

**INDIAN SOCIETY:
STRUCTURE AND TRANSFORMATION
(SGY2B02)**

**STUDY MATERIAL
CORE COUSE OF BA SOCIOLOGY
II SEMESTER
CBCSS (2019 ADMISSION)**



**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
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SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**II SEMESTER
CORE COURSE OF B.A. SOCIOLOGY**

**INDIAN SOCIETY: STRUCTURE AND TRANSFORMATION
(SGY2B02)**

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SGY2B02: INDIAN SOCIETY: STRUCTURE AND TRANSFORMATION

Course Objectives

1. To develop a sociological perspective for understanding the dynamics of Indian Society
2. To sensitize the changes occurred in the various institutions in Indian Society
3. To aware the issues and challenges of contemporary society

MODULE I: FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

- 1.1 Approaches to study Indian Society- Indological (Dumont), Structural-Functional (Srinivas), Marxian (Desai)
- 1.2 Features of Indian Society:- Village Community in India- Features and Transformation
- 1.3 Concepts of Social Change in Indian Society- Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Modernization

MODULE II INDIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- 2.1 Family and Marriage in Indian Society- Structural and Functional changes
- 2.2 Kinship System in India- Regional Variations-North and South
- 2.3. Religion in Indian Society – Changing dimensions

MODULE III CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

- 3.1 Indian Caste System- Features and Transformation
- 3.2 Caste and Class in India, Reservation Policies, Social Mobility (Pauline Kolenda)
- 3.3 Caste and Politics- Politicization of caste, Caste organizations

MODULE IV CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES

- 4.1 Structural: Poverty, Unemployment, Differential access to resouces
- 4.2 Social: Marginalisation, Exclusion
- 4.3 Political- Regionalism, Communalism

MODULE: I
FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Approaches to study Indian Society-

Indological (Dumont), Structural-Functional (Srinivas), Marxian (Desai)

Introduction

This second paper **Indian Society: Structure and Transformation** help the students to develop a sociological perspective for understanding the dynamics of Indian Society and it sensitizes s/he the changes occurred in the various institutions in Indian Society in different contexts. It also equips them to understand different issues and challenges happened in the contemporary Indian society.

So, this course will help us to understand different sociological approaches to understand Indian society. As we studied in the first semester (Basics of Sociology (SGY1B01)) Sociology as an independent and separate discipline emerged in the west during and after French and industrial revolutions. And these sociological approaches of the West expanded to other parts of the globe as a result of imperial expansions and colonial encounters. During the colonial period different anthropologists and other scholars tried to understand Indian society and its unique cultural specificities through a western and orientalist perspective.

But, many Indian scholars began to apprehend that there are various social aspects that are atypical to Indian society which need to be studied through Indian perspectives as against the European or Western approaches. They also realized that sociological or anthropological understanding of Indian society demands a systematic examination of the social and cultural

specificities of Indian society. This led to the emergence of Indian sociology and social anthropology in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The course is divided into four Modules, each consisting of multiple units. This has been done to discuss the major theoretical approaches and concepts related to India society. First module introduces the features of Indian society. It has three units, first unit looks at different approaches to study Indian Society- Indological (Dumont), Structural-Functional (Srinivas), Marxian (Desai). Second unit examines one of the significant features of Indian Society that is village community and it looks at the features and transformation of village communities in different historical periods. The third unit emphasizes on three concepts of social change in Indian society namely, Sanskritisation, Westernisation, and Modernization.

The next module looks at four predominant social institutions of Indian society, such as Family, marriage, kinship and religion. It has three units, first unit examines the structural and functional changes in the family and marriage system in Indian society. Second unit looks at the kinship system in India and its regional variations. The third unit examines the changing dimensions of religion in Indian society.

Third module deals with most important and unique concept related to Indian subcontinent, which is caste system. In this module all three units deal with different aspects of caste system. While first unit explains the features and transformation of caste system second unit discusses the different aspects of changes in the caste system such as reservation and social mobility. In the last unit, we encounter with different aspects of caste and politics and role of different caste organizations in India.

Last module focuses on the structural, social and political issues in contemporary India. In the structural issues we focus on the poverty, unemployment, and inequalities. In the case of social issues the second unit looks at the marginalization and social exclusions. Finally in the

political issues we focus on the concepts of regionalism and communalism and locate it in the historical and contemporary Indian context.

1.1 Approaches to study Indian Society

A sociological approach is simply a way of looking at the social world. The sociological approach to study Indian society goes beyond everyday common sense knowledge about the society and use systematic methods of empirical observation and theorization. Sociological approaches on Indian society make an attempt to understand the social world by situating social events in their socio-cultural context and historical and temporal locations. Along with this situated understanding, sociologist collects and analyzes empirical data to understand social phenomenon. This systematic and scientific study of society differentiates sociology from commonsense understanding, because sociologists test and modify their understanding of how the world works through scientific analysis.

The earliest writing on Indian society starts from the ancient time. These are by travellers and traders who came to India from time to time. There are recorded observations on Indian society since the third century BC. These records are by traders, travelers and scholars who came to India in these early times. They were Greeks, Romans, Byzantine Greeks, Jews and Chinese. They are the Greek ambassador Megasthenes, Chinese, Arab and the Europeans. During the British period the British administrators began to study Indian society for administrative purposes. These writings on Indian Society were based on their first hand contact with the people. They wrote on the social institutions and customs of the people. Therefore, they are a source of information on Indian society in the early times.

As we know, sociology as a modern discipline emerged in the West and therefore, the sociological approaches of the West expanded to other parts of the globe, including to Indian subcontinents. But many Indian scholars began to realise that there are various social aspects

that are peculiar to Indian society which need to be studied through Indian perspectives. This led to the emergence of Indian sociology. In the case of modern sociology there are different approaches to understand Indian social and cultural specificities. Broadly speaking, there are two important approaches to study Indian society, they are

- The **Book view** emphasizes on the study of Indian society with the help of interpretation of ancient texts. It was one dominant perspective during the time of colonial and post-colonial era. However, the book view is not free of criticisms.
- **Field view** believes that book view always gives a distorted picture of Indian society. Therefore, scholars like M.N Srinivas have popularised the field view tradition in India. Field view in common parlance refers to the study of any phenomenon with the help of collecting data from the concerned field with the help of intensive field work, One of his books, *The Field Worker and the Field*, Srinivas gives us a comprehensive understanding of field view and its applicability in studying social phenomenon.

In this first session we look at three important approaches through three sociologists. They are:

1. Ideological Approach
2. Structural-Functional Approach
3. Marxian Approach

1.1.1. Ideological Approach

Indology refers to the view that the sacred scriptures and ancient Sanskrit texts offer accurate guidelines to the study of history, culture and society of the India. In this approach scholars looked to the Sanskrit texts to explore the sources of Indian tradition and culture. So, an understanding of Indian society based on the study of the ancient texts and sacred scriptures led to the development of Indological tradition.

In another word, Indology or Text view / book view refers to the study of the Indian society by interpretation of ancient texts such as Vedas, *Puranas*, *Manusmriti*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* etc. Indology assumes that historically, Indian society and culture are unique. This uniqueness or specificity of Indian social realities could be understood only with the help of ancient 'texts'. Therefore, Indologists use the literature of ancient Indian society such as ancient history, epics, religious manuscripts and texts etc. to study the social institutions of India. G. S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont are two eminent scholars contributed towards Indological or textual perspective.

Louis Dumont (1911-1998)

Louis Dumont (1911-1998), is a French Sociologist and Indologist. Dumont's academic career began in the mid-1930s under the guidance of Marcel Mauss who was a leading sociologist and Sanskritist. In his study Dumont used ethnographic details to understand the complex nature of Indian Society. He examined the empirical details of caste system and developed complex sociological theories about cast practices in India. Dumont's study of Indian society is very much influenced by the history and culture of society. While studying the two types of societies, *Homo Hierarchicus* (characterized by hierarchy) and *Homo Aequalis* (egalitarian society), he uses the concept of holism and individualism. This comparative perspective helps us to understand the nature and characteristics of Indian society and social formations.

Dumont has written on various aspects of Indian society such as caste, Hinduism, kinship, and social as well as political movements of India. Some of his major works are as follows:

1. La Tarasque (1951)
2. *Hierarchy and Marriage Alliance in South India* (1957)
3. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications* (1966, 1970)
4. *Religion, Politics and History in India: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology* (1970)

5. *Homo aequalis* (1977).

Dumont in his work *Homo Hierarchicus*, tries to give structuralist analysis of caste, and incidentally, of Indian culture, society, and civilization (Srinivas, 1987: 137). Dumont has introduced the notions of 'system' and 'structure'. He defines caste as "a system of ideas and values, a formal, comprehensible, rational system, a system in the intellectual sense of the term" (Dumont, 1970: 35).

Dumont was the first ideologist to give a theoretical account of caste system where he was mostly concerned with the ideology of the caste system. He viewed that the ideology of caste system in India is purely religious and this religious outlook determines the situation. In addition to ideology and structure, the concept of hierarchy has a fundamental place in Dumont's study of caste system (Nagla, 2008: 117). Dumont's concept of hierarchy is very much related to the religion which is again based on the concept of purity and pollution. According to him, hierarchy is purely a matter of religious value and in modern time hierarchy has become social stratification. He viewed that "hierarchy is a ladder of command in which the lower rungs are encompassed in the higher ones in regular succession" (Dumont, 1970: 65). Dumont considers hierarchy as one essential element for proper functioning of any society and a common value system is not possible without a social hierarchy.

