other departments which also played important roles like Calcutta, Goa etc. The issue of language also came with several universities where those who had English centres they became the dominant school than those operating with regional languages.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Discuss the specialization of Delhi and Mysore school of Sociology ?

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2. State the specialisation of Lucknow school?

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## **1.4 THE BOMBAY SCHOOL**

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The Department was set up in 1919 with an eminent British sociologist and town planner **Sir Patrick Geddes** as the first Professor and Head. The Department played a pioneering role in the promotion of social science research in general and in the development of sociology and cultural anthropology in particular. It initiated a project of mapping out, independently, the vast ethnographic landscape of India through systematic field studies. In the span of over nine decades, more than 250 Ph.D. and M.Phil. dissertations have been completed in the Department. The Department played a leading role in the professionalization of Sociology and Anthropology in India. **The Indian Sociological Society** and its Journal **Sociological Bulletin** owe their inception to the initiative of Professor Ghurye and his colleagues in the Department. Long before the value of inter-disciplinary research came to be widely acknowledged and emphasised, a number of inter-disciplinary studies relating to the varied dimensions of Indian society were taken up in the Department.

**Professor Sir Patrick Geddes** was the Head of the Department from 1919 to 1924. His academic endeavours spanned the disciplinary boundaries of Sociology, Town Planning, Geography and Biology. He impressed on his students the importance of field work and practical

experience. His work continues to inspire new generations of students not only in Sociology but also in Architecture, Town Planning as well as Sociology of Science.

**Dr. G. S. Ghurye**, was appointed Reader and Head of the Department in 1924. He became Professor in 1934 and continued to head the Department until his retirement in 1959. Ghurye's initial training was in Sanskrit and Indology. Under the influence of Sir Patrick Geddes, Ghurye pursued higher studies in Anthropology under the distinguished anthropologist W.H.R Rivers at Cambridge and later under A.C. Haddon. His attempt to combine insights from Indology with anthropological perspectives was one of the major contributions of the time. After his retirement he was designated the first Professor Emeritus in the University of Mumbai. Some of his works have been criticized though yet his contribution is inevitable.

**Professor Ghurye** guided 55 students for the Doctorate in Sociology, probably the highest number for any single Sociologist. He trained many eminent sociologists who contributed to building the discipline in India. Among them, mention may be made of the following: **Iravati Karve** and **Y.B. Damle** who subsequently moved to University of Pune, **M.N. Srinivas** who started the Department of Sociology at Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, **M.S.A Rao** who also went to Delhi School of Economics, **A.R. Desai** and **D. Narain** who succeeded Ghurye as Heads of the Department in Mumbai, **M.S. Gore** who went on to head the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and later became the Vice Chancellor of the University of Mumbai, **Suma Chitnis** who became the Vice Chancellor of SNDT Women's University and **Victor D'Souza** who was head of the Department of Sociology at Punjab University.

**Professor K.M. Kapadia** succeeded Professor Ghurye as Head of the Department in 1960. Professor Kapadia will be remembered for his notable contribution to the study of kinship, family and marriage in India. His book *Family and Marriage in India* became a classic in its genre and a reference book.

**Professor A.R. Desai** succeeded Professor Kapadia as Head of the Department in 1967. Professor Desai made a significant contribution to Sociology through his numerous publications relating to political sociology, rural sociology, peasant struggles and trade union movement. His books *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, *Rural Sociology in India* and *Peasant Struggles in India* are widely used. He was also a Marxist scholar and actively engaged with trade union.

**Professor J.V. Ferreira** assumed the headship of the Department in 1976. Initially trained in the Department of Sociology, Professor Ferreira subsequently went to Vienna and obtained a doctorate from the University of Vienna. Professor Ferreira contributed to anthropological

theory and methodology through his book *Totemism in India* (1965) and later through numerous papers and monographs. He edited the second series of the ICSSR sponsored Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology in 1985. Ferreira also developed the model of Integral Anthropology.

**Professor Dhirendra Narain** succeeded Professor Ferreira as Head of the Department in 1982. Professor Narain completed his doctoral dissertation under the guidance of Professor G.S. Ghurye, which was later published as *Hindu Character* (1957).

**Professor A. R. Momin** distinguished Cultural Anthropologist assumed the headship in 1991 after Professor D. Narain.

**Professor S. K. Bhowmik** became the head after Professor Momin in 1999. Professor Bhowmik carried out pioneering work in the areas of plantation labour, trade union movement, the issues confronting workers in the informal sector and urban poverty. *Tea Plantation Labour in India, Street Vendors and the Global Urban Economy* (2009), and *Industry, Labour and Society* (2012) are among his major contributions. Since 2004, Prof. Bhowmik has moved to Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

The study of Gender as a field also emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the Department. The department also have producing scholarly work like on Tribes (Dr. Indra Munshi), important writings on Dalit and marginalization by Dr. Jogdand and Dr. Ramesh Kamble.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. State the contribution of Prof. Bhowmik

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2. State the contribution of Prof. Ghurye?

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## **1.5 APPROACHES USED IN THE STUDY OF SOCIOLOGY**

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Nagla (2018) discusses several types of approaches in his book ‘The Indian Social Thought’ like -

### **1.5.1 Indological :**

Indology deals with interpretation of ancient texts and linguistics studies of the ancient Indian culture (Siddiqui, 1978). The Indological approach works on the assumption that historically, Indian society and culture are unique and the 'contextually' specificity of Indian social realities could be grasped better by the 'texts'. Indological approach refers to the historical and comparative method based on Indian texts in the study of Indian society. Indologists use ancient history, epics, religious manuscripts and texts etc, to study of Indian social institutions. The Indological writings also deals with the Indian philosophy, art, and culture. Several scholars have used the Indology in their work like K. Coomarswamy, Radhakamal, Mukherjee, D.P. Mukerjee, G. S. Ghurye, Louis Dumont.

### **1.5.2 Civilizational :**

Civilizational perspective refers to understanding a society from its civilization. Civilizational perspective stresses on complex structure of great and little traditions. It includes the studies on the tribal, rural and urban culture. The civilizational perspective involves study of a combination of many subjects like analysis of classical and medieval texts, administrative records, village, caste and its wider network and ultimately the issue of unity and diversity. It analyses the structural support systems behind any civilization. For e.g. It looks into the historically framed portrait of religion, caste, village, state formation, land relations and so on. The followers of this perspective also believe that one has to undertake study based on cataloguing (listing of cultural traits), cultural essence and cultural communication and history. N.K. Bose and Surajit Sinha, Bernard S. Cohn and several others have used civilizational perspective in the understanding of Indian society. They have tried to explore the historicity, continuity and interlinkage of various structures in India.

### **1.5.3 Historical :**

Social sciences could be divided into two major areas. These could be classified in two categories viz., the nomothetic and ideographic. Ideographic sciences are those which study unique and unrepeatable events, while the nomothetic sciences attempt to make generalizations. We can thus call sociology as a nomothetic science and history as an ideographic science. Historians and Sociology both collect often data but the way they collect is different. For example – Historians collect the knowledge of unique phenomena of the past. On the other hand, sociologists try to seek information about certain uniformities in social behaviour under specific conditions. Thus, the difference between the two is the mode of inquiry. However, the data of history has been also widely used by sociologists. This shows the assimilative quality of sociological works. At present even historians are using data generated by sociologists. (Nagla, 2008). (1) History plays a very important role in Sociology. Guha

notes that history is no more a chronological record of kings and queens; its realm has been considerably expanded and terms like ‘social history’, ‘history from below’, ‘subaltern history’ indicate the variations available today within the discipline. Another important aspect in which the linkage between the history and sociology is that both disciplines has been strengthened, changed understanding of truth and objectivity in history. The monolithic concept of one ideologically neutral truth which is central to liberal historiography is no more accepted (R. Guha 1989: 214). The historical truth can give a great understanding of the society. (Cited from Aloysius). There are other approaches too like Marxist, Feminist, Structural Functionalist . being used in the Indian Sociology.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Write in brief about the Indological approach

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2. Discuss the civilizational and historical approach in brief?

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### **1.5.4 Fieldwork:**

Sociology has always been dealing between two views. Field view and book view. Though both stand important, the field view helps in getting a greater depth of the subject. The field work tradition in India became more prominent with M.N. Srinivas. He even wrote an article titled ‘Studying one’s own society’. Srinivas also developed the concept Sanskritization in his book ‘Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India’ (1952), D.N. Majumdar conducted fieldwork among Ho tribe of Kolhan Bihar (Singbhum), which appeared as book in 1937. Andre Beteille, Iravati Karve, too carried out fieldwork in village and focused on the structure of social relationships, institutional patterns, beliefs and value systems of rural part of India. Several Sociologists and Anthropologists have continued this tradition even today. Even though the pioneers of the subject in India. A full-length study of the Sacred City of Gaya is attempted by Vidyarthi in his book, ‘Sacred Complex in Hindu Gaya’, (1961). The study focuses the city of Gaya as a dimension of Indian civilization in the framework of Red-field and Milton Singer’s theories of civilization.

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### **1.6 SUMMARY**

In this chapter we saw the discussion about different schools in Sociology. We learnt about the tradition of Bombay school which started during the colonial period and under the guidance of Patrick Geddes to G.S. Ghurye and still continues to thrive. We also learnt about the different approaches used while studying sociology like Indology, Civilizational, Historical and fieldwork.

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## 1.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the historical development of sociology in India with regards to different schools of thought?
2. Explain the various approaches used in the study of sociology?

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## 1.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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## **INDIANIZING AND INDIGENIZING SOCIOLOGY AND NON BRAHMIN PERSPECTIVES**

### **Unit Structure**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Indigenization of Sociology
- 2.3 Need for Indigenization in the context of India
- 2.4 Aspects of Indigenization
- 2.5 Classification of Indigenization
- 2.6 Challenges
- 2.7 Indigenization of Sociology in India
- 2.8 Non-Brahmin Perspective
- 2.9 Summary
- 2.10 Unit End Questions
- 2.11 References and Further Readings

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### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To understand the concept of Indianization.
- To identify the factors behind Indigenization of Sociology.
- To analyse the emergence of Non-Brahmin perspective.

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In order to understand Indianization and Indigenization of Sociology it is important to understand the concepts of Sociology in India, Sociology of India and Sociology for India. Sociology in India stands for professionalization of Sociology that involves teaching of Sociology. It started in 1914, at the University of Mumbai by the Grant received from government of India. However, the discipline of sociology had made its formal beginning at the Calcutta University in 1917 due to the efforts of B.N Seal but did not make any impression. In 1919, the department of sociology was set up at the University of Mumbai by Patrick Geddes who was joined by G.S Ghurye and N.A Toothi. Sociology was introduced in the department of Economics and Sociology in 1921 at Lucknow University headed by Radhakamal Mukherjee. Due to the effort of B.N Seal and A.F Wadia sociology was introduced at Mysore University in 1928 and in the same year sociology was started at Osmania University

under Jafar Hasan and in the late 1930s the teaching of sociology began in the Poona University under Irawati Karve.

However undertaking empirical research was prevalent before professionalization of sociology to satisfy the requirement of the colonial government. The area of research were caste, tribes, family, marriage and kinship system, rural and urban communities and were influenced by the western values and normative principles of Christianity which many India Scholars felt was biased (Mucha 2012). Teachers had freedom to design the courses as per their interest.

Sociology of India stands for the perspectives to understand Indian Society. It covers social researches undertaken to study Indian Society from colonial to contemporary period. The attempt to understand structural and cultural aspects of Indian society were investigated by undertaking village studies, city, region, nation and civilization. Even the basis for differentiation, diversity and unity were investigated through institutions such as caste, class, tribe, kinship, marriage and family, gender, political institution and religious traditions. Attempts were made to examine these institutions by studying the concepts such as communalism, secularism and identity movements. Sociological perspectives thus remain an important factor to understand Indian Society.

Sociology for India stands for emancipation and contextualization i.e Indianization and Indigenization of Sociology. Mukherjee (1973) divides development of sociology in to three distinct period Proto-professional stage before 20<sup>th</sup> century; Professional stage of descriptive and explanatory sociology in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and present Diagnostic stage. In his opinion Indian sociology should enter diagnostic state in order to seek solution to the social problems faced by Indian society. There was a paradigm shift in Indian Sociology, a question was raised regarding the relevance of pedagogic content of sociology and methods of research. RamKrishna Mukherjee called this phase as a modernisers of Indian Sociology. By 1980s there was a quest for the relevance and indigenization of Sociology in India. The western influence on Indian Sociology began to decline. And 1990s onwards the Indian Sociology started focussing on the LPG, PPP and other areas such as Gender, Dalits, Migration and Diaspora etc.

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## **2.2 INDIGENIZATION SOCIOLOGY**

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The ideas that culminated in to the emergence of discipline of sociology can be traced to the three major events that described the modern society and the culture of modernity: the growth and expansion of modern science which stand for the view that human mind was capable of mastering the world in every sphere and the doctrine of naturalism- that all phenomenon in the world of nature can be explained through cause and effect, the American war of Independence and the French Revolution that led to the advent of democratic forms of government and the Industrial

Revolution- beginning of capitalist mode of production and need for expansion of market. These three major events of history not only prepared a background for creating a science of society but also outlined the framework for developing sociological knowledge (**Jayaram 2019**).

The new discipline spread to other parts of the world through the process of colonization. For example in India the cities of Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai (Bombay, Calcutta and Madras) got universities similar on the lines of British higher education. This process categorised the world social science system into center and periphery and the critiques of this system called for the development of indigenous sociology (Panahi 2018). The indigenous scholars began asking questions regarding the relevance of theories and methodology imported from the west and also initiated a movement to replace it by indigenous thought and indigenous techniques of research.

The term indigenization means the process of indigenizing something that is exogenous from inside (Nagla 2013). Switching to exogenous sets of thoughts by indigenous ones was also termed as indigenization. The movement to indigenize sociology gained momentum in 1970s when scholars from the developing world raised their voice against the establishment of social sciences enabling “captivity of mind” (developed by Alatas S.F, Malaysian Sociologist who critically explored the indigenization of Sociology in Nigeria) and they were later joined by others. The concern for indigenization of sociology was articulated first at the Asian Conference on Teaching and Research in Social Sciences organised by UNESCO at Shimla in 1973. The need for indigenization of sociology was again raised in a meeting on International Cooperation in the Field of Social Sciences organised by UNESCO in 1976 at Paris. One of the astounding fact of this meeting was that it was attended by almost ninety percent of the social scientist from the developed world. Subsequently, the need for indigenization of sociology was addressed in the Conference of National Social Science Councils and analogous bodies in a meeting held in 1977. Later in the year 1978 a conference on Indigenous Anthropology was arranged by Wenner-Gren Foundation and in 1979 the Korean Social Science Research Council convened a seminar to deliberate on “Organization of Western Approaches in Social Sciences”. In the same year, the AASSREC in collaboration with CNSSC organised a special panel discussion during its third conference held in Manila. Believing in the need for indigenization and development of independent sociology the advocate of this idea attempted to indigenize sociology in their respective countries.

Thus the common understanding among the western and non-western scholars was that the social science in Asia, Africa and Latin America is beleaguered by Eurocentric, imitative, elitist and they all advocated for alternative discourse (Alatas 2005).

**Check your progress:**

1. What are the factors that led to emergence of Sociology as a discipline?

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2. What is indigenization of Sociology?

