

End-Semester Examination

HSS368: Introduction to Sociology

Max Marks: 75

21 November 2019

Instructions:

Section A is COMPULSORY. This section is worth 15 marks.

Answer ANY FOUR of the questions from Section B in 700-800 words each. Each question is worth 15 marks.

SECTION A

Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

In the early 1950s, the Nehruvian government sought to eradicate the intermediaries between the government and the tillers of the soil. In Bihar, this precipitated a string of acts and amendments, as landlords sought to challenge any change to the status quo. Those who had previously been the landlord's tenants became the owners of the land they tilled, paying the state a yearly tax equivalent to the rent that the landlords had charged. ...This process of zamindar abolition has sometimes been portrayed as one of the most successful projects of the Nehruvian era. Yet in Tapu, there is little evidence to show that such transformation occurred during the years following abolition. In fact, while the tenants had become local owners of the land they tilled, they did not come to fully understand the implications of this change until much later. In practice, even in 2007, the landlord descendants helped state officials collect rent from the former tenants. In this context, it is understandable that many former tenants believed that they were still paying the landlords, and furthermore, that they perceived the functionaries as representing an alien authority that the landlords nevertheless had long been in contact with.

...Starting in 1965, the road from Ranchi to Bero and beyond was being paved by the government's Public Works Department. This was the first of numerous paved roads in the area for which gravel was needed. Contractors from Ranchi, the private suppliers to government projects, came to excavate the blue gneissic stone from the common land in Tapu and chip it into gravel. This gave the landlord descendants in Tapu the idea to chip the stone themselves. Despite the fact that the 1950s land reforms had made these gairmazurwa lands public property, many people in the village still saw them as belonging to the landlord descendants...Other landlord descendants sought to benefit from the different development resources coming into the area. In the mid-1990s, the Eastern India Rain-fed Farming Project of the Indian government and the U.K. Department for International Development targeted the village. The project community officer stayed in the house of a landlord descendent, and as a result, landlord descendants were the main beneficiaries of the various seeds, wells, and pumps, brought in by the project. Beginning in the mid-1990s, as Tapu became the target of more state development resources in the form of construction contracts, some of the landlord descendants developed a monopoly of resource control in this sphere. In short, the developmental state in its various forms (whether through jobs, construction contracts, the proliferation of a stone chipping industry, or

development programs) came to replace land as the source through which the landlord descendents attempted to maintain their material lifestyles as rural elites vis-à-vis their former tenants.

From the Munda perspective, however, things did begin to change, and for more reasons than land reform. Tapu is not the same as it was in the late 1980s or even in the early 1990s. The relative material wealth of the landlords has significantly diminished. Whereas once the landlords had horses, both Mundas and landlord descendents now have bicycles....A further factor in this process of transformation was that during the 1960s, local produce markets opened up, and former tenants found it easier to sell their surplus produce. For those who had no surplus produce in the dry months, there were opportunities to work as day-wage labourers outside Tapu, in the farms of the wealthier former landlords, in the stone chipping business or as manual labour in government development programmes. As a result, the economic structure in Tapu has changed significantly. Landlord descendents are still quick to remind Mundas of the generosity of their forefathers, through whom most of the Mundas acquired land. Most Mundas still acknowledge this, and in some ways continue to feel indebted for it. Indeed, most of the few Munda families who remain totally dependent on the landlord descendent families continue to drop everything when the landlord descendents call. However, the number of such families is now small.

- a) What theory of social stratification has been employed by the author? Explain how this theory has been employed. (5 marks)
- b) What is the nature of the new classes forming in Tapu? How are they formed? (5 marks)
- c) What is the author telling us about the relationship between class and ethnicity in contemporary India? (5 marks)

SECTION B

- 1) How is 'culture' understood in Sociology? Use any one instance to explain the various features of 'culture'.
- 2) Explain some of the underlying reasons for the rise of nationalism, and the difference between civic and ethnic nationalism.
- 3) Discuss, with examples, the main aims and methods of the discipline of political sociology.
- 4) Who are the 'power elites' and how do they influence policy discourse(s)? How is the 'ruling class' different from power elites?
- 5) "Development is the religion of modernity". Discuss.
- 6) How does Wallerstein's World Systems Theory explain failures of modernity and development?
- 7) Discuss the interplay between gender and caste in detail, with examples.
- 8) What does Durkheim have to say about 'social facts', value judgements and factual assertions? Explain with examples.