In order to have a clear understanding of India, according to Dumont, the study of the caste system is very crucial. It also forms a significant aspect of general sociology. He give emphasis to the classical texts to understand the ideology of caste and advocated the use of Indological and structuralist approach to the study of caste system and village social structure in India. In his *Homo Hierarchicus*, has built up a model of Indian civilisation based on non-competitive ritual hierarchical system. According to Dumont, caste system segregates the entire Indian society into a large number of hereditary groups. These groups can be distinguished from one another and linked to different attributes. These are as follows:

- **Gradation of status or hierarchy:** According to Dumont “hierarchy is a ladder of command in which the lower rungs are encompassed in the higher ones in regular succession” (ibid). That means it arranges the caste groups as comparatively superior or inferior to one another. The position of each caste group is dependent on the positions of the other caste groups. For example, the Brahmin’s position has no meaning if we do not compare it with that of the Kshatriyas; in absence of such comparison, it will not be apparent that the Brahmin has ritual superiority.
- **Division of Labour:** The caste system is marked by specialisation and interdependence of the constituent groups. Each caste group is traditionally associated with an occupation from which its members can depart only within certain limit. Specialisation necessitates separation between these groups, but it is oriented towards the whole, which must be repeatedly emphasised. As such, it links the division of labour with hierarchy (ibid: 92-95).
- **Separation:** A member of a caste group always has obligation to marry within the group, which is known as endogamy. The regulation of marriage is actually an expression of the principle of separation. By prohibiting marriage outside the group and prescribing marriage within the group, one caste separates itself from another, contact and commensality between persons belonging to different groups are forbidden. At certain level of segmentation, the caste prescribes endogamy and thus ensures its own reproduction (Dumont, 1970: 109).

So, *Homo Hierarchicus* is a complete, theoretical work that helps us to access the vast body of available ethnographic data on caste. The main focuses of this book is the concept hierarchy which is the fundamental feature of the Indian society. Hierarchy is said to distinguish Indian society from ‘modern’ societies whose fundamental social principle is equality. This hierarchy, on the one hand, like any equalitarian system, is opposed by those who see its effect upon

themselves as disadvantageous, no matter how loudly or piously it is advocated by those who benefit from it. Those low in a hierarchical system universally see it as disadvantageous to themselves and object either to the system or to the manner in which it is applied to themselves. Any social hierarchy, then, is perpetrated and perpetuated by elites and is struggled against as circumstances permit, by those they oppress. This is true in India and anywhere else.

The main points made in this book can be briefly summed up as, first, India is one and this unity is found above all in ideas and values. Second, caste is the fundamental institution of Hinduism which determines the social cultural and other aspect of individual and community life. Third, this caste system is constituted and governs by the opposition between the pure and impure. Fourth, hierarchy and separation are two basic aspects of opposition between purity and impurity. Fifth, hierarchy distinguishes Indian society from 'modern' societies whose fundamental social principle is equality.

Criticisms of Dumont's Theory

Dumont has been widely acclaimed as an important sociologist who contributed to the development of sociology in its early phase. His explanation of caste in terms "purity" and "pollution" became a part of the common sense sociology. Even though, his theory of caste has also been one of the most controversial pieces of work in the contemporary time. Different scholars' criticized his work on various grounds. These are some common point

- 1. The contradictions between book view and field view:** Dumont's work on cast does not correspond with the lived reality of Indian society. It has been pointed out by his critiques that much of his theory has been derived from the study of some selective classical Hindu texts. He has ignored the large amount of empirical literature that was available to him, produced by professional social anthropologists in form village studies and monographs.
- 2. The textual view of caste gave him a Brirhmanical perspective on caste:** Dumont has been widely criticized for presenting a partial and a biased view of the system. Since his

theory was largely derived from the classical Hindu texts, produced invariably by the upper caste Brahmins, his theory allegedly reflected the bias that the upper caste themselves had vis-a-vis the system.

3. **The comparative assumption he start with is based on a false dichotomy between the "traditional" and "modern" societies:** Dumont has also been criticized for treating Indian society as being fundamentally different from the West. He works with a much-criticized notion of a dichotomy between the modern societies of the West and the traditional societies of the Third World. His theory is based on the assumption that while the modern societies of the West were characterized by the ideas of individualism and egalitarianism, the traditional societies, in contrast, were characterized by conceptions of the collective nature of man, by the primacy of social rather than individual goals, and thus by hierarchy.
4. **Critic against unchanging nature of caste system:** Dumont's work is based on traditional Indian texts. Consequently, the features of the caste system, as projected by Dumont, seem to be unchanging. In reality, the caste system has changed in various ways during a period of time. Dumont also seems to characterize Indian society as almost "stagnant, since he emphasizes the integrative function of caste system.
5. **Indifferent attitude towards anti-caste movement:** Dumont does not acknowledge the social movements against the caste ideology: There was a long list of social mobilizations against Brahminical dominance in modern as well as in the pre-modern India. From Buddhism to Bhakti to Sikhism to neo Buddhism, there had been strong, and to some extent successful opposition to the caste ideology. There was no place for such realities in Dumont's depiction of the Indian society and in his theory of the caste system.

However, Dumont holds an important position in Indian sociology. Amidst the debates about appraising Indian social reality on the basis of caste, Dumont's Homo Hierarchicus represented an outstanding contribution, whether or not one agrees with his viewpoint.

1.1.2. Structural-Functional Approach

In the early stage onwards Structural-Functional approach got a prominent position in the study of society and it became a predominant trend in sociology, social and cultural anthropology and other social sciences during the first half of 20th century. It appeared from the writings of early thinkers like August Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim during the later part of 19th century. The Functional approach to the study of phenomena emerged initially in biological sciences and later on adopted in other sciences and social sciences. The key points of the functionalist perspective may be summarized by an analogy between human biological organism and social organisms. A biologist carries out the study of an organism, say human body, by analyzing various parts, such as brain, lungs, heart and liver. However if each part is examined in isolation, it will not reveal the entire working and maintenance of the part unless studied in relation to other parts comprising the whole organism.

Functionalism in social science adopts a similar view and study different social institutions and organizations. Functional approach to the study of society views society in terms of its constituent parts and their relationship with each other in order to maintain the society as a whole. So, society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. For example, each of the social institutions contributes important functions for society: Family provides a context for reproducing, nurturing, and socializing children; education offers a way to transmit a society's skills, knowledge, and culture to its youth; politics provides a means of governing members of society; economics provides for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services; and religion provides moral guidance and an outlet for worship of a higher power.

Likewise, the Structural-functional approach got predominant position in the study of Indian society since the 1940s till the end of the 20th century. Different scholars' from India, both sociologists and social anthropologists, took structural and functional approach as a guiding theoretical and methodological tool to understand Indian society. They have undertaken extensive analysis of the caste and village systems in order to understand the unique nature the Indian society. G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas and S. C. Dube are some of the main Indian scholars who used structural-functional approach in the study of Indian society. The structural-functionalists view that the Indian society is made up of castes as significant parts that collectively constitute the social system.

M. N. Srinivas (1916-1999)

Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas was born on 16th November, 1916 in Mysore in a Brahmin family and died in 1999 at the age of 83 at Bangalore. He achieved M.A, LLB. and Ph.D. from Bombay and D. Phil. from Oxford. He was a student of G.S. Ghurye in Bombay University. He has contributed significantly as a researcher as well as an institutional builder. He must be given credit for setting up the department of Sociology at M.S University, Baroda. He has also contributed a lot for the setting up of the Department of Sociology at Delhi University.

He was very much influenced by his teacher at Oxford University, Radcliffe-Brown and his idea of structure. M.N Srinivas introduced a new line of structural-functional analysis in sociological and social anthropological research in India. On the one hand, he did not rely on Western textbooks or indigenous ancient texts to know about Indian society in general and his countrymen in particular. On the other hand he tried to know the society through direct observation, field experience and field study.

Srinivas is of the view that there are two basic concepts to understand our society—book view and field view. Book view which is also known as Indology is not acceptable to Srinivas

for which he emphasized on Field view. Srinivas believes that knowledge about Indian society can be gained through fieldwork. So, he emphasized on intensive fieldwork and wrote many books on the basis of the field data. According to him, book view gives a distorted picture of any phenomenon. His fieldwork has helped us in revealing many facts about Indian society. After completing his fieldwork in Coorg and Rampura, he has come up with many new concepts like Sanskritisation, Westernization, dominant caste, etc. The various scholarly writings of Srinivas include,

- Social change in Modern India (1966)
- Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India(1952)
- Caste in Modern India and Other Essays(1966)
- The Dominant Caste and Other Essays (1987)
- India's Villages (1955)
- India: Social Structure (1980)
- The Remembered Village (1976)

His major areas of study were social change in terms of processes. He is best known for his work on religion, village community, caste and it is based on intensive field work in south India in general and Coorg and Rampura in particular. He tried to study how a dominant cast in a village in Mysore i.e. Lingayats have started a non-bramhinal movement to disapprove the dominance of Brahmins that area.

His important work *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* is based on the intensive fieldwork where Srinivas has focused on social and religious lives of the Coorgs. By explaining the interaction in ritual context of different castes of the Coorgs, he describes the concept of functional unity. After conducting his fieldwork on the Coorgs, he has formulated the

concept Brahminisation to refer to the process where the lower caste people imitate the lifestyle and rituals of Brahmins. However, he has soon replaced Brahminisation with Sanskritisation.

Srinivas in his book *The Remembered Village* has written about the structure of caste system in Rampura village. He discusses the caste system by dividing the entire population on the basis of occupation. While doing so, he sees its link with agriculture. He analyses the practices of various castes in relation to their occupation (Srinivas, 1976). He is therefore of the view that each caste is dependent on the other thereby leading to an organic integration of each caste with others. They are related with each other in a functional perspective as elaborated by Radcliffe Brown.