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**2.3 NEED FOR INDIGENIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA**

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Many scholars in India expressed their concern regarding the applicability and relevance of the methods and theories from the west and advocated for new methods and approaches relevant to Indian milieu which led to the call for indigenisation of sociology.

Some thinkers believed that Indian Sociological imagination emerged during Indian renaissance or in words of Radha Kamal Mukherjee the pre-sociological reference groups. Some members of these groups supported liberal reformist blend of Indian tradition and modernity while other groups promoted revivalist dismissal of colonial domination.

One of the earliest Indian thinkers who was critical of Eurocentric thinking was Raja Rammohan Roy. He was against the disparaging outlook of the missionaries towards Hinduism and Islam. He argued that the doctrines of Vedas, Puranas and the Tantras were more rational than Christianity. Similarly Benoy Kumar Sarkar also critiqued several aspects of Orientalist Indology. Sarkar also criticized Asian Scholars for falling prey to the misleading sociological methods and western world (Alatas 2005).

The founding fathers of Indian Sociology such as B.N Seal, Sarkar, G.S Ghurye, R. Mukherjee and D.P Mukherjee works were based on premises of the nationalist reformation and were India-centered. There was a prevalence of Indological approach. All these Scholars believed that Sociology was a cultural critique and questioned the attempt of the western Indologist to understand Indian society from evolutionary and reductionist perspectives.

Deva (1965) suggested that western ethnocentrism should be discarded from the existing theoretical and conceptual framework of sociology and a theoretical framework should be evolved that is impartial to the study of structural, functional and dynamic aspects of Indian

society. S.C Dube (1977) contend that Indian sociology was facing a crisis due to the fact that it functions within the framework of dependency by way of satellite system rather than an autonomous one.

In Singh's (1984) view most social science values intrinsically involve concepts, tools and techniques that are developed for the study of the western society. It introduces a kind of methodological individualism and social system ideology in theories and researches which may not be relevant for third world societies.

Other scholars who advocated the indigenization of sociology were Yogesh Atal (2003) who believed that the need for indigenization of social science emerged from the need to re-examine the structure of social sciences and develop an appropriate strategies to promote indigenization and Parth Mukherji (2005) asserted that the issue is not of autonomy but of the 'captive mind' thus the concept of indigenization as a process of producing relevant concepts becomes more significant.

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## **2.4 ASPECTS OF INDIGENIZATION ATAL (2003)**

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The proponents of indigenization stressed on some of the important aspects of indigenization which are as follows:

1. Self-awareness and rejection of a borrowed consciousness: The proponent stressed on the need for an inside view. It advocated understanding of one's own society not by western concepts, theories and methodology but generating new concepts and methods.
2. Alternative perspectives: Developing alternative approach on human societies to make social science more enriching and less parochial.
3. Historical and cultural specificities: Indigenization appeals for historical and cultural specificities with the aim to develop dynamic approach to deal with national issues
4. False Nationalism: The proponents of indigenization of social sciences stressed that indigenization should be above narrow parochialism or it should not lead to fragmentation of a discipline into several insulated systems of beliefs centred on geographical boundaries. It opposed not only false universalism but also false nationalism.

### **Check your progress:**

1. Write a note on need for indigenization of Sociology in India.

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2. Explain important aspects of Indigenization of Sociology in India.

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## **2.5 CLASSIFICATION OF INDIGENIZATION**

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Krishna Kumar in “Indigenization and Transnational Co-operation in the Social Science” suggested three types of Indigenization: Structural, Substantive and Theoretical.

- a. Structural Indigenization: It means nation’s institutional and organizational capabilities for the production and diffusion of social science knowledge.
- b. Substantive Indigenization: It can also be called as content indigenization. The main thrust of social science should be own society, people, political and economic institutions.
- c. Theoretical indigenization: It occurs when social scientists of a nation get involve in constructing distinctive conceptual frameworks and meta-theories which reflect their worldviews, socio-cultural experiences and perceived objectives.

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## **2.6 CHALLENGES**

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Atal (2003) contends that the effort of indigenization in the Asian context is pursued on following grounds:

### **1. National Language and use of local materials for teaching:**

Many countries began teaching in regional language as a medium of instruction at higher level of learning that required production of material in regional language. Most of the reading materials were in foreign language which the students would find it difficult to comprehend. The need for vernacular books would be difficult to fulfil as the scholars though expert in their respective field lack skills in vernacular or were reluctant to come down from their standard and unwilling to write books in regional language at the cost of their research.

Secondly the new generation scholars due to their lack of knowledge of international language would remain unexposed to the recent trends and development in their respective field. At the same time their work would not have wider reach. In case of India the same thing may happen as we have numerous regional languages. Today due to globalization there is curiosity to learn new languages such as French, Korean, Chinese German etc., beside English.

### **2. Research by insiders:**

Another important effort to indigenize is to promote research undertaken by the locals. Many methodological challenges pertaining to research by the insiders vs outsiders has come in front. The curbing of

research by the outsider is many a time politically motivated and sometime even insiders are also restricted to undertake research on certain themes. Restriction of the publication of research findings in another issue where the outsiders may be allowed to collect data and publish their findings but the insiders may not.

### **3. Determination of research priorities:**

Another aspects of indigenization is promoting themes that is regarded as relevant and having national significance which permeate in all the sectors of Asian countries for example planning and resource allocation. Thus introduction of social sciences teaching and the promotion of research is influenced by this criterion.

### **4. Theoretical and methodological reorientation:**

This is taking place gradually as voices are being raised about the dominance of western theories and their suitability. Some press for the need of Marxist alternatives but it is still alien and not justifiable. Thus there is not much advancement in the development of indigenous theories and methodologies.

The process of indigenization became wide spread in different parts of the world in case of India the scholars began working on various fronts such as evaluating the work of foreigners on India; distinguishing sociology from ideology and social anthropology and ; lastly defining the scope of Indian Sociology and fix priorities for research.

The key factors that gave impetus for indigenization was as a part of nationalist agenda many Indian scholars of the 1940s and 1950s examined the writings of the aliens on India to uncover colonial strategy and western plot to degrade Indian culture and civilization to prove supremacy of the west. Many popular approach such as the theories of unilinear evolution, structural functionalism and Marxism were seen as western plot to maintain unequal, hierarchical relations. Concerned were raised in the context of applicability of Western theories and methodology in research and limitation of an outsider to understand internal structures of Indian society. The insider and outsider debate became a methodological concern.

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## **2.7 INDIGENIZATION OF SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA**

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Surendra Sharma (1983) summarised the objectives and deliberation of the seminar held at Mount Abu on Indigenization of Sociology in India as follows:

1. Status of Sociology in India.
2. Need for re-adaptation and re-conceptualization of sociological concepts for scientific study of the Indian Society.

3. Possibilities of inter-disciplinary approach and co-operation available that can be further envisaged.
4. Problems of teaching and research in sociology in India.
5. Possibility of further improvement.
6. Role of sociology and Sociologists in developing society.
7. Theoretical and practical problems to be taken up for research by sociologists in India.

**Conclusions drawn:**

1. There is no specific formulae of Sociological enterprise and the practice of sociology to be based on academic sensibility of individual sociologists.
2. No antinomy between the use of approach such as historical facts and the structural functional approach
3. Sociologists showed faith in universalistic characteristic of sociology for India.
4. The prospect of having a typical and particularistic sociology rejected (Singh 1967).

It is clear from above discussions that Indian Sociologist were aware about the growth and development of sociology as a discipline. They attempted self-analysis by examining the origin of Sociology as a discipline and its growth. They reviewed the impact of British and American sociology and Marxist approach to understand the issues and challenges faced by the discipline. It is evident that sociology in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not the mirror image of the western theories, concepts and methods. It was contemporaneous to the discipline of sociology in the West. Sociological studies developed new sensitivities which is evident from the theoretical orientations such as ethno-sociology, post structuralism, neo functionalism etc. Specific areas of research was also undertaken such as Sociology of Environment, Sociology of Organization, Sociology of Tourism, analysis of problems faced by the weaker section of society so as to promote social reconstruction and development (Nagla 2013).

**Check your progress:**

1. Write a note on Indigenization of Sociology.

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2. Explain challenges to indigenize sociology.

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## **2.8 NON-BRAHMIN PERSPECTIVE**

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In the study of Indian society scholars have used various perspectives such as Indology, Structural Functionalism, Cultural and Marxist. The Indological perspective stressed on ideals of Hindu Society such as Dharma, Karma and Moksha etc. while the Structural Functional perspective of Parsons and Merton emphasized on integration. Merton's reference model was widely used to understand social mobility. The structural orientation began stressing on power structure, family structure and social stratification. The Indian sociologists were influenced by the theoretical orientation of Durkhiem, Weber and Marx. The culturological approach to sociology started with the studies of M.N Srinivas on 'Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India'. This study brought forth the concepts such as Brahminization, Sanskritization and Westernization. The dialectic historical approach based on the Marxist perspective and method was considered by some scholars to be the most suitable perspective to understand Indian social reality. A.R Desai who advocated dialectic historical approach focussed on inequality, power and property relations and the perspective of the marginalized, who were involved in new social movements (Patel 2010).

Post-independence due to land reforms and wage legislation coming into force the dynamic relations in agrarian society were seen to be apt. As the protest movements gained momentum the life of the oppressed became core of study. However to study the oppressed people various theories emerged like theory of relative deprivation and the subaltern perspective but it was considered inadequate.

The non-Brahmin social reformers not only questioned the Brahminical hegemony but also developed their own philosophies and ideology. They critically analysed historical writings and interpreted Brahmanic production of knowledge. The factors that led to the emergence of non-brahmanism was creation of public space and development of idea of rights an outcome of colonial rule. The discontinuation of old socio-political order influenced the social and traditional relations of society. The new socio-economic order, cultural changes and revenue collection policies dislocated people from their traditional occupation and social status. Due to these changes various social groups started their pursuit for new social identities and alternatives. This search for new identities and alternative was multidimensional. The growth of consciousness and political awakening was an outcome of these reactions. As the life of people was not much organised during this period the consciousness that emerged was scattered among various groups.

The term consciousness here means beginning of the resistance or protest among various social groups. However in the beginning these

movements lacked ideological force. In most of the cases the origin of social consciousness among the non-Brahmin in India in 19<sup>th</sup> century was part of general public consciousness it was only during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the non-Brahmin movements gained concrete shape.

The protest movement against Brahmanical dominance emerged in different parts of India for example in South India Aravippuram movement (Shri Narayan Guru) and Self Respect movement (Perriyar), Western India Satyashodak Samaj- Phule. But the movement reached its peak under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar.

Although the approach of these social reformers were different but the ideals remained same emancipation of the oppressed. They questioned the writings and works of scholars who while defining India were immensely influenced by the world view of Hinduism which privileged the Brahmins. They challenged the Brahmanical production of knowledge and gave voice to the marginalized and the oppressed section of Indian society.

Sharmila Rege (2010) pointed that for the colonialists and nationalist the nature of knowledge was essentially Hindu and Brahmanical but after second World War the social science discourses altered the binaries of Orient and Occident, the tradition and modernity or indigenous approaches all of which explained the structural inequalities in Indian society and normalized the knowledge production and education project offered in India to be Hindu and Brahmanical. For her Phule and Ambedkar by their emancipatory non-vedic traditions of Lokayatta, Buddha and Kabir and Western ideas of Thomas Paine, John Dewey and Karl Marx challenged the binaries of modernization and Indian tradition, private caste and gender with public nation and strived to refashioned modernity and thus its project of education.

T. K Oommen (2001) contend that the view from below is an old and enduring issues in Sociology. The traditionally oppressed and stigmatized groups which are homogenous and partially emancipated and empowered began getting voice. These groups started questioning the knowledge produced by the upper caste, men and bourgeoisie. The necessity to give representation to them in the production of knowledge gained recognition though reluctantly. Thus those who were at the bottom of the society and invisible due to the upper caste, urban, middle class, male researcher became the core and claimed their legitimate stake in the production and representation of knowledge.

**Check your progress:**

1. What is Non-Brahmin perspective?

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2. Enumerate important features of Non-Brahmin perspective.

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## **2.9 SUMMARY**

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Indian Sociology is plural and multidimensional which is manifested in the various programmes of the study, research and publication. After independence certainly it has come out of the shadow of colonialism and moved forward indigenization of research and curricula (Sharma, 2019).

The non-Brahmin perspective is based on the premises that there is relation between knowledge and power. This relation influences the social reality. The non-Brahmin perspective raises the question on how to understand India? It argues that for long the Indian society has been identified as Hindu society therefore the concepts such as inequality and discrimination, hierarchy, injustice etc., were not matter of sociological discussion. So there was a demand for an alternative approach to understand Indian society. This approach was political in nature as it not only questioned the politics behind knowledge generation but also incriminated the self that was involve in the procedure of knowledge creation, consumption and circulation. The radical social thinkers from various parts of India confronted the Brahmanical creation of knowledge and gave voice to the marginalized section of Indian society with their emancipatory perspective. The non-Brahmin perspective also took up the cause of women liberation by emphasizing on girls education, widow remarriage and so on. It envisaged a society based on equity and justice.

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## **2.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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1. What is indigenization? Discuss it in the context of India.
2. Write a note on Indianization and Indigenization of Sociology.
3. Present different types of Indigenization.
4. Elaborate on Non-Brahmanical Perspective.

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## **AMBEDKAR’S THEORIZING OF CASTE AND ‘CASTE QUESTION’, DUMONTIAN AND POST DUMONTIAN APPROACHES TO THEORIZING CASTE**

### **Unit Structure**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Ambedkar’s Theorizing of Caste
- 3.3 Dumontian Approach to Theorizing Caste
- 3.4 Post Dumontian Approaches to Theorizing Caste
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Unit End Questions
- 3.7 References and Further Readings

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### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To understand the concept and theorization of caste.
- To examine Dr.Ambedkar’s and Louis Dumont’s approaches to theorising of caste.
- To gain a critical understanding of the Post-Dumontian approaches to theorising Caste.

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

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It is challenging to generalize the role and meaning of caste in the present day India. There are conflicting views. For some it has vanished, while for others caste give meaning to their lives and forms their identities (Garalyte, 2017). Caste has been deliberated in classical Hindu writings, in micro-ethnographic accounts and in many caste based mobilization. Caste as a form of stratification is both historical and contemporary reality. However history of theorization of caste started with the work of British orientalist. The attempt to systematically theorise caste was made by C. Bougle in his essay published in 1908 where he explained caste to be not only hierarchically arranged hereditary groups distinct from each other in some aspect but also interdependent in other (Jodhka, 2010).

There are numerous accounts regarding the origin of caste given by sociologists, anthropologists and other scholars but no particular account has been accepted universally. Thus the origin of caste is subjected to

speculation (Blunt, 1931). However, there exist three broader perspectives that is the religious-mystical, biological and socio-historical. Each of these perspectives have been debated (Sharma 2005; Pruthi, 2004; Bayly 1999; Blunt 1931). But these perspectives throw light in understanding the origin of caste.

