B. A. 2nd Year
4TH Semester
Indian Society: Structure and Change

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COMPOSITION OF INDIAN SOCIETY

India is the second most populous country in the world, with over 1.21 billion people (2011 census), containing 17.5% of the world's population. With multi-religions, languages and ethnic groups.

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to things that are sacred i.e. things set apart and forbidden.

Being a multi-religious country Indian society is equipped with all the major religions of the world. The religions Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism and Parsis originated in Indian society. The outside invasions to Indian society have brought Islam and Christianity as major religions after Hinduism to Indian sub-continent.

The demographic composition of major religions in India as per 2011 census is as follows. Of the total population of India in 2001, **79.8 %** are Hindus while Muslims account for **14.2 %** and Christians **2.3 %** respectively. In absolute numbers, approximately 828 million are Hindus while Muslims are around 138 million out of India‟s total population of approximately 1,029 million. Sikhs account for **2.08**%, Buddhists **0.84**%, Jains **0.4**% and other religions **0.6 %** respectively.

REGIONAL COMPOSITION OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Geographical location of a country determines the availability of the country's resources like rainfall and water. It also influences nature of soil, range

and density of forest. These in turn determine flora and fauna, which balance the ecology, climate and crops. Territory of India is expanded from Kashmir to Cape Comorian and from Gujarat to Assam.

This vast territory includes several geographical regions:

(i) The mountain belt stretching from North West (now Pakistan) to the north east.

(ii) The Ganga-Yamuna plain.

(iii) The region beyond the Vindyas and Satpura.

In India, the vast geographical region has various diversities like high mountains and low plains, areas of freezing chill and frost in northern side and tropical heat in the south, places of high rainfall like in Charapunji and the dry lands of Rajasthan. The territorial and climatic diversities influence the cultural pattern of the community of those areas. Of course, with all these diversities, these people have developed a sense of unity, because of which we find continuity of our culture.

LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Language includes signs and symbols and helps an individual to interact to his/her fellows in society. Indian society being a diverse entity people speak different languages at national, regional and local levels.

The constitution of India recognized **22[1] languages in 2003 (8th Schedule of Constitution)** and Hindi is official language of the country. In India the total

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[1] **English was included as 23rd language**

no of languages spoken are **826** also there are about **1652** mother tongues. The main linguistic families in India are as follows.

(i) Indo Aryan Language family

Indo Aryan languages come in India after advent of Aryans and are spoken by **73** % population of country, the major languages in this group are Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Marathi, Assammee, Orriya, Urdu, Sanskrit, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Phari, Rajhsthani and Bhojpuri.

(ii) Dravidian Language Family

These languages are spoken in south India by **20** % population of India such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

(iii) Austric and Sino-Tibetian Languages

This category of languages include Kol, Mon-Khemar, Tibeti, and Ladakhi and are spoken by **7**% population of country.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Unity in diversity is the highest possible attainment of a civilization, a testimony to the noblest possibilities of the human race. The values of universal brotherhood, love as well as the golden rule of treating others as we. These ideas foster social union and amity between people for countless generations and provide stability to a particular society.

India is a perfect example of unity in diversity. Take geography for example – from the snow-capped Himalayan mountain peaks in the north to the arid deserts of Rajasthan in the west. Then there is a multitude of religions – Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism – and even religions within religions called sects. And then comes the linguistic diversity of our country – to be precise, India has 22 major languages, written in

13 different scripts, with over 720 distinct dialects. This was aptly surmised by the eminent sociologist A R Desai when he said:

'India presents a spectacle of museum of tongues.'

UNIT 2

CONCEPT AND FEATURES OF CASTE

Caste means a hierarchical endogamous occupational grouping with positions fixed and mobility barred between castes by ritual distances.

Risley "caste is a group of families bearing a common name, claiming a common decent from mythological ancestor".

Batellite "caste as a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuits by tradition of a particular occupation".

The Indian society is mainly divided in to four major castes viz. **Brahmans** (Priests) **Kshatriyas** (Warriors) **Vaishyas** (Traders and Producers) **Shudras** (Servicing Caste)

Features of Caste

(i) Membership is based on birth: the caste system in Indian society is an ascribed heredity, the birth of the person determines his/her caste and he can't change it.

(ii) Segmental Division of society: The segmental division refers to its division into a number of groups, each of which has got a life of its own and stood in a relationship to higher or lower status to other castes.

(iii) **Hierarchy**: another feature of caste system is prevalence of hierarchy in society. In this system Brahmans were placed at the top Shudras are placed at the bottom.

(iv) **Caste is Endogamous**: The members of each caste marry within their own caste to maintain ritual purity.