Social Change - Sanskritisation and Westernisation

In his book *Social Change in Modern India* (1966) Srinivas dealt with the concept of social change. In this book he has discussed about the process of social change mainly with the help two important concepts- Sanskritisation and Westernisation. According to him, of these two processes, Sanskritisation seems to have occurred throughout Indian history and is continuously occurring in the society.

Sanskritisation is a process in which a 'low' Hindu caste or tribal or other group, imitates the custom, ritual, ideology and the way of life of a high, and frequently "twice born" caste to uplift its status in local caste hierarchy. This process of imitation results into some changes in the lifestyle of lower caste people. Generally, such changes help them to achieve a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that which has been traditionally ascribed to them by the local community. The lower caste people usually made such kind of claim over a period of time, in fact, a generation or two, before it is conceded (Srinivas, 1966).

On the other hand, Westernisation refers to the changes introduced during the British period to the Indian society and which still continue in independent India. Westernisation, like Sanskritisation is not restricted to any particular segment of the Indian population. It may be

noted that the achievement of independence accelerated the process of Westernisation (Srinivas, 1966). There are, however, some presuppositions in the process of both Sanskritisation and Westernisation, which do imply precedent or connected structural changes, such as improvement in economic position of the Sanskritising caste, superiority and dominance of the caste being emulated and the psychological dissatisfaction among the low castes from their own position in the caste hierarchy (Srinivas, 1966).

Along with these concepts, Srinivas has added the concept of 'secularisation' to indicate the process of institutional innovation and ideological formulations after independence to deal with the question of religious and minority groups. However, he has been criticized for marginalizing and alienating religious minorities in his venture for encouraging Sanskritisation.

Dominant Caste

The concept of dominant caste has been used for the first time in sociological literature by an eminent Indian Sociologist M.N. Srinivas in his essay Social System of a Mysore Village, which was written after his study of village Rampura. The concept occupies a key position in the process of 'Sanskritisation'. The term dominant caste is used to refer to a caste which "wields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy."

He has also coined the concept of 'dominant caste' after studying the Rampura village. The concept of dominant caste has been used to the study of power relation at the village level. There are three important attributes which decide the nature and characteristics of a dominant caste in a locality. They are

- i) Numerical strength,
- ii) Economic power,
- iii) Political power.

These castes are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life. The people of other lower castes look at them as their 'reference group' and try to imitate their behavior,

ritual pattern, custom and ideology. In this way, the dominant caste of a particular locality plays an important role in the 'process of cultural transmission' in that area. The members of a dominant caste have an upper hand in all the affairs of the locality and enjoy many special opportunities as well as privileges. Srinivas has defined the following six major characteristics of Dominant caste.

1. Land Ownership
2. Numerical Strength
3. High place in local hierarchy
4. Modern Education
5. Job in administration and urban sources of income
6. Political involvement

Land is the most precious possession in rural area since it is the principal source of income. Uneven distribution of locally available cultivable field is a regular phenomenon of Indian Society. A vast area of land is concentrated in the hands of rich minority. Generally the big landowners come from higher castes. These land owners employ the people of other castes as their laborers. They also give land on rent to the people. As a result, the entire population of the locality remains obliged to the few land owners of a particular caste.

The numerical strength of a caste also contributes towards its dominance. The more the number the greater the power. In many areas, the Kshyatriyas due to their large population are able to exercise their control and power even over the few rich Brahmins of a locality and are able to dominate the socio-political situation. Indian Society has been stratified into various groups on the basis of caste system organised according to the beliefs and ideas of purity and pollution. In every locality certain caste is accorded high status owing to its ritual purity. They always enjoy social superiority to all other castes in every aspects of social life.

The caste, member of which are highly educated, is naturally looked up by the members of others castes. Due to their high education, they win the morale of others. The illiterate people have to take their help in many occasions owing to the complexities of modern social life. The educated people, due to their adequate information and knowledge about various developmental activities, plans and programmes, are also in a better position to utilize them which aids to their prosperity making them dominant in a particular area.

The caste, the majority members of which is in government bureaucracy or has sound economic strength, always finds itself in an advantageous position. Its members hold legal and administrative powers by virtue of their being government officials. They help their other caste fellows to have different sources of urban income like supplying of food grains to urban dwellers, doing various types of business. The dominant place of politics in contemporary Indian Society can hardly be undermined. The caste being more involved in political affairs of the state or locality, automatically raises its position and exercises control in all fields of social life. Till now we have been emphasizing on the point that a caste becomes dominant in a locality due to its attributes as discussed above. But dominance is no longer a purely local phenomenon.

Criticism against M N Srinivas's Structural-Functional Approach

- Although Srinivas has talked about the economic and technological development, he has not focused of the lower segment of society.
- His ideas on Sanskritization and Dominant caste have made him closer to Hindutva ideology of cultural nationalism.
- The two processes of social change, Sanskritization and Westernization are regarded as “limited processes in modern India and it is not possible to understand one without reference to the other.”

1.1.3. Marxian Approach

Historical materialism or dialectical materialism is the core of Marx's sociological thought. Therefore, it is necessary to situate historical materialism within the overall context of Marx's work and his contributions to sociological theory. According to Marx material conditions or economic factors affect the structure and development of society. His theory is that material conditions essentially comprise technological means of production and human society is formed by the forces and relations of production. Marx's historical approach understand that all societies as evolving in a series of stages.

Marxian Approach to Understand India Society

Marxism aims at providing a scientific study of society from a class angle. The Marxist thinkers in India believe that the emergence of Indian society and its unique institutions could be best examined from the Marxian perspective than any other approach since the only reality is that of material phenomenon that determines everything else. The material mode of production forms the basic structure of any society and the socio-cultural domain of social relationships and institutions constitute the 'superstructure'.

D.D. Kosambi was one of the well known Marxist historians who tried to employ the Marxian dialectical method to analyze 'materialism' of Indian social system. He argued that human beings cannot live without 'bread' or food. An aggregate of human beings become society only when the people develop the most essential relations, viz., the relations developed through production and mutual exchange of commodities. Kinship is not as essential as production relations are. The nature of interaction of people with natural surroundings depends on the techniques of production. Surplus depends on the means of production and the distribution of surplus among various members is a matter for the relations of production. What matters is who owns the tools of production and controls the distribution of surplus.

Marxists believe that society is held together by bonds of production. For Kosambi, history is the 'presentation in chronological order of successive developments in the means and relations of production'. He argued that materialistic analysis provides a systematic understanding of Indian culture and society. In the Marxian approach, the main task is to identify the successive developments in the means and relations of production that truly mirror the life of people at any stage in history.

Kosambi proposed a general theory of history founded on dialectical materialism and undertook what he called 'purely materialistic reconstruction of history and stages of societal development' in India. Study of religion, superstition, rituals and myths may be undertaken to examine the underlying means and relations of production, for they form ideological superstructure. Study of superstructure sometimes reveals the changes occurring in the base. However, he emphasized that economic considerations are important even in the explanation of religions. He argued that the productive base as a source of explanation rather than emphasizing the superstructure to understand the social reality.

A. R. Desai (1915-1994)

Dr. A. R. Desai was born on April 16, 1915 at Nadiad in Gujarat and died in 1994 at Baroda. His personal and political life helped him to concentrate on Marxist theory and practice. As a college student, Dr. Desai took part in students' movements in Baroda, Surat and Bombay. He became a member of the Communist Party of India in 1934 but resigned from it in 1939. He graduated from University of Bombay and secured a Law degree and a Phd. in Sociology from the same University in 1946 under Dr. G. S. Ghurge. Dr. Desai started his academic career in 1946 as a lecturer of Sociology to Siddharth College in Bombay. In 1951 he joined the department of Sociology of Bombay University. In 1969 he became Professor and the Head of the Department till his retirement in 1976. He edited a monthly journal in Gujarati called as 'Padkar' which means challenge. Below are some of his writings,

1. Social background of Indian Nationalism (1948)
2. Peasants struggles in India (1979)
3. India's path of development: A marxist approach (1984)
4. Recent trends in Indian Nationalism (1960)
5. Agrarian struggles in India after Independence (1986)
6. Rural Sociology in India (1975)
7. Violation of Democratic Rights (2 volumes) (1986)

He consistently advocated and applied Marx's dialectical-historical model in his sociological studies. He closely studied the works of Marx and Engels and the writings of Trotsky. He may be regarded as one of the pioneers in introducing the modern Marxist approach to empirical investigations involving bibliographical and field research. He rejects any interpretations of tradition with reference to religion, rituals and festivities. It is essentially a secular phenomenon. He finds it in family, village and other social institutions. He also does not find the origin of tradition in western culture. He considers that the emerging contradictions in the Indian process of social transformation arise mainly from the growing nexus among the capitalist bourgeoisie, the rural petty-bourgeoisie and a state apparatus all drawn from similar social roots.

1.2 Features of Indian Society:- Village Community in India- Features and Transformation

Village social structure is the dominant pattern of social life in developing countries like India. In India, sociologists and social anthropologists have made important contributions to the understanding of rural social structure. Rural Social Structures is composed of different individuals, groups and networks. They interact with one another for the fulfillment of their basic needs. In this process, they occupy certain status and roles in social life with accompanying rights

and obligations. Their social behaviour is patterned and gets associated with certain norms and values, which provide them guidance in social interaction. There emerge various social units, such as cast groups, religious communities, political associations and institutions in society as a product of social intercourse in human life.