The term caste stems from the Spanish and Portuguese word 'casta' which means "race, lineage, or breed" (Mookherjee, 2012). The Spanish used the term to mean a clan or lineage but the Portuguese used it to explain the in-marrying hereditary Hindu social groups in India (Kadel, 2014). There is no universally accepted definition of caste. It means different to different people depending upon situation. However, various scholars have defined caste as:

- Andre Beteille defined caste as 'a small and named group or persons having features such as endogamy, hereditary membership and particular life style associated with pursuit of certain type of occupation and relatively distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system which is based on concepts of purity and pollution'.
- Berreman elaborated on caste as a system based on birth ascribed stratification with socio-cultural pluralism and hierarchical interaction.
- Velassery described caste as an endogamous group with hereditary based ethnic subdivision associated with the position of superior or inferior rank of social esteem compared to such subdivisions.
- Iravati Karve expressed that in caste based society large part of individual's social and cultural activity is limited to their own group.

Thus caste is a hereditary endogamous group with common name, common occupation, and common culture and relatively rigid in nature forming a single homogeneous unit. Nevertheless caste has adapted few new characteristics such as having formal organization, less rigid and associated with politics.

The concept of caste is linked to two terms Varna and Jati. The term Varna means colour and is found in Vedic and Sanskrit texts which means fourfold social stratification in Hindu society linked with certain occupations. It is interesting to note that the untouchables were not mentioned in the earliest texts and till today there is disagreement regarding the origin of the concept and phenomenon of untouchability. The Varna model demonstrate singularity, uniformity and stability of the social system (Garalyte, 2017). On the other hand Jati is a local system of ranking which is heredity based endogamous groupings associated with certain occupation and is interdependent. In Beteille views caste does not act as a uniform system of social stratification instead it is a segmentation of several orders. Thus Varna is a static Brahmanical textual model and Jati is a dynamic social identities which exists at the ground level. The Jati groups get further expanded into local hierarchical system closely resembling Varna model.

**Check your progress:**

1. What is Caste?

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2. Explain the term varna and jati.

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### **3.2 AMBEDKAR’S APPROACH TO THEORISING CASTE**

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in his research paper titled ‘ Castes in India, their Mechanism, Genesis and Development, 1916 which he read on 9<sup>th</sup> May in front of the Anthropology seminar of Dr. Goldenweigor while pursuing his doctoral studies in New York at the Columbia University expounded the framework, emergence, development and growth of caste in India. He developed the theory of caste by tracing the creation and development of caste in India that led to marginalization of low caste people. The two principles that theorised Ambedkar’s view on caste were ‘graded inequality and naturalization’ of caste system (Gandee, 2015).

Caste in its classical form for Ambedkar deals with socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of governance of Hindu society and it is exclusive to Hindu society. The hierarchical structure of caste system is grounded on exclusion and inequality which functions due to multiplicity of caste which stand against each other in terms of ritual purity. His views presupposes the Dumontian model of caste where the untouchables are permanently considered unclean and allows higher caste to uphold their purity (Gandee, 2015).

Caste is endogamous restricting inter caste marriages and assigns civil, economic, educational and cultural rights for each caste based on heredity with no freedom to change the status.

For Ambedkar caste system is not only divisive but also exploitative. Due to caste system the lower caste people were victimised by the upper caste people. Caste stratification placed lower castes at the bottom of the caste structure, left them to lead a meaningless life and be slaves of the upper caste. Their basic rights denied and life made worst. While concluding his presentation he also stressed on the need for right approach to study Caste.

Ambedkar while dealing with caste analyzed definitions given by various thinkers:

- a. Senart defined caste as closed corporation, hereditary in nature having a traditional and independent organization including a chief and a council. Meeting occasionally in assemblies of authority and coming together in certain festivals. People are bound together by common occupations related particularly to sharing food, marriage alliance and to the questions of ceremonial pollution. The members of the caste groups are ruled by the exercise of jurisdiction the reach of which may differ. The authority of the community is felt through the sanctions of penalties and exclusion from the group.

Ambedkar argues that Senart's characterization of caste on the idea of pollution originates in priestly ceremonialism. The idea of pollution is linked to the institution of Caste merely because the caste that is placed higher in the caste strata is the priestly caste and the idea of pollution associated with caste is only religious.

- b. Nesfield explained caste as a class. In his opinion caste is like a class of community that disowns any relation with other class and does not allow intermarry and inter-dinning. In Ambedkar's view Nesfield has mistaken the effect for the cause. The absence of inter-dinning and inter-marrying is due to exclusiveness.
- c. In Sir Herbert Risley's view caste is a collection of families or group of families having common names, common descent from a mythical ancestors, human or divine, engage in specific occupation, follow same calling and forming a single homogenous community. In Ambedkar's view Risley's definition does not make any new contribution and therefore not even worth mentioning.
- d. Dr. Ketkar definition highlights two characteristics of caste as a social group:
  - a) membership by birth and
  - b. prohibition on inter caste marriage.

In the opinion of Ambedkar prohibition on inter caste marriage means restricting the membership only to those born in a particular group. It focused on caste as a system and highlights only those features which are essential for the existence of caste within the system and excluded other features as secondary. Thus Ambedkar was critical of all the above concept of caste as it understood caste as a separate entity and not as a group within, with certain relations to the system of castes as a whole (Kannabiran, 2009).

Ambedkar presents an ethnological account of population of India. He rejected racial theories to explain caste system in India. He maintains that caste is a mix of Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians and Scythians who came to India centuries ago at different point of time. He contend that caste system did not emerge to prevent intermingling of people from different groups nor did it was a mean to maintain purity of blood. In fact

intermingling of culture and blood took place long before the emergence of caste system in India. In his view Indian society was exogamous where all the groups would maintain close contact with one another and assimilate and amalgamate into a homogenous society.

Ambedkar argued that the high caste Hindu Social Reformers who were crusading against the practice of Sati, Widow Remarriage, Child marriage and other social evils did not stressed on the need to abolish caste system and Shastras. He questioned Hindu texts such as Manu Smriti and Dharma Shashtra and said that these texts are against the interest of the women and Dalits. He waged a war against discrimination of Dalits by his writings such as in Mook Nayak, Equality Janta and Bahiskrit Bharat. He fought for the rights of the Dalits, Women, and Peasants.

Ambedkar advocated for annihilation of caste and socialism within the economic structure that would be based on the enlightenment of the middle class and would include emancipation of land and industrial capital (Teltumbe, 2013). He gave the slogan 'educate, agitate and organize'.

By annihilation of caste he meant religious reforms and that was possible only when:

- a. All the religious texts such as Vedas, Shastras and Puranas are abolished. And there remains only one religious text acceptable and recognized by all Hindus.
- b. Priesthood to be abolished. Only those who clear the exams conducted by State should be the Priest. The priesthood should be provided by State Law and it should not be hereditary.
- c. Priest should be a government servant and the number of priest should be less.
- d. Inter-caste marriage should be embraced and exogamous marriages should replace endogamous.
- e. Inter-dining system should be adopted. There should be no discrimination on the basis of caste, class, and religion etc.,
- f. He strongly believed that ideal religion is based on liberty, equality and fraternity. He emphasize on the education for the downtrodden.

Ambedkar's activism and political thought collectively played a decisive role in building a negative identity a source of substantive rights claims. In the words of Rao's (2009) "Ambedkar's critical engagement with and creative transformation of, liberal democratic norms and practices produced new idioms for untouchability as a form of historic discrimination and enabled experimentation with a range of ameliorative measures."

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### 3.3 DUMONTIAN APPROACH TO THEORISING CASTE

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The French anthropologist Louis Dumont was one of the most influential writer on Caste. The centre of his debate has been India and the West. From 1951 onward, he wrote and lectured on caste. In his opinion caste was omnipresent and it was symbolic of India's cultural unity and distinctiveness. The product of this scholastic research endeavour was his magnum opus *Homo Hierarchicus*, 1966.

*Homo Hierarchicus* is very widely discussed work on the caste and it was translated in many languages but up till now it is not translated in to any Indian language. His work gave new insight to the study of caste and social structure. The concepts of ideology and traditions are intrinsic parts of his model.

Dumont asserts that hierarchy is the main characteristics of Indian society and it makes Indian society to be different from the individualistic western societies. His study provided a holistic and universalistic narrative on Indian social stratification system. His primary concern was attributes of caste therefore his approach to understand caste is called as attributional approach. He described caste as a set of relationships based on economic, political and kinship systems that is sustained by values which is religious in nature. He asserted that caste is a special type of inequality, whose essence has to be interpreted by the sociologist.

The starting point of Dumont's study is Bogle's definition of caste. In his opinion caste is a pan India institution and caste groups are distinct and connected to one another on the basis of:

- Division of labour where each group has in theory or tradition a fixed profession from which the members can deviate to certain limit.
- Hierarchical ranking of the groups based on superiority of pure and inferiority of the impure.
- Separation in matters of marriage and contact.

On the basis of above definition of caste, the important characteristics of caste are as follows:

- India is made up of small territories and caste.
- Every caste has a designated geographical area and
- Marrying outside one's own caste is not permissible

Dumont analysis of caste is based on single principle – the opposition of pure and impure. The core of this opposition is 'hierarchy' that is superiority of the pure and inferiority of the impure and separation of the pure from the impure (Madan, 1971).

In Dumont view two important norms that regulates caste hierarchy are the dichotomy between purity and pollution and the distinction between status and power. The dichotomy between purity and pollution places Brahmins at the topmost position in the ritual hierarchy and the untouchables at the bottom of it. For him the untouchables were involved in impure tasks as a result some of them were attributed to massive and permanent impurity. Similarly occupation, food, gods and other aspects of Hindu life also falls in to the same hierarchical model of purity and pollution for example birth and death. While in the context of second norm he stress that hierarchy is of status and therefore is independent of power for example Brahmins enjoy superior position above the power holding Kshatriyas because ritually they are pure. Thus Dumont see caste systems in terms of ideas and values which for him is formal comprehensible rational system. Even economic system such as Jajmani is based on religious values not on the principles of economics.

He also observed the significant changes taking place in caste system. He pointed that the traditional interdependence of caste has been taken over by a “universe of impenetrable blocks, self-sufficient, essential, and identical and in competition with one another which he termed as ‘substantialization of castes’

According to him study of caste system is necessary to know India and it is duty of general sociology to study caste. In his work *Homo Hierarchicus* he developed a model of Indian Civilization based on a non-competitive ritual hierarchical system. His theorization of caste is based on classical literature and historical texts therefore he is considered as cognitive-historical and Indological.

Dumont’s accounts on caste had many admirer as well as critiques (Gupta 2000; Srinivas 1996; Quigley 1993; Berreman 1991; Raheja 1988, Chatterjee 1989; Dirks 1987, Appadurai 1986; Kolenda 1973; Marriott 1969). He was accused of providing Brahmanical (book) view of caste presenting Varna model where he tried to fit diverse Jatis into the fourfold system of division of society. His idea of purity and pollution is not universal. In some tribal societies status is not derived from ‘purity’ but from ‘sacredness’. For some of his critique Dumont ignored the protest movements in India which questioned the ideology of caste division.

In McKim Marriott opinion Dumont’s *Homo Hierarchicus* is a speculative sketch of a pair of model which is inspired by textual ideology of social science and philosophical allusions. Berreman criticised Dumont’s separation between status and power. He asserted that status and power can be two sides of the same coin. Despite these criticisms Dumont’s *Homo Hierarchicus* remains an outstanding work on Caste.

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### 3.4 POST DUMONTIAN APPROACHES TO THEORISING CASTE

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In 1980s and 1990s, the anthropological study of caste went through reconsideration in response to transformation in case studies brought by the Dumont's Structuralist approach in 1960s and 1970s. Dumont approach was criticized on three grounds:

1. It hindered the comparative aim of Sociology and Anthropology.
2. It made the reality of caste stand for India.
3. It explicate caste as an idealistic and cultural construct without material content so much that it created a myth of a single hierarchy based purity and pollution on the line which all the caste in India could be ostensibly arranged (Natrajan, 2005).

Briefly we will discuss the work of Dumont Critique such as McKim Marriott, G.G Raheja, Quigley and Nicholas Dirks. Taking into account the limitation of Dumont's dualism, McKim Marriott envisioned the new ethno-sociological view of India. He emphasised on Indian society to be a unique system that necessitates conceptualizing various categories in the milieu of its own ethno-history and culture.

McKim Marriot presented an interpretative understanding of caste based on 'coded bodily substance' notion to examine the Hindu caste system which was different from the Dumontian model. His approach is termed as ethno-sociological, transactional, interactional, and monistic and based on substance codes. According to Marriott caste was built on number of concepts relating to bodily substances and inter-personal exchanges. He used interactional approach to study caste in Konduru village of Andhra Pradesh where he discussed the matters such as who willingly accepts water, food etc., from whom which was also a symbol of relative status. Those who belonged to the lower status readily accepted food from those who belonged to the higher status and vice-versa. The Brahmins were not receiver of any lower forms of substance code from lower status groups such as cooked food or wives etc. They accepted substance code in a very specific form like piece of land as a gift, money, grain and so on. The Brahmins hold highest rank due to their own divinity, exclusive exchanges and through their gifts to other terrestrial men engaging in cosmic knowledge in the form of substance transformative ceremonies, advice and teaching. There are certain groups like Rajput and their allies who follow maximizing strategy by trying to increase their symmetrical exchange by means of land control, distribution of food and also maximizing strategies of descent, diet etc., to gain greatest quality and potency in substance, action and group substance code. While there were other groups that used the minimizing strategy to decrease the number of relationships in which to exchange cooked food were skilled artisans. For example the Vaishya community who enjoyed productive power as they grew grains, reared cattle and were traders. There were groups which were

in the category of receiving rather than giving relationships those were the barbers and leather workers who accepted food as well as bodily substance codes directly from their patrons belonging to different castes (Subhedi 2013). The most significant standpoint of these strategies is that it allows to know the local caste ranking.

G.G Raheja, 1992 in her study *The Poison in the Gift: Ritual Prestation, and the Dominant Caste in a North Indian Village, Pahansu, Uttar Pradesh* challenged Dumont's concepts of hierarchy and purity of caste as a religious phenomenon and presented a new interpretation of caste. The village was a Gujar (land owning community) dominated where 98 per cent of the arable land was owned by them. According to Raheja castes were interconnected to varying degree based on the contexts. The hierarchical order was grounded on the principle of ritual purity as a result the Brahman and the sweeper caste were placed at two extremes. This ordering relates to the traditional conception of caste rank. The relationships between various castes and Gujar dominance is formed by dan prestations which is established through Jajmani system. Jajmani system involve an ordering of mutuality in which the members belonging to service castes get a share of the harvests for their services rendered and loyalty to their parton caste i.e the Gujars who are also called as Jajman. Even though Jajmani system is asymmetrical and associated with power and economy it does not define hierarchical order of castes.

At the heart of the rituals in the village was the transfer of inauspiciousness. She argues that scholars while studying caste were only concerned about hierarchy and ranking and missed out on what actually is caste all about. For Raheja though the inter-caste relationships seems to be hierarchical but its main component is inauspiciousness. In fact it is the duty of certain caste to take dan (gift) and the linked inauspiciousness from the donors. In this context the Brahmins, the Barbers and the Sweepers for example are all equal recipients of inauspiciousness and their rank vis-vis the donor is irrelevant. The Gujars feel proud of themselves because they give dan and do not receive dan. The special castes such as Brahmins and others give dan only to their married daughters. Raheja assert that earlier work of the scholars on Jajmani system has failed to distinguish between these two types of prestation.