(v) **Occupations are fixed by caste**: In the Hindu religious texts, the functions of castes are defined such as **Brahmans** (Priests), **Kshatriyas**

(Warriors), **Vaishyas** (Traders and Producers) and **Shudras** (Servicing Caste).

(vi) **Restrictions:** the caste system determines the limits of relationships a person can keep with other castes.

CONCEPT AND FEATURES OF CLASS

Class is a set, collection, group, or configuration containing members regarded as having certain attributes or traits in common. Which in turn determines their socio-economic status in society.

Mrax "class is an aggregate of individual who are performing similar role in forces of production"

Maclver and Page "social class as any portion of the community marked off from the rest by social status".

Max Weber "social classes are aggregates of individuals who have the same opportunities of acquiring goods, the same exhibited standard of living. He formulated a three component theory of stratification with social, status and party classes (or politics) as conceptually distinct elements.

Features

(i) **Social Mobility** in class system an individual can change his socio-economic position and can change is status persistently.

(ii) **Openness** in class system every individual is free to change his occupation or adopt new occupation.

(iii) **Hierarchy** in every society classes are hierarchically organized into lower, middle and upper classes.

(iv) **Limited social relations** every individual tries to develop relations with relevant class and tries to stay away from lower classes.

(v) Development of sub classes the class system can be sub divided into lower, middle and higher classes.

CASTE AND CLASS: DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE

Caste system had very favorable climate in the country in the past. But since the last 50 years, and more particularly after independence, times are against the system.

Some basic and fundamental changes are coming in it which include decline in the prestige of Brahminic cult and intermixing of people of all castes and classes.

Rigidity and conservatism is gradually losing its grip . It would not be surprising if castes were eventually reduced to a word signifying merely a group, since inter -caste marriages are increasing and the restrictions on mutual behavior, exchange of good-will and conduct are breaking.

Some people are changing their caste on the strength of their monetary wealth, the occupations for the various castes are no longer fixed , a member of any caste takes to any profession that he desires, the Brahmins have been deprived of much of their past glory and respect. Very few caste panchayats are to be seen and even they have no control whatsoever over the members. Many people have even started excluding their caste name from the name they use.

In this way caste is continually taking on the shape of class and casteism is growing in the form of classism.

Ogburn and Nimkoff, 'castes are a special form of social classes which in tendency at least are present in every society'.

Proof Y. Singh is of the view that classes operate within the framework of castes. He writes, "The situation corresponds to a 'prismatic 'model of change where traditional sentiments of caste and kinship undergo

adaptive transformation without completely being diffracted into classes or corporate groups.

K.L. Sharma observes that caste inhered in class and class inhered in caste for centuries in the Indian context and Indian society continues to have their inseparable mix even today. Class consciousness is created among the members of a caste on the basis of common economic deprivations. The upper castes, being conscious of the probable threat to their status, to be generated by the lower castes, strive to prevent the emergence of class consciousness among the lower classes.

Industrialization has given rise to the emergence of new social classes. These social classes are replacing the traditional castes. Trade Unions, Merchants' Associations and Political Parties are replacing the old caste loyalties. An increase in class consciousness leads to a decrease in caste consciousness.

FACTORS

1. **Modern education:** Modern liberal education introduced into the country by the British has played a crucial role in undermining the importance of caste in Indian social life. Modern education is based on such democratic values like equality, liberty and fraternity. It is also grounded on such scientific values like reason and observation. Hence it is quite natural that with the spread of modern education, the people's belief in the divine origin of caste has received a severe setback.

2. **Industrialization:** The process of industrialization has affected caste structure to a remarkable extent. Industrial growth has provided new sources of livelihood to people and made occupational mobility possible.

3. Sanskritization: The process by which a low Hindu caste or tribal or any other group changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born' caste". The members of the lower castes leave their own traditional ideals and behaviour patterns and accept the ideals and standards of higher castes. Hence through sanskritization the lower caste people move up slightly in the scale of "Jatis' within a particular varna.

4. Westernization: By promoting education, egalitarianism, rationalism, humanism and above all a critical outlook towards various social issues and problems, westernization has gone a long way in undermining the influence of the caste system.

5. Proselytism: refers to the attempt of any religion or religious individuals to convert people to their beliefs, or any attempt to convert people to a different point of view the castes having lower social status are changing their beliefs to seek upward mobility.

UNIT 3

RURAL SOCIETY

Rural society may be defined as that geographical area where levels of intimacy and community sentiments are high among members and have face to face relations.

"Rural" refers empirically to populations living in areas of low density and to small settlements, there are wide variations in the cutting point used operationally to distinguish rural from urban.

Features

1. **Agriculture** is both a mode of production and a way of life of rural community. It is a dominant mode of occupation. People are directly or indirectly involved in agriculture.