There are lots of myths about the rural communities in India. The important and wide spread one is that Indian villages are 'little republic'. Charles Metcalfe is the one who developed this notion. In his own words, 'the Indian village communities were little republics, having nearly everything they wanted within themselves, and almost independent of foreign relations. They seemed to last where nothing else lasted. Dynasty after dynasty tumbled down; revolution succeeded revolution but the village community remained the same.' They imagined village as a self-sufficient and independent unit of the society. Gandhi's perspective of the Indian village also corresponds to this image of village and he romanticized it by calling for the reconstruction of lost legacies of the Indian villages due to colonial administrations. Gandhi honestly believed that the progress of India lies in its village.

New sociological studies played an important role in breaking these myths about Indian villages. They carried-out a large number of ethnographic studies on the social and cultural life of the village in India. Most of these studies were published during the decades 1950s and 1960s. These "village studies" focused on the structures of social relationships, institutional patterns, beliefs and value systems of the rural people. And shows that villages have connections with rest of the world and they share with each others.

Features Village Communities

There are certain distinctive features which separate rural communities from urban settlements such as their size, demographic composition, cultural specificities, style of life, economy, employment and social relations. In rural India, people live in settled villages. Three main types of settlement patterns have been observed in rural areas:

- The nucleated village: This is the most common type found all over the country. Here, a tight cluster of houses is surrounded by the fields of the villagers. An outlying hamlet or several satellite hamlets are also found to be attached to some villages in this case.
- Linear settlements: In such settlements, houses are strung out, each surrounded by its own compound. However, there is little to physically demarcate where one village ends and another begins. This kind of settlements are found in some parts of the country, e.g. in Kerala, in Konkan and in the delta lands of Bengal.
- Scattering of homesteads or clusters of two or three houses: In this case also physical demarcation of villages is not clear. Such settlements are found in hill areas, in the Himalayan foothills, in the highlands of Gujarat and in the Satpura range of Maharashtra.

Rural Social Structure occupies an important place in the social and cultural landscape of contemporary India. Even though there are different changes in the post independent India, a large majority of Indians continue to live in its more than five lakh villages. And most of them remain dependent on agriculture, directly or indirectly. According to the recent Census, rural India accounted for nearly 72 per cent of India's total population. Similarly, though the share of agriculture has come down to around one-fourth of the total national income, nearly half of India's working population is directly employed in the agricultural sector.

From the early writings onwards village community became a significant structural and demographic reality through which sociologists and social anthropologists looked at the social formations in Indian society. As Andre Beteille writes, 'The village was not merely a place where people lived; it had a design in which were reflected the basic values of Indian civilisation' (Beteille 1980:108).

Village Community in India- A Historical Overview

In the early nineteenth century British administrators had described Indian villages as 'little republics' with their simple form of self government and, almost no interference from the higher

political authority except for claiming a share in the produce of the land and demanding young men to serve in the wars. The villages functioned normally, unconcerned about who sat on the throne in the kingdoms of which they were territorially a part. They were also described as being economically self-sufficient having nearly everything that they wanted within themselves. This description of Indian villages is an over-simplified one. Yet it influenced the views of important scholars like Karl Marx and Henry Maine and Indian nationalists like Mahatma Gandhi. It was only after gaining Independence that some social anthropologists who made intensive field studies of Indian villages began to question the conventional description of the Indian village. On the basis of their findings they demonstrated that the Indian village has been a part of the wider society and civilisation and not “little republics” as described by British administrators.

In pre-British India, it's very difficult to say that the village was politically autonomous except for paying tax to the local chieftain or the king and providing him young men for his wars. The relation between the king and his subjects was a complex one. The king performed several duties towards his subjects. He built roads, tanks and canals for irrigation. He also built temples and gave gifts of land to pious and learned Brahmins. He was the head of all caste panchayats and disputes regarding mutual caste rank were ultimately settled by him. So, the relation between the village and the ruler was a complex one and it is wrong to describe the village in pre-British India as a ‘little republic’. It must however be pointed out that due to the absence of roads and poor communication, the village did enjoy a considerable amount of autonomy as well as discreetness from the higher levels of the political system. The village panchayat formed mainly of the dominant caste exercised authority in local matters, settled inter-caste disputes and maintained law and order in the village.

But, the British rule changed the relationship between the village and the ruler. Political conquest was followed by the development of communications. This enabled the British to establish an effective administration. Government employees like the police, revenue official,

and others, came to the village. The British established a system of law courts. Major disputes and criminal offences had to be settled in court. This greatly reduced the power of the village panchayat.

Since Independence, the introduction of parliamentary democracy and adult franchise has made the village even more fully integrated with the wider political system. Villagers not only elect members of local bodies like the gram panchayat but also elect members of the state legislature and parliament. Regional and national political parties are active in the village doing propaganda and mobilising support for their parties. Government policies and programmes like the Community Development Schemes affect the village. Although the village is a political unit with an elected panchayat to run the day-to-day administration, it is part of the district or *zilla*, which is part of the state. The state is part of the Indian Union. There is interaction between these different levels of the political system.

Transformations: Urban Impact on the Villages

The post independent India witnessed the process of industrialization and thereby urbanization. As we saw that the Indian village was not economically self sufficient even in the British times. Industrialisation and urbanisation, which began during British rule and gained momentum after independence, have made the village a part of the wider economic network. Recent studies in sociology have concentrated on agrarian movements, *Bhoodan* movement, land reforms, community development and the green revolution. These developments led to the transformation of Indian village system as a whole. M.S.A. Rao (1974) in his book *Urban Sociology in India* identified three types of urban impact on the villages in India.

- Firstly, there are villages in which a sizable number of people have taken employment in Indian cities and even overseas towns. They send money regularly to their families,

which are left behind in the villages. The money earned from the urban employment is used to build fashionable houses in their villages and invested in land and industry.

- The second kind of urban impact is seen in villages, which are situated near an industrial town. Their lands are totally or partially acquired. They receive an influx of immigrant workers, which stimulates a demand for houses and a market inside the village.
- The third type of impact on the village is the growth of metropolitan cities. As the city expands it sucks in the villages lying on the outskirts. Many villages lose their land, which is used for urban development. The villagers in these landless villages who get cash compensation may invest in land in far off places or in commerce or squander the money. The villagers generally seek urban employment. Those villages on the fringe of a city whose land has not yet been acquired or particularly acquired may engage in market gardening, dairy farming and poultry keeping. Some may seek employment in the city and start commuting.

1.3. Concepts of Social Change in Indian Society-Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Modernization

Concepts of Social Change

The prime concern of sociologist is to understand the changes occurred in the society. Even the origin of sociology traced back to the industrial and French revolutions and related social changes. Due to this, sociology and sociologists have never lost sight of the study of social change, and this interest has been major concern of the discipline throughout its entire history of about two hundred years. Social change can be caused by many factors. Increased population can bring about changes. Innovations-i.e., new ideas or an object can bring about new relationships. It is also possible that one society can borrow ideas or objects from other societies, which may cause variation in social relations. In the context of India, there are different factors of the social change.

As we know all societies undergo changes. In some cases these may be radical in the sense that some social institutions may be replaced by new ones. Or, there may be major changes in the existing social institutions. For example, the dominance of nuclear families in the place of traditional joint families has brought a change in the family as a social institution. Furthermore, there are other institutions, which no longer exist. For instance, if a society based on slavery is replaced by feudalism then the social institutions in that slave society may disappear too. If we observe societies over a period of time (i.e., historically) we will find that changes have taken place in all of them. In some cases these may be gradual, i.e., spread over a long period of time. In others they may be rapid.

In India caste system is a unique mode of social stratification. We can't discuss or theories social change without referring to cast system and related practices. Caste has been considered

to be a closed system of stratification. However, in reality no system can be absolutely closed. In fact, social change has always been present within the caste system. In the long run, different kind of changes happened in the social setup. The British colonialism and modern education also triggered social and cultural change in the Indian society. Different sociologist and social anthropologist tried explain social change in Indian context.

In the society there are different factors operating to bring social change. Some of these may be external to social institutions. For example, changes caused by a change in the economy or the production relations. In the modern society industrialization creates changes in social institutions. For instance, the changes in the family structure are caused by the impact of industrialisation. Nuclear families are more adaptive to the nature of industrial societies than joint families. The joint families are more suited to pre-industrial, mainly agrarian, societies. At the same time, there are change producing agents inside a society as well.

In the context of India, sociologist and social anthropologist have developed several concepts to study social change in India: development, modernization, Westernization, universalization, social development, great and little traditions are some of them. For a long time sociologists and anthropologists in India used the concepts of parochialization and universalization, and great and little traditions which were developed by McKim Marriot and Robert Redfield in studies of Indian and Mexican villages. Among such concepts three important concepts related with social change are,

1. Sanskritisation,
2. Westernisation,
3. Modernisation

1.3.1. Sanskritisation

In the previous section we briefly discussed about sanskritisation and westernization. M.N Srinivas developed the concept of sanskritization to understand the social change in Indian

society. In his book *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of Mysore* (1952) he described the dynamic nature of the caste system in the Indian society. He used this term to describe the process of cultural mobility in the traditional social structure of Indian society. Srinivas, defines the concept of Sanskritization as "a process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, frequently, 'twice born' caste". According to Srinivas, lower caste hindus adopted rituals and customs of higher caste peoples to raise their social positions in caste hierarchy. And also, they gave up some of their own social and cultural rituals, which are considered to be impure by the higher castes. They adopted dressing style and food habits of Brahmins and gave up meat eating, liquor consumption and animal sacrifices. Through this process, within a generation or so they can claim higher position in the existing caste hierarchy. The major factors that contribute for the process of Sanskritization were:

1. Fluidity of political system with bardic caste having the special privilege of legitimization of the origin of different castes and Varnas
2. Position of the dominant caste
3. Pilgrimage
4. Migration of values and beliefs from great tradition to little tradition
5. Secular factors in determining the position of caste (in addition to pollution and purity)
6. Migration to new areas
7. Bhakti movement that established the idea of equality before God and thus the idea of equality among different groups and castes