Raheja's rejection of Dumont bring her closer to the Hocartian interpretation of Caste system which places primacy to the King. Raheja brings to centre the 'mutuality and centrality', by mutuality she means inclusion of daughters and specialist caste who are referred as ours and by centrality she means exclusion where the daughters and specialists caste are treated as recipient of dan. Thus according to Raheja the Brahmins are not always considered having high rank and purity, in fact they are regarded as dependent and polluted.

One of the strongest critique of Dumont has been Beteille who advocated to take a much wider approach to understand Indian Society. He

stressed on the need to study kinship, class and power along with caste. For him structural aspects of caste such as economic and political has remained untouched by the scholars which is essential to understand the relationship between the upper caste and the lower caste, Jajman and the Kamin etc. His work has contributed to the understanding of empirical reality of caste rather than the cultural ideal type.

Quigley (1993) in *Is a Theory of Caste Still Possible?* Explains caste having two important elements the kingship and the kinship. In his view caste is arrangement of political structure where kingship and kinships are in opposite camps and the priest are the mediators. Thus for Quigley caste is an outcome of “uneasy stalemate between the pull of localized lineage organization and the forces of political, ritual and economic centralization encapsulated in monarchical institutions”. He is critical of both the idealist and materialistic theory of caste as it considers Brahmin as the highest caste. Many scholars are confused between the two concepts Varna and Jati therefore give supremacy to Brahmins in Caste hierarchy. Quigley asserts that Brahmins are not homogeneous groups they are divided into large number of groups and contest each other status. In line with Raheja(1992) Quigley stress that Brahmins act as a purohit to their Jajman and remove inauspiciousness, sin and evil of their jajman, therefore, it is strange to believe that Brahmins are higher in rank than their Patron. In Quigley’s opinion caste is undeniably result of the organization of rituals and other services centered around the king and dominant lineage. Hence monarchy and not the priesthood was the central institution. Unlike the view of Dumont which gave primacy to priesthood.

Dirks (1993) refuted the subordination of kingly power to Brahminical ritual which in Dumont’s view was a unique feature of Hindu civilization. This in Dirks view was in fact the creation of colonial power which reduced the indigenous king to merely a symbolic and of inferior status. The British redefined caste conceptually and administratively with numerous local logics- mercantile, agrarian etc, and religious. Caste which was earlier political was brought under one single umbrella- apolitical especially Hindu and pan Indian social order. Dirk, thus challenged the Dumont’s theorization of caste by exhibiting that neither the Brahmins nor the religious ideology but it was the kings or colonial institution and the power which they enjoyed played an important role in structuring the principles of caste relations. He stressed that it was British colonialism along with the reforms introduced by it turned Indian kinship institution into a hallow crown depriving it of its earlier glory and powers. He termed caste as explicitly colonial form of civil society.

**Check your progress:**

1. Explain G.G. Raheja’s view on Caste.

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3. Discuss Dirks perspective on Caste.

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### **3.5 SUMMARY**

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For better theoretical understanding of caste it is essential to review the work of various scholars. Ambedkar provided a multi-layered counter hegemonic view of caste. He was a crusader who fought for the rights of the downtrodden, a leader of national eminence whose contribution in the making of the Indian Constitution will always be cherished. His most important work includes 'Caste in India' and 'Annihilation of Caste'. He was an anti-caste who believed that Varna of a person should be based on one's merit not on birth. His social philosophy was based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Dumont on the other hand stressed on Hierarchy-religious not political along with the concepts of Purity and Pollution. The most illuminating criticisms of Dumont's approach to theorising caste came from the ethnographers studying the untouchables (Dalits) and the historians who were studying the transformation of Indian society under the colonial rule.

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### **3.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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1. Present Dr. Ambedkar views on Caste.
2. Discuss Louis Dumont's perspective on Caste
3. Explain the Post Dumontian Critique on Caste

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## **GENDER AND CASTE (GAIL OMVEDT, LEELA DUBE AND SHARMILA REGE) CASTE TODAY: POWER, HIERARCHY, DIFFERENCE AND IDENTITY (WORKS OF BETEILLE, D. GUPTA AND ILAIAH)**

### **Unit Structure**

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Anti-caste and Women's Struggles – Gail Omvedt
- 4.3 Gender Studies In India – Leela Dube
- 4.4 Dalit-Feminist Standpoint – Views of Sharmila Rege
- 4.5 Caste Today – Power, Hierarchy, Difference and Identity
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Unit End Questions
- 4.8 References and Further Readings

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### **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To introduce students to the issues of caste and gender in the Indian society
- To study the contribution of scholars such as Gail Omvedt, Leela Dube and Sharmila Rege.
- To reflect upon the works of Andre Beteille, Dipankar Gupta and Kancha Ilaiah in order to understand issues of hierarchy, power and identity in the context of caste in India.

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### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

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While diversity and pluralism remain a defining feature of Indian society, so is true about its inequalities and social discrimination. Caste exclusion and discrimination is deeply engrained in the Indian psyche. An equal damage has been done to the status of women, through centuries old patriarchy in Indian society. The casteist Indian society, with its inequitable gender approach and attitude poses a grave problem for the socio-economic wellbeing of the Dalit women specifically.

This is not to deny that Dalits and women, in general, do not suffer in these exiting social setups. What implies here, however, is the fact that

Dalit women suffer ‘double marginalization’ due to their caste and gender statuses. Women from lower castes are exploited and discriminated in more than one ways, thus placing them at the margins of the margins. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that the unequal position of women has interconnections with the caste system, from ancient times. Along with social division of labour, caste in the Indian society, ensured sexual division of labour as well.

As caste is infused into socio-political set up, the Indian society becomes even more discriminatory and exclusivist. While we proclaim to be democratic and liberal, caste politics and hierarchies continue to dominate the social, political and economic aspects of Indian society. The political set up of the Indian society gives identity to caste associations, as they continue to exhibit significance and relevance. Caste-based hierarchies and identities still continue to govern Indians’ way of thinking.

Within the sections of this unit, we will explore the intersectional aspects of the unending oppression that particularly women from lower castes face. And this will be done by exploring the work done by women writers. We will also look upon the works from the subalterns that highlight the politics of representation, identity politics and discourses of power.

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## **4.2 ANTI-CASTE AND WOMEN’S STRUGGLES – GAIL OMVEDT**

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Gail Omvedt, an American by birth, is an Indian sociologist and human rights activist. She has worked and published on topics that deal with issues of Dalits, anti-caste movements, women’s struggles, farmers’ movements. Basically, Omvedt academically writes at the intersections of caste, gender and class. The marginalized communities remain main focus of her intellectual indulgence. Though her various critical works, Omvedt presents a critique of the Brahmanical texts that aim at caste and gender subjugation. Century-old prevalence of caste-based discrimination has been due to the religious scriptures of Hinduism, she opined.

In her one of the phenomenal works – *Understanding Caste*, Omvedt (2011) explores the historical issues of caste-based discrimination and anti-caste struggles, where Brahmanism remains the backbone of the Hindu tradition and thus continues to influence the essence of Indian tradition. This work also conducts an inquiry into the aspects of Hinduism that emphasize patriarchy and thereby justify the inferior position of women.

Omvedt argues how the India came to be identified largely as a Hindu nation, and how Hinduism was identified as the religion of pan India. The entire social, political and economic life came to be governed by the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and all Hindu, Brahmanic scriptures. These

eventually led to the anti-caste struggles, Dalit politics that challenged the hegemony and supremacy of the Brahmins. This also resulted in the birth of religions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism as counter forces to deal with Brahmanical supremacy.

Omvedt ideologically agreed with the Ambedkar's thoughts and actions. For Ambedkar, Brahmanism was responsible for most of the evils affecting India and that Buddhism was its main potential alternative (G. Omvedt, 2003). In fact, the anti-caste movements and struggles got radically influenced by Ambedkar and his logical inclination towards Buddhism, a religion that radically started opposing Brahmanism in newer ways.

In her publication, titled *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Visions of Anticaste Intellectuals*, Omvedt (2008) outlines the socioeconomic perspectives of leading anticaste intellectuals, spanning over five centuries. During the modern era that these centuries witnessed, we also see the exchange with Europe, colonization, rise of subaltern identities, amongst others. These intellectuals seem to have shaped and developed the anticaste and women's movements to great heights.

Omvedt (1993) uses the framework of 'historical materialism' of Marxism and recommends its extension to 'peasants, women, tribals, Dalits and low castes, and oppressed nationalities', besides the industrial factory workers. Omvedt also considers caste as synonymous with 'race', as both intend to subjugate groups of people on the basis of birth and social hierarchy. Challenging the *Brahmanic patriarchy* thus, remains the core of Omvedt's writing.

**Check Your Progress:**

1. What has been Gail Omvedt's contribution to the study of Indian society?

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**4.3 GENDER STUDIES IN INDIA – LEELA DUBE**

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Leela Dube, a feminist scholar, writer and anthropologist, is renowned for her work on kinship, matriliney and gender. Dube explores the idea of family structure, kinship, sexual relations and eventually caste to show their effects, individually as well as together as a complex, on the gender roles in the society (Dube, 1988). Her works focused on the idea that gender differences are culturally located and produced, also projected as being a natural biological outcome.

Dube is also known for bringing gender issues and women studies into mainstream anthropology and sociology. Within the context of kinship studies, Dube explored the process of socialization, especially of girls, in a predominantly patriarchal setup. Being influenced from the women's movements, Dube sought to understand the gender concerns not merely to see the position of women, but also to challenge and change the gender relations and outlooks. She attempted to make academics gender sensitive.

Dube undertook an exemplary work for her doctoral dissertation, on Gond women, from Nagpur University. Till then, women were marginally represented in social research agenda and as such while research on tribes dominated anthropological works, tribal women remained least represented, which Dube sought to intervene with her intensive fieldwork (Palriwala, 2012). Dube is known to have struggled a long way to make gender issues equally important in the sociology as well as anthropology, as women were not academically recognized as a marginalized group and hence were never spoken or discussed about.

Leela Dube considered the usage of "man" as a generic term in social sciences as a misleading, harmful and underrepresenting umbrella term to subsume woman under it. According to Krishnaraj (2012a), Dube devised new analytical frameworks by bringing in folklore and symbolic representations of women's position to show its ideological influence. Dube gave a famous formulation – "seed and soil" – as a reproductive symbolic devise, with which man's role in reproduction is given primacy over that of a woman, who is regarded as a passive recipient (*ibid*). Thus patriarchy ensured sexual control over women, by justifying that men play a superior role in this process.

In her autobiographical account, Dube (2000) acknowledges the impression that the figure of her own mother – as a complex of roles and responsibilities, an embodiment of care and affection, which are also expressed through the relational idiom of food. With her own self-explorations, Dube sought to bring in the intricacies of women situations and women-men relations, the context of matriliney and so on, in the humanities and social sciences, thus challenging the whole idea of 'value-neutrality'. Her constant touch with the ground reality is also what makes Dube's contributions authentic and highly acceptable.

**Check Your Progress:**

1. How does Leela Dube explore the formulation "seed and soil" to suggest the situation of women?

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## 4.4 DALIT-FEMINIST STANDPOINT – VIEWS OF SHARMILA REGE

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Sharmila Rege has been a distinguished feminist sociologist, having worked on the intersections of caste, class and gender. Rege contributed influential research, as she also headed the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre at the University of Pune. Her work draws attention for its underlying feminist debates about caste, religion, gender, sexuality, women's movement and Dalit literature. Rege insisted upon the narratives and local knowledge, and as such oral traditions, particularly of the marginalized, showing deep rooted commitment for them.

In an attempt to highlight the importance of the politics of lived experiences of caste in academics, Rege, through her book, *Writing Caste/Writing Gender — Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonies*, presents eight such narratives of Dalit women with special emphasis on their misery, Dalit feminine movements and their apparent caste struggles that together signify Dalit women's struggles within the larger anti-caste movement (Rege, 2006). Whether caste or tribe, the eight narratives show the extent of abject poverty, discrimination and deprivation that untouchable women experience within the Indian context.

Rege was a pioneer of Dalit-feminist standpoint as she emphasized the social location of women in question, in order to understand how caste/class interact with gender and results in their struggle for survival in a caste dominated, hegemonic society. As Dhanagare (2013) puts it, Rege firmly believed that gender studies and Dalit studies were organically linked. She persuasively criticized sociological research for being male dominated and gender insensitive. For Rege, women's lifespan cannot be generalized with that of men's and hence needed attention in a historical context.

Rege, being a prolific writer and an activist, successfully brought in the structural violence of caste and its linkages with sexuality and labour into the feminist discourse (Devika *et al.*, 2013) in particular and academics in general. Hence, Rege is claimed to have a Dalit-feminist standpoint with aims of emancipation and liberation as she explores the category of 'Dalit women' to understand how caste, gender, class, sexuality construct each other.

### **Check Your Progress:**

1. What was Sharmila Rege's contribution towards Dalit-feminist perspective?

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## 4.5 CASTE TODAY – POWER, HIERARCHY, DIFFERENCE AND IDENTITY

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Even after centuries of exploitation, decades of independence and robust constitutional safeguards, Indian society even today is characterized by hegemonic caste dominance in almost every aspect of social life, often subtly. Although India appears to be a democratic, liberal and a modern nation, yet the social relations are still governed by the ascriptive identities such as caste and religion. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that there are changes in the ways different communities interact, and that the discrimination and exclusion are not as overtly practiced as earlier, caste identities continue to remain present in the minds of the people, which are now indiscriminately exploited for political correctness.

As caste is enduring even in post-independent India, one can note many contemporary changes within this setup. Caste is not so much about physical discrimination than it is about psychological exclusion. The reservation policy that the Indian society implements, with the intention of ‘positive discrimination’ also works in favour of ensuring the continuity of caste in the public domain. As a counter-force, there are consistent outbursts that go against the whole of idea reservation policy and as such, these to ensure its continuity.

Kancha Ilaiah, an prolific writer, theorist and Dalit rights’ activist has been an spokesperson against the Hindu philosophy and caste hegemony. As Ilaiah (1994b) conceptualizes the situation of caste in India, believes that the Dalit-Bahujan school of thought in India does not proclaim to abolish the entire caste system in one go. Even if majority believe in this school of thought or favour anti-caste movements, yet an ideological change cannot happen overnight. This is also because, being truly plural and diverse, the caste-based Indian society is also full of contradictions. Within a same caste group, there are contradictions making it extremely difficult to grasp its situation.

And therefore, caste remains the bone of contention in the present Indian society – socially, economically and politically. The acclaimed Indian sociologist, Dipankar Gupta, has contributed tremendously on the caste system in India. Gupta (2005) asserts that caste continues to affect us, although the dominant castes are no longer dominant in the same way and that caste identities and caste politics are both legitimized, what has changed drastically is the single, vertical overarching hierarchy of purity and pollution, replaced by multiple hierarchies clashing in the open.

Caste is not just a system, it is an ideology that ensured division of labour as well as division of sexuality only on the basis of hereditary and hierarchy. This ideology, even today, perpetuates violence against the lower castes, particularly the women within these communities. However, despite all these road blocks, the marginalized today have more or less

come together, organized to form socio-political organizations and asserted their identities and rights. The clutches of caste-based identification is so strong that even after alleged mobilization , caste discrimination continues.