2. **Caste System** Caste and hierarchy have long been seen as the distinctive and defining feature of rural community. It is the main form of social stratification in village life even today.

3. **Community Sentiments** The relationships among inhabitants of village are face to face, direct, intimate and personal, so people posses community sentiments.

4. **Joint Family** Another important feature observed in rural community is that people prefer to live in joint families. All the members of the family share the burden of the family occupation.

5. **Social Control** In rural areas informal social control is being observed. The primary institutions like family and religion play an important role in exercising social control.

JAJMANI SYSTEM

Oscar Lewis defined jajmani system as that under which each caste group within a village is expected to give certain standardized services to the families of other castes. Jajmani is more than a relationship between families than between castes.

Jajmani is sort of mutual give and take form of relationship in which one family is hereditarily entitled to supply goods and render services to the other in exchange of the same. The person rendering the services or supplying the goods is known as kameen or prajan and the person to whom the services are rendered is called a jajman.Thus under jajmani system a permanent informal bond is made between jajman and kameen to meet each other's need for goods and services.

Inter-caste relations at the village level constitute vertical ties. They may be classified into economic, ritual, political and civic ties. The castes living in a village are bound together by economic ties.

Main features of Jajmani System

The jajmani system is characterized by the following features:

- Unbroken relationship- Under the jajmani system the kameen remains obliged to render the services throughout his life to a particular jajman and the jajman in turn has the responsibility of hiring services of a kameen.
- Hereditary relationship- Jajmani rights are enjoyed hereditarily. After the death of a man his son is entitled to work as kameen for the same jajman family of families. The son of a jajman also accepts the son of the kameen as his kameen.

- Multidimensional relationship- Due to the permanency of relationship both the jajman and kameen families become mutually dependent on each other. The relationship becomes very deep. They often take part in the personal and family affairs,family rituals and ceremonies.
- Barter exchange-Under jajmani system the payments are made mainly in terms of goods and commodities. The kameen gets his necessities from the jajman in return of his services.

The jajmani system has gradually decayed in modern society. There are many reasons responsible for it. Modern economic system that measures everything in terms of its monetary value. The decline of belief in caste system and hereditary occupation has given a strong blow to the system. Growth of better employment opportunities outside the village and introduction of new transport options.

PANCHAYATI RAJ

The term „panchayat raj" is relatively new, having originated during the British administration. 'Raj' literally means governance or government. **Mahatma Gandhi** advocated Panchayati Raj, a decentralized form of Government where each village is responsible for its own affairs, as the foundation of India's political system. His term for such a vision was "Gram Swaraj" (Village Self-governance).

Three tier structure

1. Village Panchayat

Village Panchayat is the lowest unit. There is a Panchayat for each village or a group of villages in case the population of these villages happens to be

too small. The Panchayat chiefly consists of representatives elected by the people of the village.

The principal functions performed by the Village Panchayat are maintenance of roads, wells, schools, burning and burial grounds, sanitation, public health, libraries, reading rooms, community centre etc.

2. Panchayat Samiti

The Panchayat Samiti is the second on join tier of the Panchayati Raj. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee report has envisaged the Samiti as a single representative and vigorous democratic institution to take charge of all aspects of development in rural areas.

The Samiti, according to the Committee, offers "an area large enough for functions which the Village Panchayat cannot perform and yet small enough to attract the interest and services of residents."

Usually a Panchayat Samiti consists of 20 to 60 villages depending on area and population. The average population under a Samiti is about 80,000 but the range is from 35,000 to 1, 00,000. The Panchayat Samiti generally consists of- (1) about twenty members elected by and from the Panches of all the Panchayats falling in the block area; (2) two women members and one member each from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be co- opted, provided they do not get adequate representation otherwise; (3) two local persons possessing experience of public life and administration, which may be beneficial for the rural development; (4) representatives of the Co-operatives working within the jurisdiction of the block; (5) one representative elected by and from the members of each small municipality lying within the geographical limits of a block; (6) the members of the State and Union legislatures representing the area are to be taken as associate members.

3. Zilla Parishad

The Zilla Parishad stands at the apex of the three-tier structure of the Panchayati Raj system. Generally, the Zilla Parishad consists of representatives of the Panchayat Samiti; all the members of the State Legislature and the Parliament representing a part or whole of the district; all district level officers of the Medical, Public Health, Public Works, Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary, Education and other development departments. There is also a provision for special representation of women, members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes provided they are not adequately represented in the normal course. The Collector is also a member of the Zilla Parishad.