The caste system is a rigid system of social stratification in which the positions of each caste are fixed. Mobility between the hierarchies is only possible for the people who belong to twice born caste or the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste individual will take a generation or two to change his position only through adopting vegetarianism and by sanskritizing his rituals

and customs. So, sanskritization is considered as the imitation of the Brahmanical customs and manners by the lower castes. As Srinivas stated "The mediation of the various models of Sanskritization through the local dominant caste stresses the importance of the latter in the process of cultural transmission. Thus, if the locally dominant castes Brahmin or Lingayat, it will tend to transmit a Brahmanical model or Vaishya model. Of course, each locally dominant caste has its own conception of Brahmin, Kshatriya or Vaishya models"

This observation points out variations in and varieties of mobility or change in the caste system. To make his observation more powerful and empirically substantiated he cites the historical study of K.M. Pannikar. Pannikar holds the view that all Kshatriyas have come into being by appropriation of power by the lower castes and consequently the Kshatriya role in the social hierarchy. Srinivas further adds that though all non-dominant, particularly low or non-twice born castes want to sanskritize themselves but only those succeed whose economic and political conditions have improved. For example, the *Ezhavas* in Kerala also tried to achieve upward social mobility. The *Ezhavas* were also traditionally toddy-tappers. They were led by Shri Narayanan Guru and the S.N.D.P. Yogam, forming an association called *Shri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalayan*. In the latter part of the 19th century the association launched activities for sanskritising the norms and customs of *Ezhavas*. It undertook secular programmes such as establishing schools and co-operative societies. The *Ezhavas* also joined hands with Christians and Muslims for achieving their aims.

In his definition of Sanskritization Srinivas included scheduled caste and process of social mobility. Though, culturally the distance between the tribal and the upper caste sections of society are very high and the tribal people were ecologically and socially isolated. They had developed their own traditions, customs, habits and ways of life. Even though, different social factors were at work leading to transmission of cultural elements from the dominant caste of

society to the tribes. They have felt the impact of Sanskritic ideas and values. This impact has gathered momentum over the last several decades.

The sanskritization of tribal started due to the opening of the tribal areas to the outside world. One of the most general effects of Sanskritisation of tribal communities is that it leads to the integration of segments of tribal society unto the wider caste structure and its assimilation in the wider Hindu fold. There have been numerous examples of this kind of integration or cultural assimilation. The Bhumij of eastern India, the Raj Gond in Central India and the Patelia in western India are some examples of such integration in the caste structure. This integration cannot be understood simply in terms of changes in rituals or style of life. Rather it is a reflection of fundamental transformation viz. tribal people getting integrated more fully into the wider economic system.

Sanskritization is not a one-way process through which the local cultures seem to have received more than they have given. As Srinivas mentioned 'it should be remembered that throughout Indian history local elements have entered into the main body of Sanskritic belief, myth, and custom, and in their travel throughout the length and breadth of India, elements of Sanskritic culture have undergone different changes in the different culture areas. Festivals such as the Dasara, Deepavali, and Holi have no doubt certain common features all over the country, but they have also important regional peculiarities. In the case of some festivals only the name is common all over India and everything else is different-the same name connotes different things to people in different regions. Similarly each region has its own body of folklore about the heroes of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and not infrequently, epic incidents and characters are related to outstanding features of local geography. And in every part of India are to be found Brahmans who worship the local deities which preside over epidemics, cattle, children's lives, and crops, besides the great gods of all-India Hinduism. It is not unknown for a Brahman to make a bloodsacrifice to one of these deities through the medium of non-Brahman friend. Throughout

Indian history Sanskritic Hinduism has absorbed local and folk elements and their presence makes easier the further absorption of similar elements. The absorption is done in such a way that there is a continuity between the folk and the theological or philosophical levels, and this makes possible both the gradual transformation of the folk layer as well as the "vulgarization" of the theological layer'.

It is a much broader definition of Sanskritization. It is neither confined to Brahmins as only reference group not to the imitation of mere rituals and religious practices. It also means imitation of ideologies. However the social change and mobility associated with Sanskritization results only in 'positional changes' in the system, but does not lead to any significant structural changes. Hence the concept serves very little purpose in understanding the contemporary social changes in the Indian society.

1.3.2. Westernization

Westernization refers to changes brought about in the Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule. In another word, westernisation means the impact of Western culture, values and institutions on the Indian Society. The contact with the West, particularly after the British colonialism in India, set in motion another process of social change in India. The term westernization means changes occurring at different levels - technology, institutions, ideology and values. The term westernization emphasise on the idea of humanitarianism and rationality. These two notions played an important role in the process of institutional and social reforms in Indian subcontinent.

As Srinivas elaborated 'the spread of Sanskrit theological ideas increased under British rule. The development of communications carried Sanskritization to areas previously inaccessible, and the spread of literacy carried it to groups very low in the caste hierarchy. Western technology-railways, the internal combustion engine, press, radio, and plane-has aided the spread of Sanskritization. For instance, the popularity of *harikatha* has increased in the last

few years in Mysore City, the narrator usually using a microphone to reach a much larger audience than before. Indian films are popularizing stories and incidents borrowed from the epics and puranas. Films have been made about the lives of saints such as Nandandr, Potana, Tukaram, Chaitanya, Mir&, and Tulasidds. Cheap and popular editions in the various vernaculars of the epics, puranas, and other religious and semi-religious books are available nowadays. The introduction by the British of a Western political institution like parliamentary democracy also contributed to the increased Sanskritization of the country. Prohibition, a Sanskritic value, has been written into the Constitution of the Republic of India, and the Congress Governments in various states have introduced it wholly or partly'.

The western system of education was also responsible for the spread of egalitarian ideas and modern, scientific rationality. These ideas became the guiding spirit behind the national movement in the fight for equality of opportunities, a source of inspiration for social reforms, and a challenge to traditional values, which supported the caste system. The western type of education has also made possible the upward mobility of individuals and groups in the society. Individuals get their children educated in public schools and convents, follow modern occupations, which are more remunerative and adopt a westernized style of life. Generally, such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community.

Westernization, on the other hand, refers to changes brought about in the Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels - technology, institutions, ideology and values. The western system of education was also responsible for the spread of egalitarian ideas and modern, scientific rationality. These ideas became the guiding spirit behind the national movement in the fight for equality of opportunities, a source of inspiration for social reforms, and a challenge to traditional values, which supported the caste system. As a result, independent India adopted a modern

constitution, founded a secular democratic state and followed the policy of planned socio-economic development, democratic decentralisation and the policy of protective discrimination for the weaker sections.

It is characterized by western patterns of administration, legal system and education through the medium of the English language. Under the impact of the Western way of life, a sizeable section of educated and urbanised Indian adopted Western style of dress, food, drink, speech and manners. The emulation of the West inculcated the values of Western democracy, industrialisation and capitalism. There are cultural as well as structural aspects of Westernisation. It brought about structural changes by the growth of modern occupations related with modern education, economy and industry, emergence of urban centers with the introduction of colonial administration and the rise of urban middle class.

On the one hand, Srinivas mentioned about the ways in which the westernization of India has helped its Sanskritization. On the other hand he also explained the conflict between Sanskritic and Western values. One aspect of the conflict which to my mind appears to be very important is the conflict, real or apparent, between the world view disclosed by the systematic application of scientific method to the various spheres of knowledge and the world view of the traditional religions. No analysis of modern Indian social life would be complete without a consideration of westernization and the interaction between it and Sanskritization. In the nineteenth century, the British found in India institutions such as slavery, human sacrifice, suttee, thuggery, and in certain parts of the country, female infanticide. They used all the power at their disposal to fight these institutions which they considered to be barbarous. There were also many other institutions which they did not approve of, but which, for various reasons, they did not try to abolish directly.

In the case of tribal communities westernization process happened very rapidly. The Christian missions play an active part among tribal communities in India. They operate as agents

of social change. Besides providing an alternative system of religious values, the missionaries introduce many new features into tribal society such as education and modern medical facilities. The spread of education and conversion to a new religion, i.e. Christianity have led to rapid Westernisation among the tribal communities. The process is more pronounced in the tribal belts of the north-eastern region than elsewhere. The Mizo, Naga, Khasi are some examples representing such a process. Conversion to Christianity has also taken place in the region of Chotanagpur in Bihar. So, Westernization in a way changed the life patterns of Indians and created new values. The vision of the average Indian, so long closed and severely confined was enlarged and liberalised to some extent. Exposure to English literature, history and political institutions made them to adopt humanitarian outlook and promoted in them an active concern for welfare of all human beings.

Though, westernization made remarkable changes in the social fabrics of the Indian society, some sociologist posed a number of criticisms against this process. It brought many changes in the Indian elite ranging from their speech, clothing, and food habits to certain value changes like humanitarianism, equalitarianism and secularism, etc. Western influence thus, has been a very important source of social change in India. However, the process failed to bring about basic changes in the masses. The process did not foster any changes in the value orientation and attitudes of the broader strata of society. Thus the changes instituted by Westernization had an elitist bias and failed to touch the broad local and grass root levels of the people. Also the changes introduced as a result of Westernization were limited only to the administrative and technical fields as against the deeper social and cultural spheres of life. Thus the concept of Westernization is too narrow to stand for the wider and complex processes of social change that happened in Indian society.

1.3.3. Modernization

Since independence, modernization of India has been an integral part of the national development and social transformation. Conscious and sustained efforts are being made for the overall development of India's economy, polity, social framework and cultural matrix. India's transition towards modernization has been a slow and continuous process. It was during the early part of the nineteenth century that the traditional social structure of India underwent some changes. Modernization is process by which a culture or society becomes socially and technologically more advanced and a better livelihood is assured for a vast sections of society.