Dipankar Gupta, through his research and writing, attempts to suggest an alternative conceptual formulation on castes, in order to overcome the problem, of irreconcilable malleability of castes and modern social institutions, posed by many empirical studies (Gupta, 1984). Andre Beteille, another noted Indian sociologist and an ideologue on caste system in India, attacks the stereotypical stigmas associated with lower castes. Beteille too observes that as the hierarchies are embedded in the psyche of the individuals, caste-based identification and discrimination prevails.

In one of his articles, Bêteille (2002) re-examines the M. N. Srinivas's 1960s examination of a casteless and classless society and the risks associated with this due to the persistence of caste-laden mentalities. Amongst other points, it has been stated that while the hierarchical mentalities remain with the ordinary people, the intelligentsia in India can be regarded as both Utopian and fatalistic in its orientation with reference to equality and inequality. The existence of these two contradictory positions within the same individuals makes it even more difficult to address the issues of inequality in a more equitable way.

A strong need has been felt amongst the intellectuals to re-conceptualize caste in today's scenario. K. L. Sharma, another noted sociologist attempts to understand the change as well as the continuities in the caste system, because on one hand caste remained dynamic due to its inner inconsistencies and contradictions , on the other hand, it continues to remain so due to its strong interaction with the economy, culture and polity (Sharma, 2012). Far from being only a social institution, caste today has acquired a political character as it keeps people socially as well as politically engaged.

Within the purview of political engagement, the role played by the reservation policy remains significant. By way of giving a personal account of what it really means to have access to education only due to reservations, Kancha Ilaiah (1990) highlights the long-term impact of such provisions at the individual as well as societal levels. Ilaiah (2006) also asserts the need to understand that the reservation policy and nation building are not antagonistic, in the context of upper castes' intolerance towards sharing of government educational facilities with the historically oppressed communities.

### **Check Your Progress**

1.State the contemporary perspective on the prevalence of caste today.

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2. What is ‘positive discrimination’?

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## **4.6 SUMMARY**

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As Chakravarti (2012) highlights, with reference to all the women’s narratives, that the caste stigma and associated poverty remains the running theme in all the autobiographical writings, which include the offending touch, association with dirt, unclean occupations and finally the quality of being polluting like in the case of drawing water from common village wells or inter-dining. There is a variety of violence that the women from lower castes encounter due to their double marginalization. While the lower castes suffer under the hegemonic caste system, the lower caste women suffer the most and also the worst.

It is the post-independent India that saw a marked and structured rise of the gender studies in India. Even the cases of Dalits and other marginalized groups raising their voices, asserting their identities are ever increasing. Yet, caste and gender continue to remain a source of socio-economic inequality. Today, caste identities are politicized more than ever. In fact, caste becomes a source of political mobilization. The intermingling of caste and gender as well as caste and politics, has been more harmful than the mere institution of caste itself. In combination, these have created layers of marginalization, that are engrained rigidly in the mindset of the communities.

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## **4.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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1. Explain the views of Gail Omvedt on caste and gender subjugation in India.
2. In what ways, did Leela Dube contribute to the feminist studies in the anthropological and sociological research?
3. Elaborate on Rege’s research and writing with special emphasis on her understanding of Dalit feminism.
4. Elaborate on how caste-based discrimination is continuing even today in India.
5. Write a brief note on the views of Kancha Ilaiah and Dipankar Gupta with reference to the caste in India today.
6. What are the contemporary embedded contradictions in the caste system that make its abolition difficult?

7. How has Andre Beteille contributed towards the contemporary understanding of caste?

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## **NATION AS SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL (PARTHA CHATTERJEE), CRITIQUE OF “PROJECT HOMOGENIZATION” (T.K. OOMEN)**

### **Unit Structure**

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Nation as Spiritual and Political
  - 5.2.1 Two spheres
  - 5.2.2 Nationalists and Colonizers
- 5.3 Critique of Project Homogenization
  - 5.3.1 Hinduism
  - 5.3.2 Critique
  - 5.3.3 Strategies used
  - 5.3.4 Problems with religious Nationalism
  - 5.3.5 Ban
  - 5.3.6 Census
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Unit End Questions
- 5.6 References and Further Readings

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### **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

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1. To learn about the process of homogenization.
2. To understand the impact of homogenization.
3. To learn about the complexity of the growth of nationalism within the country.
4. To understand how it impacts the society at large.

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

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There are two major author's work are being discussed in this unit. The first is that of Partha Chatterjee and the second is that of T.K. Oomen.

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### **5.2 NATION AS SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL**

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In this section, Chatterjee views on Nationalism is being discussed through the basis of his book titled, 'Nation and its fragments'. Impact of

Nationalism has been discussed often in the present times in the academic circles and in the social movements and in media. Earlier nationalism was more seen among Asia and Africa it has now widespread impact. It is spread more issues like terrorism, racism etc. and with popular culture and media. The earliest nationalism emerged because of the colonizers. In the book he tries to break the myth of a uniform model of impact of colonization and the construction of nationalism. Nationalism has been discussed by several authors like Benderson who view it like a imagined community.

### **5.2.1 Two spheres:**

In his work Chatterjee criticizes the nationalism within the country. There exist two realms through which the nationalist movement operated. The Britishers were more focussed on the material realm. Where as the nationalist movements used the spiritual realm as a tool to put forward. The spiritual realm like culture, tradition, caste was seen as the point of control for the nationalist's groups. For the nationalist group the spiritual realm was seen as more superior than the material realm. The nationalist therefore tried to protect this with great spirit. There was a symbolic nationalism according to Chatterjee.

The nationalist tried to bring a new culture which had roots with the indigenous culture. They also bent the existing rules in family, culture, literature for bringing more people together and to make them involved. For Chatterjee a historic nationalism has to include both the spheres i.e., material and spiritual.

### **5.2.2 Nationalists and Colonizers:**

According to Chatterjee colonial powers limited themselves to administration as the colonisers saw the within layers of hierarchy operating in caste etc. The nationalist rewrote the history after taking away the vulgarity, objectification to bring people from different class together. This was majorly done through the middle class educated Indians. He also discusses the role of women in the nationalist movement.

According to him, the relationship between the modern state and a peasantry is ambiguous and deals with tension. In Western Europe, the institutionalization of a modern regime of power coincides with and follows through a process of the extinction of the peasantry.

Chatterjee through his book tries to show how the anticolonialist nationalists have recreated their own domain of sovereignty within colonial society before the beginning their political battle with the imperial power. These nationalists divided the culture into material and spiritual domains, and spiritual sphere, representing the religion, caste, women and the family, and peasants. Chatterjee also points out that middle-class elites first imagined the nation into a spiritual dimension and then readied it for

political contest, all the while "normalizing" the aspirations of the various marginal groups that typify the spiritual sphere. He argues this with the example of Bengal and the history, location and literature (3).

**Check your progress**

1. Discuss the views of Chatterjee on the spiritual and material realm

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2. State how the changing patterns of the nationalist movement as discussed by Chatterjee.

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**5.3 CRITIQUE OF PROJECT HOMOGENIZATION**

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The present section is based on the critiquing of the homogenization process from the perspective/ writings of Prof. T.K. Oomen a renowned Indian Sociologist. There are four hundred or so tribal communities of India which claims that they are the original inhabitants (Adivasis) of the land. This claim is not accepted by the Hindu nationalists, who see Aryan Hindus as the original settlers and label the tribal communities as the forest-dwellers (Vanvasis). The population of India speaks languages belonging to four families : Indo-Aryan (73%), Dravidian (25%), Austro-Asiatic (1.5%), and Tibeto-Chinese (0.5%). Dravidian languages which is mainly spoken in the four South Indian states namely Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh. The Dravidian movement however, opposed the Aryan domination and saw itself distinct form the Aryan Hinduism. In the British census on India religious categorizes like animism, tribal religions, primitive religious were counted. This was nearly 2-3% of the total population. However, after 1951 these were clubbed under the general religious group of Hinduism. In a way, the distinct identity of tribal religion being eroded.

The Hindu advocacy of homogenization has been tried out in different ways. In 1960s and 1970s the phrases used were ‘Indianization’ and now it is called ‘Hindutva’. Hindu nationalists insist that the advocacy is disassociated from and devoid of any narrow religious context and content but refers to a lifestyle common to the people of India as a whole; hence, a Hindu is one who follows this life-style. If life-style includes matter of dress, food, worship styles, art forms, marriage and family patterns, there is very little common even to the Hindus of different regional-linguistic areas, not to speak of the different religious

communities of India. It cannot be denied that there exists a civilizational unity with in the whole of India and that of South Asia too.

### **5.3.1 Hinduism:**

One of the theory of usage of the term Hinduism is that it was invented by the colonizers to refer to the inhabitants of the then India across the river Sindhu. However, the terms have changed its meaning and context altogether and is being used as particular religious collectivity, belief system and ritual practices. These concepts are problematic in itself. As according to the Hindu doctrine of creation, the Brahmins emerged from the mouth of the creator, Kshatriyas from the hands, Vaishyas from the thighs and Shudras from the feet. This chaturvarna (four color) scheme does not even account for the untouchables, belonging to the fifth varna'. So, how is it justifiable to use such concepts and claim ideas of religious nationalism in pluralistic country like India, it is kind of unhealthy. Homogenization in simple words means to make uniform in structure or composition. Here the reference is made towards culture/ religious homogenization.

#### **Check your progress**

1. What do you understand by the word homogenization project?

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2. State the major families of languages?

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### **5.3.2 Critique:**

The process of cultural homogenization operates through religious groups and developing values of religious nationalism. Religious nationalism is nothing but imposing the life-style, practices of the majority over the minority groups.

### **5.3.3 Strategies used:**

This operates through simple strategies like the original vision of the founding fathers which actually promotes brotherhood (relativism) is revived and edited modified to suit to personal agendas and then spread out. It itself has lots of problem, Oomen points out,

‘Several strategies are invoked to manage this tension and camouflage this contradiction: first, denying that caste system and particularly untouchability are parts of traditional Hinduism and insisting that these are latter day accretions resulting from praxiological aberrations rather than imperfect doctrines; second, conceding the need to scissor away these negative accretions through gradual piecemeal reformism; third, organizing reformist collective actions and mobilizations (e.g., intercaste dining, collective worship) to fraternalize the deprived and sap them of their protest orientation. However, given the fact that the constituency of the Hindutva ideology is largely confined to the twice-born Hindus of the Hindi belt, it has failed to gain the confidence of the Dravidian Hindus, the Other Backward Classes, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, together constituting the majority of the Indian population. Thus the Hindu project of homogenization is bound to remain limited in its scope unless it frontally grapples with the issue of institutionalized inequality within Hinduism’. As it has limited scope for Dalits and Tribes development in a way not leading to inclusive development.

#### **5.3.4 Problems with religious nationalism:**

Religious nationalism is problematic as it carries within itself the seeds of religious fundamentalism. As we fundamentalism is a threat and a big problem in it’s for the peaceful functioning of the democracy. It is not only a problem for countries like India but also to different countries where there are population with minority religion.

The Hindu nationalist project of homogenization is caught in a trap of Hinduism's internal contradiction because homogenization implies not only uniformity but also equality. The Hindutva version of homogeneity, however, while appealing to the non-Hindu minorities to shed their cultural identity, assimilate with the mainstream and become full-fledged Indians, is either reluctant or else ambivalent, to grapple with the institutionalized inequality within the Hindu social system as embodied in the institution of caste. Religious diversity brings legal pluralism hence it is healthy for a society at large.

#### **Check your progress**

1. Discuss the strategies used for homogenization project

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2. State the ban and its impact on people according to you?

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### **5.3.5 Ban:**

Let us look into the issue of Beef ban, what is sacred to one group isn't sacred to another. So, imposing it for all is problematic. For e.g. Muslims, Christians consuming beef has been a common practice. Brahmins in Bengals have been meat eaters. While Kashmiri pandits are meat eaters too. So, having a uniform civil code rises in favour of the conservatives than on the reforms of the religious communities who speak of development.

### **5.3.6 Census :**

Homogenization is a problem as it creates a hegemony through which the minority religion lose their identity in the assimilation process. Secondly, his assimilation and annihilation can create problem to the diversity of the group. In a way, making lose the pluralistic and disturbing the democracy. Thirdly it can give rise to intergroup inequality. Fourthly, the concept of relativization where by the old is being revived is in itself problematic.

For e.g. If we observe the Hindu culture has several practices which is inhuman like sati, untouchability, specific diet patterns, dress patterns etc in the name of religion. So, if religion is said to be revived that the idea of old being beautiful, pure isn't it itself being problematic. So, this partial relativization in the name of religious texts can be seen as fundamentalism. This can be a threat to several indigenous practices. If the indigenous practices vanishes then the cultural habits may vanish and several new social movements could emerge. He argues that religious nationalism and democratic polity cannot co-exist harmoniously, particularly in a society characterized by religious diversity

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## **5.4 SUMMARY**

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Thus, T.K. Oomen views the ideology of homogenization, as not only aimed at the standardization of values, norms and practices, but it also implies (a) the revival of obsolescent traditional values, norms and practices that are not relevant to the present, and (b) the imposition of those values on others, both "deviant" co-religionists and religious minorities. This is so because the reference point of homogenization advocated by religious nationalists invariably relates to the original vision and practices of their rounding fathers, ignoring the context of the latter's advocacy. On the other hand, Chatterjee views how the nationalist movement was problematic with reference to the Bengal. He also points out how the nationalist movement tried to control through the spiritual realm the Indian society.

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## 5.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the Partha Chatterjee's view on Nationalism.
2. Explain the critique project homogenization.

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## 5.6 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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## **NATIONALISM SANS NATION (G. ALOYSIUS), WOMAN AND NATIONALIST DISCOURSE (VICTIM, MATA AND SEVIKA) (TANIKA SARKAR AND OTHERS)**

### **Unit Structure**

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Nation and Nationalism
  - 6.2.1 Meaning of Nation and Nationalism
  - 6.2.2 Political Consciousness
  - 6.2.3 Core Arguments
- 6.3 Women and Nationalist Discourse
  - 6.3.1 History
  - 6.3.2 Stories and Mythological figures influence
  - 6.3.3 Core arguments
  - 6.3.4 Feminists view
- 6.4 Summary
- 6.5 Unit End Questions
- 6.6 References and Further Readings

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### **6.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To learn about the meaning of Nation and Nationalism.
- To understand the historical relevance and its sociological effect on the society.
- To understand the multiple roles of women with respect to the nationalist movement.
- To explore the problems within these movements.

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The national movement has been an area which has been studied by sociologists, historians specially. There are also schools like subaltern school which question the national movement which locates how the marginalized groups were used by the dominant groups for their own interests and they didn't receive the due recognition. This chapter is based on the book Nation without Nationalism written by G. Aloysius 1997 by

Oxford University Press and the second section is focussed on the multiple patterns of woman interaction with the mythological characters, politics and practice.

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## **6.2 NATION WITHOUT NATIONALISM**

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### **6.2.1 Meaning of Nation and Nationalism :**

Aloysius views nation as a constructed category. The nation is the feeling of a common bond between people that they share a common cultural past and present. He also views it as an entity forming part of the compound concept nation-state, or to a linguistic-ethnic community struggling for its own statehood. It may refer to a relationship that exist or presumed to exist between individuals and groups with either equality or common cultural bond as the basis of common political consciousness. Here the discussion of nation as a geographical location hasn't been said.