Functions of Panchayati Raj:

The structure of Panchayati Raj is designed in such a way that the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act gives certain powers and functions to the three-tier structure of the Panchayati Raj. The idea is to decentralise the power of rural administration to the elected representatives. The Act enables the elected representatives to take their own decisions within the framework of Act.

Some of the important functions of the Panchayati Raj
1. Agricultural development and irrigation facilities;
2. Land reforms;
3. Eradication of poverty;
4. Dairy farming, poultry, piggery and fish rearing;
5. Rural housing;
6. Safe drinking water;
7. Social forestry, fodder and fuel;
8. Primary education, adult education and informal training;
9. Roads and buildings;
10. Markets and fairs;

11. Child and women development;
12. Welfare of weaker sections, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

UNIT 4

SANSKRITIZATION

The term "**Sanskritisation**" was introduced into Indian Sociology by M.N. Srinivas. The term refers to a process whereby people of lower castes collectively try to adopt upper caste practices and beliefs, as a preliminary step to acquire higher status.

Thus it indicates a process of cultural mobility that is taking place in the traditional social system of India.

M.N. Srinivas in his study of the Coorg in Karnataka found that lower castes, in order to raise their position in the caste hierarchy, adopted some customs and practices of the Brahmins, and gave up some of their own which were considered to be "impure" by the higher castes.

For example, they gave up meat-eating, drinking liquor and animal sacrifice to their deities. They imitated Brahmins in matters of dress, food and rituals. By doing this, within a generation or so they could claim higher positions in the hierarchy of castes.

In the beginning, M.N. Srinivas used the term "Brahminisation" (in his book "Religion and Society among the Coorgs"— 1971) to denote this process. Later on, he replaced it by "Sanskritisation".

M.N. Srinivas, in fact, has been broadening his definition of the term 'Sanskritisation' from time to time. Initially, he described it as—" the process of mobility of lower castes by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism to move in the caste hierarchy in a generation or two" — (1962).

ISLAMIZATION

Islamization is the process of a society's shift towards Islam, such as found in Sudan, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia or Algeria. In contemporary usage, it may refer to the perceived imposition of an Islamist social and political system on a society with an indigenously different social and political background.

Muslimization has recently been used as a term coined to describe the overtly Muslim practices of new converts to the religion who wish to reinforce their newly acquired religious identity.

Modern day Islamization appears to be a return of the individual to Muslim values, communities, and dress codes, and a strengthened community.

Another development is that of transnational Islam, It includes a feeling of a "growing universalistic Islamic identity" as often shared by Muslim immigrants and their children who live in non-Muslim countries:

The increased integration of world societies as a result of enhanced communications, media, travel, and migration makes meaningful the concept of a single Islam practiced everywhere in similar ways, and an Islam which transcends national and ethnic customs.

Global Muslim identity does not necessarily or even usually imply organized group action. Even though Muslims recognize a global affiliation, the real heart of Muslim religious life remains outside politics—in local associations for worship, discussion, mutual aid, education, charity, and other communal activities.

The rapidly increasing population of muslims in a democratic setup like India triggers a phenomenon known as 'Islamization' which is the process of

ending up the democratic system and bringing it under the proclaimed law of Allah (God) known as the Sharia. The unique factor common to muslim demands of implementation of Sharia in a particular democratic country is their population. When the muslim population exceeds a particular threshold, these cries grow louder and much more violent.

MODERNIZATION

The process of modernization is viewed as a onetime historical process which was started by the Industrial Revolution in England and the Political Revolution in France. It created a gap between these new societies and the other back ward societies.

Modernisation is a historical inescapable process of social change. Modernisation first occurred in the West through the twin processes of commercialization and industrialisation.

Wilbert E. Moore defines modernisation as "the 'total' transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into the types of technology and associated social organisation that characterise the 'advanced', economically prosperous, and relatively politically stable nations of the Western World".

According to **Neil J. Smelser,** the term modernisation "refers to the fact that technical, economic and ecological change ramify through the whole social and cultural fabric".

Characteristics/Attributes of Modernisation:
1. The modern society is characterised by 'differentiation' and 'social mobilisation'. These are called pre-requisites of modernisation,

according to **Eisenstadt**. As social systems modernise, new social structures emerge to fulfill the functions of those that are no longer performing adequately.

2. Differentiation refers to the development of functionally specialised societal structures. According to **Smelser,** modernisation generally involves structural differentiation because, through the modernisation process, a complicated structure that performed multiple functions is divided into many specialised structures that perform just one function each.

3. 'Social mobilisation implies the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded and broken and people become available for new patterns of socialisation and behaviour, says Eisenstadt. It is a process by which the old social, economic and psychological elements are transformed and new social values of human conduct are set up.

4. At a minimum, components of modernisation include: industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation, media expansion, increasing literacy and education.