Compare to sanskritization and westernization, the concept of Modernization is much more comprehensive and has greater explanatory power to understand the contemporary social changes taking place in Indian society. The process of modernization describes the qualitative and quantitative changes that are taking place in the contemporary human society. A series of interpenetrating and interdependent transformations are inherent in the complex process of modernization. The problem of modernization is not external alone; it is internal too and as such it is intimately associated with human personality.

The process of modernization involves not only enormous institution building in the social, economic, political and other spheres of the life of people but also a basic change in the personality structure of the individual. Indeed the two changes are complementary. Thus modernization entails internalisation of positive attitudes and value orientations like those of achievistic norms, specificity of roles and relationships, secular and rational outlook, belief in the efficacy of human efforts in goal attainment, participation in political processes as responsible citizens, development of personal opinion on public issues, readiness to play new roles according to new relationships and so on.

In India the process of modernization brought about fundamental, deep rooted and widespread changes in attitudes, values, motivations and behaviour of people. And it became a desirable state leading to better living condition for the people. Although the process of modernization is very desirable, pervasive, and transformative it may fail to reach every section of the society due to some structural obstacles, caste or ascriptive stratification or some negative elements of tradition or fatalistic attitudes of individuals in society. But for the process to be more effective it should reach a major segment of the population of the society.

MODULE II

INDIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

2.1. Family and Marriage in Indian Society- Structural and Functional changes

2.1.1. Family in Indian Society:

In the first semester we learn different aspects of family and its typologies. As we know, family is the basic unit of the social structure in every society. In simple societies as well as in the complex and modern societies family play an important role in the process of socialization of the individual. In each social setup, it varies in internal organization, in its degree of autonomy and in the sanctions and taboos by which it is protected and perpetuated. There are a number of characteristics feature for the family such as its universality, its presence in various culture and in time.

Its biological and social functions make it an important social institution for the existence of the society. Each family follow specific pattern of life according to their social structure and moral values and it varies with time and place and peoples. It is built around the needs of human beings to regularize sexual behaviour and protect and nurture the young ones. Because of this reasons family is seen as a universal social institution and as well as an inevitable part of human society.

Different sociologist defines family in different ways, according to its nature and functions such as sexual, reproductive, economic and educational. The family has defined as group based on marital relations, rights and duties of parenthood, common habitation and reciprocal relations between parents and children. Some sociologists feel that the family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. In another word family is viewed as an adult male and female living together with their offspring

in a more or less permanent relationship such as marriage which is approved by their society. These definitions point out four basic features of the family as a special kind of social grouping, they are:

1. It involves a sexual relationship between adults of opposite sexes;
2. It involves their cohabitation or living together,
3. It involves at least the expectation of relative permanence of the relationship between them; and
4. The relationship is culturally defined and societal sanctioned-it is a marriage.

According to this definition and features of the family we can identify some important functions. They are discussed below:

1. **Member replacement and physical maintenance:** In order to survive, every society must replace members who die and keep the survivors alive. The regulations of reproduction are centered in the family as are cooking and eating and care of the sick. Once children are born, they will be nurtured and protected within the family. It is the family that feeds clothes and shelters them.
2. **Regulation of sexual behavior:** The family regulates sexual behaviour. Each and every member's sexual behaviour is influenced to some extent by what is learned in the family setting. The sexual attitudes and patterns of behaviour we learn in the family reflect societal norms and regulate our sexual behaviour. The sociological notion of sexual regulation should not be confused with repression. The norms, on the other hand, specify under what conditions and with what partners sexual needs may be satisfied.
3. **Socialisation of children:** The family carries out the serious responsibility of socialising each child. Children are taught largely by their families to conform to socially approved patterns of behaviour. If the family serves society as an instrument

for the transmission of culture, it serves the individual as an instrument of socialisation. A family prepares its children for participation in the larger world and acquaints them with the larger culture.

4. **Status transmission:** Individual's social identity is initially fixed by family membership by being born to parents of a given status and characteristics. Children take on the socio-economic class standing of their parents and the culture of the class into which they are born, including its values, behaviour patterns and definitions of reality. In addition to internalising family attitudes and beliefs, children are treated and defined by others as extensions of the social identity of their parents. In short, family acts as a vehicle of culture transmission from generation to generation.
5. **Economic activity:** Until recent times, the family was an important unit of both production and consumption. The family produced most of the goods it consumed and consumed most of the goods it produced. But today, modern families mainly earn incomes. Thus, their principal function is that of the consumption of goods and services which they purchase. Because of the production of income the provision of economic support for family members is a major function of the modern family.
6. **Social emotional support:** The family as a primary group is an important source of affection, love and social interaction. Caring for family members does not end with infancy and childhood. It is seemingly the nature of human beings to establish social interdependencies, not only to meet physical needs, but also to gratify emotional and psychological needs for response and affection as well as.
7. **Inter-institutional linkage:** Each baby is a potential participant in the group life of the society. Family membership in a religious, political, economic, recreational and other kinds of organisations typically gives individuals an opportunity to participate in activities that might otherwise be closed to them. The family, then, not only

prepares the individual to fill social roles and occupy a status in the community, but also provides the opportunities for such activity. Some institutions depend also on the way the family functions in this regard to insure their own continuity and survival.

Family in Indian Society

In India, family is one of the most important social institutions which constitute the society. It provides the needs essential and performs important functions of the society, such as, reproduction, production and socialisation. Broadly speaking there are two types of family:

1. Nuclear family consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children,
2. Joint or extended family comprising a few more kins than the nuclear type.

This classification of families into joint and nuclear types is usually based on the way in which families are organised. For instance, the most popular definition of a nuclear family is to refer to it as a group consisting of a man, his wife and their unmarried, children. The joint family is commonly defined as the nuclear family plus all kin belonging to the side of husband, and/or wife living in one homestead. In the case of joint family, the important dimensions of 'jointness' are coresidentiality (members of a family live under the same roof), commensality (eat together or have a common kitchen), coparcenary (joint ownership of property), generation depth (three or more generations), and fulfillment of obligation towards kin and sentimental aspect.

In sociological literature the term 'extended' family is used instead of the term joint family to indicate that the combination of two or more nuclear families is based on an extension of the parent-child relationship. Thus, the patrilineally extended family is based on an extension of the father-son relationship, while the matrilineally extended family is based on the mother-daughter relationship.

Changes in the Institution of Family

As we discussed family in India has been generally of two kinds, joint or extended family comprising more than two generations of members such as a married couple, their children,

married or unmarried and one or both parents. The other type of family is the nuclear family consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children. It was initially assumed that the process of urbanization leads to a decline in family size, weakening of family ties and break up of joint family system into nuclear families.

Industrialization and urbanization brought about these types of social changes in society and nuclear families came to be associated with the modern industrial urban societies. In India, too, this assumption presupposes that joint family is an institution of the rural social structure and as society gets urbanized the joint families, associated with rural agrarian economy will give way to nuclear family with the increase of non-agrarian occupations. But as evidence gathered by sociologists studying family in urban India reveals, this hypothesis does not hold much acceptance since as a matter of fact joint families are found in urban areas as well. The correlation of “joint” family with rural areas and “nuclear family with urban is not reasonable. The household dimension of family in India which indicates that there is no correlation between urbanization and ‘separate’ nuclear households.

2.1.2. Marriage in Indian Society

Marriage is a universal social institution; it provides a recognized form for entering into a relatively enduring heterosexual relationship for the bearing and rearing of children. Marriage plays an important role in the regulation of human reproduction. Sociologically, this reproduction provides legitimization to the children born in marriage and this legitimacy is important in the matters of inheritance and succession. Besides, through marriage there comes into existence the family, a relatively stable social group that is responsible for the care and training of children. Historically, marriage provided the institutional mechanisms necessary for replacement of social members and thereby has been meeting the important prerequisites of human survival and society's continuance.

Another important aim of marriage is providing companionship, emotional, and psychological support to the individual. The idea of companionship in marriage as a main feature, however, is a recent

development. Historically, all societies have emphasized marriage to be a social obligation. It is invested with several familial, social and economic responsibilities. Historically marriage has been found to exist in a wide variety of forms in different societies. Typologically, there are different kinds and forms of marriage.

Changes in the Institution of Marriage

As a social institution different changes had reflected in the various aspects of marriage. In the modern time, industrialisation and urbanisation are two most important changes which have profoundly affected the institution of marriage all over the world. In India, different communities and caste groups have different rules and procedures for marriage. Each group has responded differentially to process of industrialization and urbanization. Though, certain common changes are visible in the institution of marriage are visible in Indian society. We can classify these changes on the basis of,

1. Forms of marriage
2. Mate selection
3. Age of marriage
4. Rituals and Customs
5. Goals and Stability of marriage

- **Changes in the Forms of Marriage:** We know that different societies perform different systems of marriage. Now, societies with traditions of plural marriages are turning towards monogamy. Due to the general improvement in the status of woman and her gradual emancipation from the clutches of male dominance, even in those societies where polygamy is permissible, incidences of polygamous marriages, and plurality of wives, are on the decrease. In India, the Hindu Marriage Act has banned both polygynous and polyandrous marriages. The trend towards monogamy has also been encouraged by the

new idea of romantic love as the basis for marriage propagated by the western societies.

It is a marriage in which one specific individual is considered to be the ideal partner.