On the other hand, in the book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of Nationalism*. Anderson, an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (Anderson 1991: 6). Anderson explains each of the important words of this definition. Nation is imagined because all the people who inhabit it do not know each other and even in the smallest of the nations all the people do not have face to face interaction. Still, they treat each person inhabiting within the boundaries of the nation as a fellow national being (1991: 6).

### **6.2.2 Political Consciousness:**

According to Aloysius, the common cultural bond of a nation acts as a basis for a common political consciousness. It is here that the political enters into the idea of nation. The political consciousness is understood as awareness among people of the power relations which governs a group or a society and this awareness leads to the assertion in the power relation. Aloysius views political consciousness as the perception of power relations within society and of one's own (individual or group) position. It also refers to an urgency to take collective action to strengthen or alter that position.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Discuss the meaning of Nation and Nationalism

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2. State the political consciousness associated with Nationalism.

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### 6.2.3 Core arguments :

Aloysius argues that in India nationalism existed and continues to exist without a nation. He argues that: Nationalism may refer to the doctrine or ideology of an aspiring class, or to the policy orientation of a state or to a praiseworthy sentiment of attachment to one's own nation or state. Nationalism may also refer here to a socio-political movement for state-formation or any anti-imperialist movement or to the nation-building activities, mobilization of a government or class. Moreover, for him it is this aspiring class or classes which initiate or lead the movement towards the aspiration of the formation of the nation<sup>1</sup>. There are also certain groups which denies such an existence which can be seen as hegemony of knowledge and even creation of history and nationalism. Aloysius tries to bring this perspective where he combines the politics and that of sociology through historical sociology and looks from the view of the submerged masses. It is a work on Sociology of nationalism and history in his book Nation without Nationalism.

He analyses the result of the interaction between traditional Indian society and colonial rule, particularly from the point of view of the restructuring of power relations within. The analysis addresses the following questions like: What was the impact of the British on the segmented and traditional Indian society? Were the changes brought about during colonial rule conducive to the becoming of a society based on social mobility and anonymity of membership? Finally, what kind of infrastructural foundation was laid for the rise of political consciousness and articulation of nationalist thoughts and sentiments? Such questions are raised through his work. He also makes an survey of literature and analyze struggles of anti-caste, anti-feudal and pro-autonomy—which claims to create a national society which is homogeneous with respect to power.

A short survey of different schools of thought is also addressed in his work, followed by a contextualization of the birth and growth of the anti-imperialist movement. He also discusses the dichotomous nature of Indian political response to colonial rule and the mutual relationship between what are seen as traditional but labelled as the national and communal movements.

Here he traces the development of the ideologies of nationalism—cultural and political—within the conflicting socio-political situation. According to him, the nationalist ideology was not monolithic and did not go without contestation. Nationalism as an intellectual-cultural construct, too, was diversified within the subcontinent. For him, construction of the past was differential, the contestation at present was polarized and the visions of the future were divergent. He also points out that in the latter phase of the nationalist movement, known as the Gandhian era, can be

seen as an attempt to bring together the two streams of national and nationalist (or national and communal as per established historiography) awakenings. According to him in the context of the new situation currently developing in the country, this Gandhian legacy has assumed a new significance, at least among the ruling circles and the established academia.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Discuss the questions raised by Aloysius in his work.

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He also discusses about the nationalist mobilization which is a combination of both vertical and horizontal political mobilizations within society. It is both integrative as well as disruptive. One of the attempts to grasp the nature of this mobilization at the theoretical level through Antonio Gramsci. In the last chapter of his book, he proposes to situate the Indian national synthesis within the Gramscian notion of the ‘National-popular’ and ‘Hegemony’, and examines whether nationalism has indeed invented the nation or not.

Let us now look into the second section of the unit on Women and National Discourse

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## **6.3 WOMEN AND NATIONALIST DISCOURSE (VICTIM, MATA AND SEVIKA) TANIKA SARKAR AND OTHERS**

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### **6.3.1 History:**

The role of female into the nationalist movement can be seen more popularly with the foundation of the Rashtra Sevika Samiti and Lakshmibai Kelkar (Dr. Hedgevar- founder). The membership estimates are 200,000. Some members join only during that of the celebration of festivals. The members come from various caste groups however the dominant castes are often seen as occupying the leadership roles. Sadhvi Rithambara and Uma Bharati are two women ascetics who rose to prominence in the movement during the Ram Janmabhoomi campaign. P. K. Vijayan argues that this is particularly so since the late 1980s, the same period during which women's violent participation in Hindu nationalism started to gain visibility<sup>ii</sup>.

Durga Vahini is the young women's wing of a dominant party which began in the early 1990s. As the aim of the group is to be more active and action based hence the age group of the members are restricted to 15 to 35 years. There are periodic camps being held and which is very

popular. At times it also lands up into activism and turns out to be aggressive. Often the activities of Durga Vahini are rarely in the limelight than the other groups. Durga Vahini is the counterpart of the male version group i.e., Bajrang Dal named after the god Hanuman. It is interesting to observe the role of religion and politics and ideology and story which merges together.

### **6.3.2 Stories and Mythological figures influence:**

The role and image of goddess is often used to in the nationalist movements like that of the figure of Kali, who is angry, forgiving. She stands up for her own rights and for her subjects crushing the evil and bringing the good. Another popular goddess is that of Sita who is seen as a symbol of purity and chastity. Someone who doesn't question the tradition but follows it and it is she who belongs the carrier of the tradition too. We can observe in all these characters as figures, statues and stories and being used in speeches even today in political campaigns. These historical stories act as a role model, benchmark on which women are expected to operate. The ideal woman hood symbols are also propagated through that of publications like Gita press books.

### **Check Your Progress**

1.State the popular mythological themes used with respect to women and nationalist movements.

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2.Discuss the popular history of the development of Women and the nationalist movement

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### **6.3.3 Core Arguments:**

A Hindu woman is seen as to perform her duties with dedication, affection and respect such ideas are also circulated through that of the movements. The iconography of the goddess are also used with the national movements like several goddess are seen as armed and like a warrior figure. However, there are other goddess like Saraswati, Lakshmi who are blessing givers, knowledge givers or connect with economic aspects. So, there exists a dichotomy in the role of women as savior, as protector and follower. Even today, the recitation of the *Devi*

*Mahatmya* occupies a central place in Durga Puja as well as daily liturgy, and its hymns continue to be familiar to vast numbers of Hindus<sup>iii</sup>.

“All our goddesses are armed”: religion, resistance and revenge in the life of a militant Hindu nationalist woman<sup>iv</sup> The language also plays a major role in the movements like with Durga Vahini's language when discussing the need to transform Hindu society: ‘History is the proof that whenever there have been problems for country, *dharma* and *sanskriti* (culture), women have come to the forefront to fight it out. They have also transferred this quality to their children who have grown up to become ideal heroes and have brought the country. In this context, it can be observed that all three temples that that have been campaigned to be built are dedicated to gods rather than goddesses; Ram in Ayodhya, Krishna in Mathura, and Shiva in Kashi.

#### **6.3.4 Feminists view:**

Several Feminists argue for the primacy of women's identity and solidarity presents us with a dilemma of the rise of women's militancy in the Hindu Right. It can be observed that the role of the Sevika Samiti and the Durga Vahini in creating the militant cadre of women, contends that gender identity is not primordially but is invented, created, resisted and subverted at the fulcrum of multiple identities. The entire practice, is both discursive and material through the imagery of Bharat Mata, the valiant historical figures and subservient mythical wives at the same time all allow women to become avenging angels in moments of crisis. When these moments ebb away, they return to the mode of nurturing mothers and obedient wives<sup>v</sup>.

#### **Check your progress**

1. Discuss the feminist views on the role of women and politics with respect to the nationalist movements.

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#### **6.4 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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1. Explain the role of women in Nationalist Discourse
2. Explain the meaning of Nation and Nationalism from Aloysius perspectives.

#### **6.4 SUMMARY**

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The first section of the chapter was focused on understanding the nation and the nationalistic movement from the perspective of that of

Aloysius from his Nation without Nationalism. The second section focusses on understanding the women's role with is ironical where sometimes they are expected to be warrior and sometimes just be a follower and do one's duty. There are religious symbols and stories are also used to convey this idea into the lives of women.

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## 6.6 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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# **SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGING STATE-MARKET RELATIONS AND TRADITIONAL HIERARCHIES IN GLOBALIZING SOCIETY**

## **Unit Structure**

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 State-Market Relations and its Social Consequences
- 7.3 Globalization and Traditional Hierarchies
- 7.4 Summary
- 7.5 Unit End Questions
- 7.6 References and Further Readings

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## **7.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To understand the nature of State-market relations within the context of globalization.
- To see its social consequences on indicators such as education, health and employment.
- To understand the impact of globalization on the traditional hierarchies, marginalities and identities.

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## **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Globalization, as an on-going process, has affected all the nations in the world. Globalization can thus be seen as a unifying or assimilating force that connects every nation to the world economy. Simply put, through globalization different nations, economies, States, cultures and so on come together and integrate into common whole. Obviously, globalization was the result of the industrial revolution, with increasing sophistication in modes of communication and transportation.

Industrial revolution gave rise to the capitalist mode of production and the entire world this gradually got transformed into a market. The role of the government thus altered vis-à-vis with its interaction with the world economy. Another catalyst in the process of globalization were the events of colonization and its climax into the emergence of independence struggles in the colonies. Thereafter, all the emerging politically

independent economies began to have their own unique experience within the globalized economy of the world.

Within its wake, globalization has, directly or indirectly influenced social transactions as well as social relations. Indicators of development such as health, employment, poverty reduction, education and so on, all are dependent on the nature and extent of transactions that that country is having with the world economy. The major cause of dominance of world economy is due to the 'interdependence' of states and nations. This phenomenon make certain states authoritative and certain others as submissive.

Additionally, globalization also affects the traditional hierarchies thereby influencing the intersecting identities and marginalities. Since globalization has accorded fast space, there has been a rise in individualistic attitudes. Many other traditional hierarchies such as caste-based identities have also changed dramatically, if not withered away completely. Even the gender hierarchies and interactions have changed tremendously, although patriarchy still sets rules for most of the cultures.

Therefore, globalization can be seen as much more than the process of modernization itself. The idea of a global world economy has dramatically and strongly influenced each and every nation, society as well as individual. The global exchange, not only of products and ideas, but also of social problems, diseases, terrorism, and so on have thus resulted in the positive as well as negative impact of this phenomenon. In fact, the existence of hybrid identities is possible due to the phenomenon of globalization. There has been, thus, an indiscriminate development of global identities.

Let us now elaborate on various issues vis-à-vis globalization, particularly with reference to the above stated objectives.

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## **7.2 STATE-MARKET RELATIONS AND ITS SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES**

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The impact of globalization is aptly stated by Jain (1995), as she looks at its irreversible trend, amounting to the revolution in communication technology, diffusion of power, explosion of information hence making the world inevitably an interdependent one. When applied to the Indian context, the New Economic Policy of 1991 opened the doors to economic liberalization, thus expediting the process of globalization. Being a plural state, the Indian society interacted uniquely with the world markets. Thus, different sections of the society were influenced in varied ways.

Dasgupta (2005) outlines the Structural Adjustment Package introduced in 1991, sarcastically described as the LPG model because of

its incorporation of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation as essential components. Besides the dominance of markets – liberalization and closing of major public sector economic activities, the NEP-1991 rested on the core idea of globalization where more trade was considered beneficial to all, although some may gain more than others, but it was asserted that all would gain eventually.

The goal of a free market economy was thus cherished. Buying and selling of goods and commodities was supposed to be governed by larger forces of the market – that is demand and supply, and not by traditional structures. But it was obvious that the pre-existing inequalities were likely to surface in the new economic order. Hence, the drastic changes within the Indian society also became inevitable and irreversible. Indian structural frameworks of its economy as well as its society were both altered by the complex process of globalization. All the sectors of the Indian economy were affected due to globalization.

Within the context of contemporary globalization in the Indian context, that is the globalization trajectories evident in Indian society and economy as of the last two decades of the twentieth century, the most visible feature of this phenomenon has been what Pawan Verma (1999) calls the emergence of the ‘great Indian middle class,’ characterized above all by its symbiotic relationship to the expanding operation of international market-factors within the arena of a state-determined national business sector (Gupta *et al.*, 2010). The change in living standards mainly due to the high capacity for consumables brought about drastic changes in this newly formed middle class.

The modernity that came along this was unparalleled in history of Indian society. The rural-urban divide increased, occupational mobility became possible even for the lower castes, use of globally known brands’ products became rampant, with a steady growth in ICTs – information, communication and technologies. All these undoubtedly resulted in mass mobilization of income, power and ideas and goods. As industries grew, agricultural production sank with more and more migration towards urban areas. The urban society, in the post-liberalization period, had its own set of issues and problems.

Naidu (2006) highlights that along with the economic impact, economic reforms without a human face, have also affected the social and cultural life of the people in several countries including India. And as it became evident, India a predominantly agricultural society, suffered tremendous drawbacks. This was particularly evident amongst the agrarian sections – the rural India – where globalization became a cause of increasing poverty. Agriculture and rural poor thus steadily suffered a setback. Thus, with technology came new employment opportunities, but it also led to reduction in employment due increased mechanization.

With reference to the increase in poverty and interconnected reduction in employment, Mazumdar *et al.* (2008) throw some light on the grave situation in the following words: “The Task Force on Employment Opportunities appointed by the Planning Commission reported a sharp decline in the labor-force growth rates between the 1980s (1983 to 1993–1994) and the 1990s (1993–1994 to 1999–2000). Its estimates from the NSS showed that the growth rate fell from 2.05 percent per annum to 1.03 (GOI July 2001). Taken in conjunction with the increase in measured rates of open unemployment, this slow-down has been widely interpreted to have been the result of ‘discouragement’ of potential workers from entering the labor force” (p. 49).

Within the sphere of women and employment, Gupta et al. (2010) highlight how in Kerala, the lack of availability of employment opportunities along with a long history of migration has contributed to the specific situation of large-scale recruitment of women to processing units. Further there has been steady migration of men and women to cities in India as also the Gulf countries from very early on legitimized and paved the way for further migration as and when job opportunities arose.

While India’s economy has grown sharply since globalization, agriculture has not grown resulting in a rising population in rural areas and also the rural labour force (Mujalde *et al.*, 2018). As the average land holding size decreases, so does the productivity. This has resulted in mass migration towards urban areas. To easy access of goods and services, the cost of living has gone up considerably. As a consequence of reduced employment, increase in standard and cost of living, relative as well as absolute poverty both kept deepening in the Indian society.

It should be noted that there remained a huge gap between the purchasing power of the rural people as against their urban counterparts. As informal waged labour demand increased in urban areas, the cities started becoming over-populated due to rural to urban migration trends. This event has led to growth in water scarcity, pollution, unhygienic living conditions, abject poverty, child labour, etc. in the densely populated city areas designated as slums. Once overcrowded, these areas too experience high rates of unemployment. Whether rural areas or urban ones, globalization seem to have favoured certain prosperous regions at the cost of others.

The field of education has also been tremendously affected by the process of globalization. There is no doubt that the literacy rate increased in the post-liberal decades. The availability of and access to Western education thus increased incredibly. The information technology brought in by globalization has facilitated education as well as posed different challenges for the same. With globalization and liberalization, we witness opening up of newer learning programmes, e-learning options, distance education offered by premiere institutions, and so on. The market has since become highly competitive and because of which , education is also

becoming increasingly market-driven. A growing part of international student community will become market-driven rather than state-driven or aid-oriented (Scott 1998).

Education, just as health sector (will be explained in the following section), has undergone commodification – as educational institutions become a booming industry. As Spring (2008) articulates, research on globalization and education involves the study of intertwined worldwide discourses, processes and institutions affecting local educational practices and policies. As such, globalization brought about following changes in the sphere of education:

1. New courses were introduced to match the international standards as well as markets.
2. Accreditation to educational institutions for the purpose running courses and programmes.
3. English largely became a medium of instruction. In fact, importance of several foreign languages also rose.
4. Distant learning and online learning both became feasible.
5. Indian students could easily pursue courses of their choice in a foreign university and vice versa.
6. Skill specializations increased.
7. The increasing and strong networks amongst the students of different universities, even across the borders, became steadily a characteristic of this IT-driven age.
8. With ever-increasing dissemination of information and data, particularly academics, copyrights and intellectual property rights became a necessity.

And this list can go on. In the Indian context, globalization of education has resulted in something peculiar, which can also be apparent in other growing economies. Education, while considered as the most important medium for empowerment and eradication of poverty, is also facilitating the widening of the gap between the two sections of the Indian society. This is partly because India allows elite and foreign institutions to offer lucrative degrees with training, that guarantee the best of jobs in India as well as in other countries. The individuals who reach out for this are most likely belonging to the affluent sections of the society.

In fact, this practice of becoming demand-oriented in a job market, has led to the mushrooming of coaching classes. This coaching class phenomenon aims at making the students clear the most desirable competitive exams and make them ‘market-ready’. It also makes, cracking these exams, relatively possible and also easy. A number of advertisements are made available which make the consumer grieve for its possession – in this case, joining the coaching classes for achieving the best of jobs. This has resulted in a unending race for applying for these competitive exams and occupying seats for elite courses.

All this further adds to discrepancies and psychological stress, along with financial burden, for the students. The whole idea of learning for the sake of learning is rarely visible. However, as Madhok *et al.* (2011) have highlighted in their study in Kolkata, globalization has significantly changed the demand for higher education, both amongst the men and women. Likewise, technology-related fields attract more students and more and more women are getting into such courses. With education in general and higher education in particular, it is increasingly possible for women empower themselves and attain gender equality.

Globalization specifically introduced changes in the language used in education. The positionality of English has changed in the Three Language Formula (TLF), India's language in education policy, that is English becomes the medium of instruction right from nursery mainly due to increasing demand of this language (Vaish, 2008). Thus the growing importance of English was the straight outcome of the socio-economic processes of globalization.

As mentioned above, the health sector in India is also heavily commercialized and that the public health remains a grossly neglected sector. Deaton *et al.* (2004) posits the arguments from the economists that the income is the primary determinant of health, especially for the poorer countries; and that through the social forces such as education and policies, transmission of health-related knowledge should be attainable objective. Globalization has not been able to ensure good health and life expectancy in specifically poorer nations as compared to the rich countries.

As a section of economists favor the positive link between the income and health, it is then possible to see a poverty reduction induced by employment and income generation due to globalization. However, so many diseases are known to have spread to globalization that ensures ease of travel, for instance covid-19 that spread globally from China in no time. Such an event can be very dangerous for socio-economic wellbeing of every country its likely to affect.

Babones *et al.* (2010), through their research, state that globalization poses large-scale but widely-diffused threats to population health that is difficult to quantify and equally difficult to address. Globalization can project positive effects if its benefits are in the public hands, but if these are privately held, globalization then can have great negative consequences. As diseases travel fast in the globalized world, so does the medicinal alternatives. The availability of quality treatment is not within the reach of common people. However, the rich people can travel to any part of the world to get the best possible treatment. This is aptly visible in our government-run hospitals where patients are waiting for months to get treated particularly for diseases such as cancer.

It has been repeatedly researched that the physical and economic burden of diseases affect people of the developing nations more significantly than the developed ones and hence there exists a huge disparity in the health conditions experienced in the developed and developing countries (Fidler, 1999). Hence the consistently deteriorating health of the people of developing or poor countries in the post-globalization period remains a major concern. The rich, in the affluent, developed nations are thus benefitting at the cost of the poor, marginalized sections of the society.

Take for instance, the medical tourism as a manifestation of globalization. Driven by high health-care costs, long waiting periods, or lack of access to new therapies in developed countries, most medical tourists (largely from the United States, Canada, and Western Europe) seek care in Asia and Latin America. Although individual patient risks may be offset by credentialing and sophistication in some destination country facilities, lack of benefits to poorer citizens in developing countries offering medical tourism remains a generic equity issue (Hopkins *et al.*, 2010).

**Check Your Progress:**

1. What are the adverse effects of globalization on employment?

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2. State the positive impact of globalization on the education.

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### **7.3 GLOBALIZATION AND TRADITIONAL HIERARCHIES**

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India is a vast country – culturally and geographically. While colonialism left its footprints, experienced even after years of independence, post-colonization period remains heavily affected by the processes of globalization. Further, India was unique in its own way for having strongly held traditional identities and hierarchies. Just as colonization interfered with these identities, globalization have drastically altered the ways in which these identities are manifest and are perceived.

Habib (2015) looks at the works of those literary figures who have engaged with and looked at globalization as ‘neo-colonialism’. In order to address this issue, we need to understand that globalization is also a by-

product of capitalism, just like the need to colonize was felt. With colonization came the Western modernity and similarly globalization open the doors to unending information explosion. Various traditional institutions, social structures and identities got affected in the process – sometimes positively and sometimes negatively.

While in some cases, hierarchies and identities suffered as loss, in some other instances, these became more rigid and assertive. Globalization has brought multiple hierarchies and identities in close contact. Never before in the history of mankind, were the humans so closely connected. The speed required to connect to another part of the world, has reduced drastically thus influencing the way in which we think about and construct the category of ‘others’. Global identities are thus getting localized.

Whether traditionally or in a modern society, religion plays an important and all-decisive role. As religion gives a meaning to one’s existence, globalization creates uncertainty about future. Within this context, religion has adapted strangely. In India and elsewhere, there are particular connotations about particular religions based on the global events whether real, imagined or politically created. Take for instance, Islamic fundamentalism that creates a different picture particularly after 9/11 episode.

Even before colonial rule in India, religion and caste remained very significant to the extent that concepts such as purity and pollution were very deeply entrenched in religion and caste. However, with modernity that entered with the colonizers, our understanding of the religious ‘other’ changed. Particularly the existing antagonism between Christianity (colonizers’ religion) and Islam (religion of some of those colonized) resulted in varied transactions between the two.

Religious communalism has been a common issue particularly in post-colonial Indian society. Not just Hindu-Muslim enmity, globalization has shaped and reshaped Hindu-Christian issues as well. As Bauman (2013) analyzes, with reference to the varied processes of globalization, Hindu-Christian violence, where the curious alliance is shown of largely upper caste, anti-minority Hindu nationalists with lower-status groups. As it goes on to suggest, identity politics, driven by the proxy association of Christianity with the impact of globalization, can be seen the core reason for this enmity.

Brar *et al.* (2008), through their meta-analysis show how the majoritarian religious intolerance displayed by Hindutva revivalists cannot be understood until we explore their anxieties about the pollution of a pure culture and civilization called India. Postmodernist minds thrive on imagined harmonious communities, which *always* dotted India before the imposition of alien modernity. And therefore, in order to understand the politics of identity, in the Indian context, one must understand the

territorial aspect as well as the idea of imagination of identities. Globalization shook that unshakeable belief in nationalism (*Ibid*).

Globalization also seems to have brought about drastic changes in terms of gender and work. While patriarchal values continue to govern the society, women did become a part of the work force, in different capacities. However, the structuring and restructuring of the economy didn't seem to help women achieve equality. Privatization and liberalization are known to have generated huge employment opportunities for women, but the male bias in the workforce, continued in different forms, becoming more apparent at the higher ranks and positions.

Although feminization of workforce was somewhat inevitable particularly after economic liberalization India, the overall neo-liberal economy isn't very gender sensitive. Within this setup, the women from lower classes and lower castes suffer the most. In that sense, globalization facilitated their marginalization even further, rendering them little or no bargaining power. In fact, because of this prevalence, many women were employed as their labour is considered cheap as also they remained unorganized.

Channa (2004) argues that the colonial rule projected western science as the ultimate source of knowledge and western values as supreme. Stereotypes of oppressed non-western women had their counterpart in the male, rational western culture, coming to their rescue, both metaphorically and literally. Unfortunately, these stereotypes became so entrenched in the psyche of post-colonial nation builders that they and even third-world feminist activists confuse development with "westernization." The fallacy of such an assumption becomes clear when one takes a glance at the realities of everyday life where crimes against women and poverty and marginalization of the masses is exploding in the most urban metropolises with the highest exposure to modernization and globalization. Rational thought points to globalization, with its emphasis on material values, consumerism and "trashing" of traditional knowledge. Globalization has eroded the traditional resource base as well as the knowledge and power associated with it.

The situation of Scheduled Castes is equally appalling under the context of globalization. Jwala (2009) looks the situation of Dalits on the three most predominant dimensions – food security, inflation and employment, and summarizes that there exist a huge gap between the rich and the poor, specifically the Dalits. Capitalism by nature is exploitative in character. The Scheduled Castes are exploited in different ways in this new economic setup, which make the rich capitalists richer and richer.

But, one can also look at the situation differently. It is globalization that has mainly given the feasibility to some of the individuals of these marginalized sections to study specialized courses (sometimes abroad) and excel in the business entrepreneur undertakings.

These and alike constitute the ‘creamy layer’ today amongst their neglected and marginalized lot. This group of individuals is highly mobile, enterprising and progressive. The credit of having achieved all this goes to capitalism and globalization that have together broken the shackles of tradition and feudalism.

Mukherji (2015), in her ToI article recollects the Marx's view of capitalism as smashing feudalism and goes on to say how at a panel discussion on Dalit entrepreneurship, moderated by acclaimed scholar and India expert Robin Jeffrey, liberal economist Swaminathan Aiyer spoke of the rise of Dalit millionaires without props or government subsidies. "The Economic Times ran a series of 11 articles on Dalit capitalism," says Aiyer, who spoke of the manner in which capitalism had helped erode the caste system and had gone on to produce dollar millionaires. Dalits turning entrepreneurs against all odds without any outside help is a miracle of sorts, says Chandrabhan Prasad, political commentator and mentor to the Dalit India Chamber of Commerce and Industry

However, caste still remains and manifests itself in different ways even in today's globalized India. Jodhka (2017) also suggests that the mobility of SCs up and down the social ladder is undeniable. However while some have fought all the odds to become economically successful, may others from SCs are suffering even in the corporate hiring or getting equal opportunities. Even in today's times of digital and information age, with ever increasing need for digital and online teaching aids (particularly due to pandemic), it is the STs and SCs children who are suffering the brunt of digital divide. This is because they are not well equipped in terms of facilities and knowledge to match their footsteps with others. They are thus left behind. But nevertheless, there remains huge scope for their empowerment.

**Check Your Progress:**

1. What are the effects of globalization on various traditional hierarchies?

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2. State the positive impact of globalization on Dalit empowerment.

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**7.4 SUMMARY**

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Globalization does indeed create differences, even as it homogenizes—but not in the positive form of encouraging genuine

creative diversity. Rather, globalization creates far deeper and more pervasive inequalities across regions of the world, within countries, across classes and income groups. These inequalities encompass gaps in wealth, income, access to productive employment, opportunities and a whole range of other material and social conditions (Gupta et al., 2010).

While the private institutions of education pose a challenge for the public ones, the prospect of ever increasing institutions, higher education particularly, can bridge some gap between the haves and have-nots. With the situation, foreign universities, being allowed to set up campuses on the Indian soil (as proposed by new NEP, 2020) can give a huge setback to the public universities and so which are not driven by profits. Academically, India cannot perform better if education remains just a business or commercial activity. The aim of education due to the mediation of globalization, should be, among other things, to eradicate poverty, promote scientific temper, ensure gender sensitivity and equality in all spheres of life.

The most under-researched area of study vis-à-vis the adverse effects of globalization, is the public health, particularly in the developing countries. While on one hand we see rapid dissemination of medicines, these are scarcely available for the poor people, but the privatized hospitals provide them easily for their affluent clientele. Not just that, the health related knowledge and information is also not spread evenly in the rural areas. Such people and those who live under abject poverty, still do not have a clear understanding of ailments and diseases that require medical attention. And this is despite living in an information age.

Globalization works alongside patriarchy and continues to discriminate against the women workforce. As women are socially conditioned about their alleged positions in the society, they rarely exercise their bargaining power or collective force to attain equality in terms of wages and so on. Thus, globalization has only resulted in exploitation of women workers, further marginalizing them than their male counterparts.

Caste hierarchies have undergone considerable change since liberalization in India. Certain restrictions have been destroyed and certain others replaced by more latent ones. Globalization has given a number of opportunities to the SCs and STs in terms of joining the workforce and becoming aware of world situation. This is mainly possible as many of them are today connected to some of the social media and are becoming increasingly aware of their rights. Yet they are still neglected and exploited in newer ways in this new system of economic revolution.

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## **7.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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1. How has the global market influenced the job creation in India?

2. What is medical tourism?
3. How have women benefitted due to increasing education in the globalization context?
4. What positive and negative consequences of globalization in sphere of education and health?
5. How has patriarchy and globalization interacted in India?
6. What has been the nature of interaction between the SCs/STs and economic liberalization?

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## **ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES, IDENTITY POLITICS**

### **Unit Structure**

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Tribes - Economic Transformations, Marginalization and its Struggles
- 8.3 Identity Politics in India
- 8.4 Summary
- 8.5 Unit End Questions
- 8.6 References and Further Readings

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### **8.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To understand how the economic transformations taking place globally affect the tribes locally.
- To understand the forms and extent of tribes' marginalization and exploitation.
- To explore tribal struggles and movements for equality.
- To understand the nature of identity politics in India.
- To understand how religion, region and class homogenize and fragment identities.

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### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

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India, being a culturally diverse country, has a huge population of tribes. Tribes, also popularly known referred to as Adivasis, commonly translated as 'original inhabitants', are often customarily referred to after discussing Scheduled Castes, however they should be looked upon as being situated outside the caste system. However, just like the caste situation in India, the tribal people also continue to remain as marginalized, exploited and face massive socio-economic discrimination. Further, as the issue of their marginalization gets more and more politicized, their became center-stage for policies and discussions amongst the administrators and academics.

Due to consistent exploitation, the tribes have lost their hitherto held forests and hills rights, their unique cultural practices, and so on as there is continuous attempt to assimilate them, while also keeping them intentionally away from their own entitlements. However, decades of social and economic exploitation has not only resulted in their poverty and marginalization, it has also led to massive mobilization, protests and rise in demands for their equal rights to citizenship.

Even with reference to their identity and identification, there is massive politics and chaos. As there is no clarity and standard understanding for the process of their identification, their get exploited even more. Further, due to the complex processes of modernity, globalization and economic transformation, tribes are also changing from within as a community. This change is also mediated by the transforming society within which they are located.