- **Changes in Mate Selection:** In traditional societies like India, where mate selection was entirely a right of parents and elders. Young men and women are increasingly being given some say in the matter of mate selection. From a position in which they had no say whatsoever concerning whom they were to get married to, a stage has now come in which the concerned individuals are consulted and their consent obtained. In urban middle class families, sons and daughters have even come to enjoy the right to reject marriage proposals initiated by others. In India, mate selection through newspaper advertisement has become quite a popular practice among urban middle classes and the latest development is the reported harnessing of the services of computers in bringing potentially compatible mates together.
- **Changes in Age of Marriage:** In India, Child Marriage Restraint Act, popularly known as the Sarda Act, was passed in 1929. This legal effort led to the end of long lasting tradition of child marriage. As we know, India is a country where, traditionally, child marriages were prescribed, preferred and encouraged; various efforts were made by social reformers to bring this practice to an end. With increasing enrolment of girls in schools and colleges, and their desire to take up employment, along with the problems of 'settling down in life for the vast majority of boys, the age at marriage is perforce being pushed up. Further, as part of its population policy, the Government has now prescribed the minimum age of marriage as 18 years for girls and 20 years for boys. In urban areas, however, marriages are now generally taking place beyond these prescribed minimum ages.
- **Changes in Marriage Rituals and Customs:** Marriages in India are tending to become more traditional insofar as the ritual-custom complex is concerned. Today, there is a

revival of many rituals and customs, which, soon after independence, appeared to have become weak. To an extent, this revival is a function of affluence. Many people in society have a lot of money to spend lavishly on weddings, and there is a tendency among the not-so affluent to imitate the affluent.

- **Changes in the Goals and Stability of the Marriage:** In traditional societies, procreation is the most important function of marriage and large sized family was one of the cherished goals of marriage. But modern conditions of life have made a large family burdensome; in fact, even those with three or four children are being disfavored. India, in fact, was the first country to adopt an official family planning programme. This effort is gradually influencing the values of people in India. It is being realized that it is better to have about two healthy and well-cared for children than a large number who cannot be adequately fed, clothed or looked after. As procreation, and along with it parenting role, are tending to become less important, other functions like companionship and emotional support from the spouse and children are becoming the more important goals of marriage. In fact, the younger people today are entering matrimony for happiness and personal fulfilment.

2.2. Kinship System in India- Regional Variations-North and South

In the last two sections we try to understand the social institutions of family, and marriage in India. In order to fully understand the social relationships involved in family and marriage we need to understand rules, norms and patterns that govern the construction of social relationships in family and marriage. Kinship plays an important role in the constitution of relationships by constructing rules, norms and patterns.

This section of the second module provides some basic idea about the concept of kinship and its role in Indian society. We explore the significance and regional variations of kinship in Indian social life. Before going to the specific focus of the section, we will try to understand the definition of the concepts of kinship and basic concepts related with kinship such as descent, inheritance, residence rules, patriarchy and matriarchy. Then we look at the kinship system in India and its variations.

Kinship is a system of social ties based on matrimonial (affinal ties) and blood ties (consanguinal ties). We considered that the kinship system into which we are born and in which we bring in to as natural. And we believe and practice that certain close relatives should be tabooed as marriage and sexual partners, and also believe that any infringement of these taboos have disastrous social and other consequences. We have socially and culturally recognized ideas about what is the correct and proper behaviour of different kin towards each other. All such aspects of kinship relations tend to be taken for granted unless, or until, one is confronted with the kinship practices of other peoples. It will be, some time, totally different from others. So, initially, different practices may appear as disgusting or inhuman, exotic or fantastic, strange or primitive, etc.

In the early time of the development of the disciplines sociologist and anthropologists spent a great deal of time to understand cultural and social dimensions of kinship. They tried to understand various stages through which they believed kinship systems had progressed in the course of human history. So, analyze of the kinship system in a society help the anthropologist to explore the dominant structural characteristics of the society. For them kinship system refers to a set of persons recognised as relatives, either, by virtue of a blood relationship called as consanguinity, or by virtue of a marriage relationship called as affinity. For example, the relationships between mother and son/daughter, sister and brother/sister, father and son/daughter

are consanguinal, while relationships between father/mother-in-law and daughter-/son-in-law are affinal.

Modern sociology focused on the study of the collapse of community, the decline of kinship solidarities was understood as a necessary consequence of the economic specialization and bureaucratic rationalization associated with modernity and industrial development. In India, Irawati Karve, in her book *Kinship Organization in India* (1952) did extensive fieldwork in different parts of the country and her knowledge of Sanskrit gave her access to data in scriptures, law books and epics. According to different scholars it is the social recognition of these relationships that is more important than the actual biological ties. Networks built around kin relationships play a significant role in both rural and urban social life in India.

India is a country with diversity in terms of communities and regions. So we can see a wide range of kinship system across these regions and communities. It's very difficult to present details of kinship system in each and every communities and cultures. Instead we can look at overall picture of the variations in south and north. Sociological literature in India has highlighted features of North and South Indian kinship systems. This does not mean that there are a common feature and no other varieties of kinship systems in different parts of both North and South India.

Sociologist and social anthropologist used different approaches to the study of kinship system in different regions. These approaches can be broadly classified under two headings

1. The Indological approach or book view approach
2. The Anthropological approach or field view approach

Indological approach:

As we discussed in the first part of this module, Indological approach use classical textual sources to understand Indian society. Early sociological analysis used textual sources for explaining the ideological and rural bases of the kinship systems and institutions. For example,

K.M. Kapadia (1947) has used classical texts to describe Hindu kinship. P.H. Prabhu (1954) in his book *Hindu Social Organisation* used Sanskrit texts to understand kinship in Indian society. Irawati Karve (1940, and 1958) and G.S. Ghurye (1946, 1955) have extensively used textual sources to explain kinship pattern in different regions of India and to explore different socio-historical perspective worked on Indian kinship system. In India the Indological approach to the study of kinship has provided a framework to understand the elements of continuity and change in the system.

Anthropological approach:

This approach focuses on the field work and collect data from the ground to understand different aspects of kinship. As we discussed in field view approach anthropological work on kinship gave us a clear picture of kinship in India and it also help us to map the continuity and changes in the domain of kinship system. Anthropologists have looked at kinship systems from two points of view.

- Descent approach
- Alliance approach

Descent and alliance is two prominent ways through which individuals in society connected and kin relationships were established. These relationships, first through blood relationship and second through marital relationship constitute kinship system of the society. Sociological and anthropological works looks at these two dimensions to understand continuities and changes in the kinship system in India.

Descent Approach: In our society the groups are recognised or defined on the basis of shared descent. Each one of us is a member of such a cooperating and closely bound group of people. One can depend upon the help and support given by such people. Such cooperating local groups are always larger than elementary families of spouses and their children. There are six possible avenues for the transmission of descent group membership, from parents to children. These are

- Patrilineal — where descent is traced in the male line from father to son,
- Matrilineal — where descent is traced in the female line from mother to daughter,
- Double (duolineal or bilineal) — where descent is traced in both the father's line as well as mother's line for different attributes such as movable property in one line and immovable in another,
- Cognatic (bilateral) — where attributes are transmitted equally through both parents. Here no unilineal groups can be formed but group structure can be cognatic, that is, the group of kinpersons on the father's and mother's side. Membership can be acquired through either the father or the mother,
- Parallel descent — a very rare form of descent where descent lines are sex specific. Men transmit to their sons while women to their daughters, and finally
- Cross or alternative type descent — this is also very rare. Here men transmit to their daughters and women to their sons.

The description and analysis of kin relationships in a descent group have given us a fairly comprehensive sociological understanding of certain types of kinship systems in India. Here, we generally find the patrilineal and matrilineal descent systems. Of the two, patrilineal system is more common.

Alliance Approach

Alliance plays an important role in the study of kinship systems in India. Kinship includes the consideration of the patterns and rules of marriage. When a sociologist pays special attention to marital relations and different aspects of kinship, we say that he/she is following the alliance approach to understand the patterns of kinship. Many studies of kinship in India have focused on marriage as an alliance between two groups and on kinship terminology, as a reflection of the nature of alliance. Because of their concentration on relationships arising out of marriage, we say that these studies follow the alliance approach.

The main exponent of this approach is Louis Dumont. He has emphasized the role played by marriage in the field of kinship in South India. By showing the opposition between consanguines and affines as reflected in the Dravidian kinship terminology, Dumont has made an important contribution to our understanding of kinship system in India in general and of South India in particular. He has applied to South India a structural theory of kinship.

Regional Variations in Kinship

As we discussed India is a geographically big and culturally diverse. So studying kinship in different communities and group is a herculean task. Irawati Karve in her book *Kinship Organisation in India* (1953) divided India into four cultural zones to study Indian kinship system. They are, the Northern, the Central, the Southern and the Eastern zones. In this part, we concentrate on two regional variations, that is north and south.

Kinship System in Northern Zone

The northern zone lies between the Himalayas to the north and the Vindhya ranges to the south. In this region, the majority of the people speak languages derived from Sanskrit. Some of these languages are Hindi, Bihari, Sindhi, Punjabi, Assamese and Bengali.

Sociologists and anthropologists followed the descent approach to explain the kinship system in North India. This they did in the context of the four aspects of kin relationships. In the following section we will discuss these four aspects briefly.

- ❖ **Kinship groups:** Kin relationships provide both a method of passing on status and property from one generation to the next and effective social groups for purposes of cooperation and conflict. You need to identify the form of descent or of tracing one's relationships. In other words, you find out the social groups within which relatives cooperate and conflict. These social groups constitute kinship groups.