While talking about caste and tribe, as also religion and language, we come across the phenomenon of identity politics. The term identity politics can be understood as the assertion by a group of persons, with some common identifying trait, by politically channelizing their demands. The common underlying traits or factors of identification can be religious, regional, caste, tribe, class. While identity politics more than often has a negative connotation but still should be subjectively understood and evaluated for its significance and scope for bringing the into focus the hitherto exploited communities.

Through the interrelated sub-sections that follow hereafter, we will try to understand the transforming situation of the tribes in India. The larger market forces, which are also driven by capitalist/exploitative ideologies tremendously influence these marginalized sections of our society. The resultant identity politics thus also become an issue worth discussion.

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## **8.2 TRIBES - ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS, MARGINALIZATION AND ITS STRUGGLES**

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All human societies transform and with industrialization, modernization and globalization, continuous economic transformation of human societies is inevitable. Kamat (1981) highlights the social change among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the post-independence period, mainly due to the advance of education. Through modern education in an independent India, they became capable of joining new occupations, ideologically became inclined towards liberal and egalitarian values and thus facilitated their acceleration for economic change.

Within the context of colonial transformation of the tribal society, there are two sets of assumptions governing the historical writings on the Indian tribes: first, British administrators and ethnographers adopted the

prevailing conceptual framework whereby tribal communities were treated as isolates, savages, and primitive and as such overlooked historical processes; second, this assumption postulated that the tribes were a subsystem of the Hindu system and that they were being absorbed into the economic organization of the caste (Singh, 1978). Thus, the historical bias prevailed which interfered with the understanding of the tribals and its transformation in the Indian society.

As globally economies transform, societies continue to push certain communities to the margins, thus ensuring their social exclusion. Marginalization and social exclusion are universal which means, more or less, all societies practice it – knowingly or unknowingly. From an economic point of view, equal opportunities and access are denied, by certain hegemonic sections of a society, to some of the socio-economically backward communities, thus maintaining the status quo. Hierarchical differences are ensued due to such systemic and systematic exploitation of the latter for centuries.

And just like the lower castes' communities, the tribes in India also have been socially and economically kept excluded. According to the World Bank Report of 2011, with reference the tribes, it states that during and after the period of rapid economic growth, different social groups transformed themselves in different ways in response to new opportunities however as the report shows the outcomes among Adivasis are among the worst, despite considerable variation across places of residence and tribal groupings, when compared to that of Scheduled Castes.

There have been many attempts to understand the means, aims and its consequences of tribal exclusion and inclusion in the context of the development paradigm of tribal development. Sonowal (2008) attempts to highlight – first, the problems faced by the tribal people from both inclusion into and exclusion from the dominant development paradigm of the country; second, tribal societies have experienced religious and other cultural inclusion into the so-called universal or dominant culture and consequently faced the problem of identity crisis and third, exclusion from infrastructure, health and education has led them to a situation where they find it difficult to cope with the outside world.

Within the context of issues of tribal inclusion and exclusion, some of the major problems concern their health, forest land rights and related land alienation, literacy rates, their forceful assimilation into the mainstream Hindu culture and religion, and so on. Although, along with the other sections of the society, tribals have also been passing through a phase of economic transformation. Because of modern technology, tribals are not as isolated as they were previously. While this is true for their physical isolation, their socio-economic isolation more or less remains a point of contestation.

In pre-Independence India, a British anthropologist turned tribal activist, Verrier Elwin, contributed heavily to the tribal understanding. In his famous work *Philosophy for Nefa*, first published in 1960, we see a well-meaning forward written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, regarding the supposed goal of tribal development in India. Elwin's subjective and rich ethnographic material on the lives of the various tribal communities with more realistic attitudes towards tribal development.

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf quotes Jawaharlal Nehru's formulation of the five principles for the policy to be pursued vis-a-vis the tribals, also popularly known as Jawaharlal Nehru's Tribal Panchsheel:

- (1) People should develop along the lines of their own genius, and the imposition of alien values should be avoided.
- (2) Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected
- (3) Teams of tribals should be trained in the work of administration and development.
- (4) Tribal areas should not be over administered or overwhelmed with a multiplicity of schemes.
- (5) results should be judged not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the human *character that is evolved*.

The Indian government's policy for the tribal development is expected to be guided by Nehru's formulation. Thus, while globalization and economic transformations have led to increased awareness of the tribal issues, these have also resulted in their further marginalization. However, it remains a responsibility of the democratic government as well as the intellectuals at all levels to initiate equal development amongst these socio-economically isolated communities. By and large, the measures adopted to make them socially as well as economically inclusive are insufficient and lack political will.

Within the context of various encounters between the post-colonial state and tribal communities, Suan (2011) traces how the encounter between the state and disparate tribal groups in India's north-east or elsewhere not only affirms the state's monopoly of material and symbolic power but also opens up a complex and shifting discursive space. Due to unequal state arrangements, tribes tend to face structural discrimination at the hands of larger society. Hence, marginalization remains a complex phenomenon due to various developmental and historical factors.

Further, within the context of studying the tribals with the perspective of the caste society, Xaxa (1999), with his meta-analysis of the various anthropologists' and sociologists' tribal studies, opines, among other things, that the nature of tribal people's interaction with the caste members of society is governed more by consideration of market and economic interdependence than by purity-pollution ones. Thus forced categorizations or assimilation, without actually going in-depth to

understand the social interactions that the tribes are likely to have, the contexts and situations they are in, etc. can make tribes appear more akin to the caste communities.

James *et al.* (1979) highlight how, in post-independent India, the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, constituted to safeguard their interests, was himself deprived of necessary official status as well as the facilities and personnel to ensure strict implementation of the measures. However, despite its shortcomings in implementation, one cannot deny that the affirmative action and positive discrimination have more or less corrected the past discrimination and increased the marginalized communities' representation in previously excluded areas (Chhetri, 2012).

In fact, at the time of Independence, India used protective law to address fears that its tribal majority regions would be marginalized vis-a-vis the larger, more developed states of the new nation and as such the 'Sixth Schedule' was written into the Indian Constitution to ensure rights of self-government for the tribal majorities in North Eastern Himalayas (Søreide, 2013). It was therefore vital to ensure that the voices of tribal people were taken into account while framing the Constitution for the new nation.

As it is apparent, land remains a major concern, historically and economically, amongst the tribals. Claims for land and forest rights often result in struggles and rebellious outcomes in their regions. For instance, the history of land relations in tribal Andhra Pradesh and central India, showcase the recurrence of struggles against the transfer of farmland in the valleys to non-tribal farmers and moneylenders and against the government's claim to own forest land (Oskarsson, 2018).

Sahoo (2007) explores the politics of resistance in Orissa to show how the collective resistance by different groups and communities in their defense of community, livelihood and identity should be viewed as a response to the hegemonic and homogenizing project of modernity and capitalist development. The process of economic development has its own dynamics particularly for the tribals resulting in more exclusion, in spite of the affirmative action proclaimed for them. Take for example the case of Orissa, where thousands of tribals experienced large scale displacement due to industrial and huge dam projects (Debaranjan, 1999).

**Check Your Progress:**

1. What has been the situation of tribals in the post-independent India?

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2. Elaborate on tribal struggles.

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### **8.3 IDENTITY POLITICS IN INDIA**

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In the current era of identity politics where the demand for ‘recognition’ has almost become more important than that for ‘redistribution’, minorities no longer allow any kind of deliberate discourteous act or disapproval to their group identity. This can be seen as a welcome change, a tribute to democracy’s power to empower the excluded. And yet many regard it as unwelcomed change, which may turn out to infringe upon their rights and privileges, which have been long cherished. Let us now embark on a journey to see how we can look at these contemporary realities - identity politics and hybrid identities.

In today’s globalized scenario, religion and nationalism have indeed become the most effective tools for anyone to assert his/her (and ‘their’ as well) identity and at the same time resort to the same religious identity in order to take recourse. In other words, both are linked to chosen traumas and chosen glories (Kinnvall, 2004). Consider, for example, the Babri demolition incident and the Hindu-Muslim riots thereafter. The ‘muslim’ identity, from that day, has changed dramatically. On one hand, the muslims see, or to be more precise, ‘identify’ themselves as being oppressed, discriminated against, marginalized, etc. On the other hand, others (non-muslims) see or ‘identify’ them, i.e. the Muslims, as being violent, fundamentalist, extremists, etc. This view about the Muslims has also been generalized world over, especially after 9/11 attacks.

The whole debate surrounding the issue of ‘conversion’ also has lots to do with the politics of ‘identity’. Notwithstanding the impact of other political factors, conversion from a particular religion to another theoretically obliterates an individual’s pre-conversion ascriptive identities (Jayaram, 2004). However, the converted individual is then put in a dilemma, he although makes attempts to carry out the new identities, but at the same time is also lead by his ascriptive identities, which he may or may not forget throughout his life. In such a case, they are never accepted again within their own faith, and at the same time, are always considered as ‘outsiders’ by the converting religion.

Although we have multiple identities, most of the time, they are more of a subtle nature and get aroused only when they are invoked. Therefore, the limited resources lead to competition for political mobilization thus invoking identities and sub identities (*ibid*). In other words, under certain conditions, some identities become more vocal and assertive, in demanding for privileges and denying the same to others.

A lot is also spoken about the rise of social movements, which is driven by invoking certain identities. For example, Bernstein (2005) accounts for the relationship between social movements and organizing around certain identities, in a globalized context. Consider, for example, the various Dalit liberation movements, whereby their marginalized identities are strongly invoked, in order to get political recourse.

In a country like India, political parties play an important role in expressing, constructing and mobilizing religious political identities. It is this political organization that makes the fact of pluralism concrete for democratic purposes (Rosenblum, 2003). But as we all know, religion and politics is deadly combination. The offshoots of such a combination can have a devastating impact on the cultural plurality and diversity of India.

Similarly, political parties that are formed on the basis of 'regional' identities can prove to be equally dangerous. Parties like Shiv Sena of Maharashtra, Akali in Punjab, Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, are all illustrations of this kind. Recognition and affiliations to such identities can result in a very hostile attitude towards other regions and its people.

To top it up, we also have the phenomenon of 'caste', which is unique to Indian polity. Caste cuts across religions. Caste, by itself, is a very complex issue. Therefore, the 'caste' identities which are generated in course of one's life are also very complexly intertwined with other identities. We can examine the famous examples of Dalits converting to Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity or Islam. However, they are never practically able to forget their original caste identities, which are indeed, time and again, invoked by *significant others*. Caste, therefore, survives conversion (Jayaram 2004).

To worsen the case further, we have political parties based on caste identities. Here, the individual's caste identity becomes the major source of political participation. The Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) is an apt example of such caste-party politics.

To consider one such very contemporary example is to make a mention of the 2012 fight for chief minister's post in Uttarakhand. The whole issue whether Vijay Bahugunna (a Brahmin) or Harish Rawat (a Rajput) will become the next CM of the state, had taken strong caste overtones and was indeed painted as the Rajput versus Brahmin fight. It was reported that since the state's demography had changed and the Rajputs are today a clear majority, had indeed, added to the group's sense of deprivation (Network, 2012).

The politics of scarcity has its own impact on the politics of caste identity. This can be seen now in the form of competition among various caste groups to be designated as 'backward' (*ibid*). If such backwardness is granted upon them, they then become entitled to various benefits that

fall under protective discrimination. The recent turmoil in Jaipur, Rajasthan, where Gujar community demanded such a status, is an example of this aspect of identity politics.

This can also be looked at from another perspective. When 'indigenous' identities are attacked by encroaching 'foreign' powers (or modern culture), there are strong attempts made by the former, to maintain, preserve and revitalize their identities (Spencer, 1994). This is usually done by taking recourse to their age old culture and reviving their glorious past, i.e. before the advent of so-called encroaching culture. People are time and again reminded of their belonging to 'this' particular group and therefore should behave and act according to their long cherished identities. And any kind of deviance from which, is not just 'not accepted', but also publicly criticized and ridiculed.

It is often held that conceptualizations like multiculturalism and secularism have a tendency of freezing group boundaries and creating homogeneous and monolithic religious categories. However, this is a mere overlooking that these conceptualizations do. It should, therefore, be clear that the various communities in India do not fall within any particular homogeneous categories with fixed clear-cut boundaries that can define them. Obviously, there is a lot of overlapping within and between communities and there are further marked differences in various cultural practices between regions, ethnic, linguistic and/or caste groups (Deb, 2002).

A lot of concerns about attitudes and policies towards the established minorities are governed by two contrasting ideological positions, one of which is, as we have already seen, *multiculturalism* the view that these groups should maintain their heritage cultures as much as possible while establishing them-selves in other cultures; the other one being *assimilation*, the belief that cultural minorities should give up their so-called "heritage" cultures and take on the majority's way of life (Lambert et al., 1990). These scholars drew the conclusion from their research that some members of ethnic minority groups are developing full biculturalism and bilingualism, rather than choosing between heritage and adopted cultures. They resort to two cultural identities rather than relinquishing one for another.

**Check Your Progress:**

1. What is identity politics in the Indian context?

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2. Elaborate on regional identity politics.

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## **8.4 SUMMARY**

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To summarize this, one can say that tribal communities have suffered more than ever in the post-modern decades. As the economic transformations took place and the world started becoming a global village, nations became development-driven. And as a result, the marginalized communities, such as and dominantly, the tribes, were systematically kept away from participating in the economic development as well as claiming its benefits. Not only this, they were made unsuitable for the land on which they toiled for decades.

And all this in the name of development and progress. But the question remains, how inclusive is this development? While any development-related projects are intended for the entire population of that region, it is usually benefitting only a few sections of the society. Tribals and other backward marginalized people suffer in the name of development. In order resolve such tensions, we do have some robust constitutional provisions intended to safeguard their rights, but again its implementation remains a question mark.

Within the context of culturally diverse and plural Indian society, one cannot deny the existence of hybrid identities. Multiple identities coexisting that often lead to conflict in identities form the background on which politics of identity thrive and flourish. In the Indian context, identities get fragmented on the caste, religion, region, language, tribe and class. The intersections of these identities and probable conflict of interests results in identity politics. It remains a huge unresolved task with our society to do away with such politics.

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## **8.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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1. Explain the situation of the tribals with special reference to the economic transformations in the post-independent India.
2. What are the various forms of tribal marginalization?
3. Tribal struggles in post-Independent India. Explain.
4. What are hybrid identities?
5. How do linguistic identities mingle with politics? What is the result of this?
6. How religious identities highlight the politics of identities in the Indian context?

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## 8.6 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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# MODEL QUESTION PAPER

## PAPER 2

### COMPETING PERSPECTIVE ON INDIAN SOCIETY

**Total Marks : 60**

**Duration : 2 Hours**

**N.B:**

- 1) Attempt All Questions
- 2) All Questions carry equal marks

- Q1. Explain the various approaches used in the study of Sociology 15 marks  
**Or**  
What is Indigenization? Discuss it in the context of India 15 marks
- Q2. Explain Dr. Ambedkar's view on caste 15 marks  
**Or**  
Explain the views of Gail Omvedt on caste and gender subjugation in India. 15 marks
- Q3. Explain Partha Chatterjee's View on Nationalism 15 marks  
**Or**  
Explain the role of women in Nationalist Discourse 15 marks
- Q4. What is Medical Tourism? 15 marks  
**Or**  
Explain Tribal struggles in Independent India 15 marks

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