- ❖ **Kinship terminology:** The list of terms used by the people to refer to their kin relationships expresses the nature of kinship system. This is why by describing kinship terminology you are able to throw light on the kinship system. Most features of the kinship system of any society are usually reflected in the way kinship terms are used in that society. Generally a person would apply the same term to those relatives who belong to the same category of kin relationships. In this case, these relatives would also occupy similar kinship roles.
- ❖ **Marriage rules:** Just as kinship groups describe the form of kinship system found in a society, so also rules for marriage, categories of people who may/may not marry each other, relationships between bride-takers and bride-givers provide the context within which kin relationships operate. Talking about these issues gives us an understanding of the content of kin relationships. It is therefore necessary to speak of marriage rules for understanding any kinship system.
- ❖ **Exchange of gifts:** Sociologists like to describe social relationships between various categories of relatives. As there are always two terms to any relationship, kinship behaviour is described in terms of pairs. For example, the parent-child relationship would describe kinship behavior between two generations. This sort of description is possible only when you make a study of the kinship system of a particular social group. We would focus on the chain of gift giving and taking among the relatives for understanding the behavioural aspects of kinship system. This discussion gives us an idea of how kinship groups interact and how particular persons play their kinship roles.

3.1.Religion in Indian Society – Changing Dimensions

Religious beliefs, rituals and organizations are integral part of every society. Religion plays an important role in our understanding of the world and shaping our everyday life. The way in which we relate to each other is very often influenced by our religious beliefs. Religion is also related to politics, and to economic activities like production, distribution and consumption. Often religion unites human being together, but some time it creates hatred among them. Religion may produce differing impacts in different places. Since, religion is the source of public order in society and it provides the source of inner individual peace to men and women, sociological study of religion and society is very important.

Salient Features of Religion

1. Religion has a cognitive function: It provides us the categories of understanding, in other words a framework of intelligence (ideas of time, space, class, person, etc.)
2. Religion has an intellectual function: It explains the meaning and purpose of human life. It gives and supports values and norms governing the society. To be more specific, religion plays a significant role in goal-setting and value-orientation in a society. Apart from this religion explains the natural processes like birth, death, misery and evil.
3. Religion is a social institution because community of believers constitutes the basis of any religion. Religion is an organisation because it consists of a hierarchy of deities, priests, prophets and believers.
4. Religion is an ensemble of rituals and beliefs centering around a notion of the sacred.

This features of the religion shows that it has different aspects and work as cognitive, intellectual, social and ethical functions to perform in the society.

Different Forms of Religion

Sociologist and social anthropologist classified religions in to different typologies. Broadly there are three forms of religion. They are,

- (i) Simple form of religion;
- (ii) Complex form of religion
- (iii) Mixed form of religion.

Simple form of religion

. There are no scriptures or Holy books present in such religions. There are some important characteristic features which are found in the simple forms of religion. These characteristic features of the simple form of religion are as follows:

1. The archaic form of religion is ahistorical, that is timeless. It is believed as a divinely given form of life, which has been in existence since the appearance, or creation, of human being, the beginning of the World.
2. As it is ahistorical, it is not founded or formalised by human being.
3. In this form of religion, the knowledge of belief and ritual is transmitted orally from one generation to the next.
4. In it, the religious experience is also an aesthetic experience, shared collectively in such performances as ritual dance and festivity.
5. It is essentially descriptive, not explanatory. It is practiced in 'good faith' a faith that needs no interpretation, no philosophical debate, no dialectical discussion

Complex Forms of Religion

Complex forms of religion have the following main features, which are radically different from the simple form of religion.

1. It is historical, that is, its origin can be traced.

2. It is also a founded religion. The founder is attributed with divine powers, recognised as the Incarnation of God, the Son of God, or the Messenger of 'God. The adherents look upon the founder as saviour.
3. The knowledge of belief and ritual is codified and textualised. The scriptures are considered holy and believed to contain the sacred words of God, or of his representative, and worshipped as a deity.
4. In this form of religion there is a large measure of personalism. The emphasis is on personal experience of religious phenomena. Faith is organised around the personality of the founder.
5. This is a highly intellectualized form of religion. It possesses a body of doctrine which the adherents are required to believe and follow. The new doctrines are added in course of scholastic development. New interpreters belong to the same spiritual lineage. This leads to the formation of cults and sects. To continue the doctrinal system and to propagate a' particular ideology there comes up a class of specialists, preachers, monks and ascetics. who devote their lives exclusively for this purpose.

Mixed Forms of Religion

This type of religion is characterised by the elements of both the simple and the complex forms. In particular, it is a religion with scholastic explanation but without history. One of the best examples of this type of religion is Hinduism, traditionally called Sanatana Dharma or the Eternal Religion. Hinduism as a mixed form of religion does not have a historical origin as found in Islam, Buddhism or Christianity. It has no founder and its source is not in space and time. Unlike the complex forms of religions, it does not possess an organized, bureaucratic religious order of the type present in Christianity or Islam. Even its sects are without ties. Though they are founded like Christianity, Islam, or any other historical religion, they do not form a self-governing system. Each sect defines its boundary, but all are together in Sanatana Hinduism.

The basis upon which the Sanatana Hinduism and its sects are related is the principle of one-and-many.

Changing Dimensions of Religion

Change is an integral part of every society. Sometimes, religion begins to act as a force of social change. New interpretations of the old scriptures, rituals or dogmas in the light of sweeping changes in the society at large, provide valuable inputs. Most often religious sentiments and symbols are invoked, new meanings are attributed to rituals and beliefs, and in the process religion becomes a vehicle of collective mobilization, for a group of believers who would like to be 'liberated'. This group of believers may form a sect and break away from the parent religion itself as protest. Religion also interprets what is an ideal family, best education etc. and this may bring change or stability in these institutions.

- New evidences/researches which cast the message of the scriptures/holy books/ founder of the religion in a new light.
- Social origins (social class, ethnicity etc.) of the clergy, clerics, priests and the community of believers.
- Medium through which stabilisation or change is disseminated.
- Reinterpretation of the Holy Books/Scriptures/Tests in the light of scholarly debates or movements.
- Political status of the religions community-ruled by a colonial regime or themselves.
- Nexus of the religious hierarchy with other sections of the society. In other words, position of power within and outside the religion.
- Emergence of prophets, impact of other cultures, political subordination, economic exploitation of the believers.

- Just as changes in religion may initiate changes in the social order, changes in the society in various realms like education, family, science, industry, stratification may compel religion to explain the social order in a new light.

In the case of religion too, we witnessed different changes in the different historical situations. No form of religion is static. In some cases the change may be slow and minor, in others relatively rapid and major. Every religion claims its first principle supreme, original and eternal. Hence, there is also an element of censure for change. Change of religion is, on the other hand, an entirely different process. It implies rejection of the old form and acceptance of the new. It is technically known as conversion.

MODULE III

CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

3.1 Indian Caste System- Features and Transformation

The module deals with caste system in India, its historical emergence and characteristics. Caste system is the peculiarity of Indian social structure. Indian society is very complex in its structure and characteristics; it is made out of various social institutions like caste, family, marriage, kinship, State, Government etc. Social structure and its components are the subject matter of Sociology hence caste system is an inevitable topic in sociology. Caste system is one of the building components of social structure and it is a specialty of Indian society, so without understanding caste system we cannot fully understand Indian society. The Module also discusses the transformation of caste system, for understanding this, the module conceptualizes the class system in India and makes a comparative analyze with caste system. Besides, the module analyses other topics related with caste system like the reservation policies and social mobility. The former topic deals with the government took upliftment programs like financial help, reservation in government jobs and educational institutions etc to backward castes and the later topic analyses the transformation of caste system. Caste and politics is a highly discussed topic in contemporary society, the module delineates the interrelationship between caste and politics. The module gives an idea about the caste system as structural characteristics of Indian society and its transformation.

Definition of caste

India is the land or rural society, caste stratification is the peculiarity of rural social system, which is a status group. The membership in it is determined on the basis of birth of a person. It simply meant the classification on the basis of occupation but occupation is hereditary. Caste

system is made out of different culture, rules, norms and regulations. Even though the caste system has undergoing certain changes, it has certain features. As part of administrative benefits, British administrators trying study the people of India and they called the specific stratification as *Varna* or *Jati* as Caste. Different sociologists differently define caste the definitions are given below;

- ❖ Herbert Risley defines "caste as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation claiming common descent from mythical ancestor human or divine professing to follow the same professional callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community."
- ❖ M N Srinivas defines "caste is a hereditary endogamous, usually localized group having a traditional association with an occupation."
- ❖ Ketkar defines caste "social groups having two characteristics (a) membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons no born (b) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group."
- ❖ Nesfield defines caste as a class of the community which disowns any connection with any other class and can neither intermarry nor eat nor drink with any but persons of their own community."

The sociologists alikely opined that caste as a collection of people following a common rule for living. M N Srinivas conceptualizes caste as a localized group, endogamy is its hallmark. Almost all sociologists opined that caste is a social group constituted on the basis of occupation, and the status determined by birth.

Characteristics of Caste system

Indian society is a rural society caste system is the peculiarity of rural society. Caste is an occupational division in which the membership is based on birth. Even though the caste system

found in urban society, class system is a dominated phenomenon in urban society than in rural society. Some philosophers like M N Srinivas, S C Dube, McKim Marriot, D N Dhanagare, G S Ghurye etc. characterize the caste system in India. Following are the characteristics of caste system in India

1. Segmental division of society: Caste system is a social stratification. It divides society into different segments as Brahmin, Kshathriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Society compartmentalizes into different categories on the basis of castes and sub-castes. Each caste has specific occupation like; Brahmin working as priest and teaching of religion, Kshatriya are warriors Vaishya are merchants and Shudra worked as agricultural labourers.
2. Hierarchical divisioning of society: Hierarchical division simply means the step by step arrangement. Caste system arranged the people as social hierarchy. Brahmins are arranged at the top of hierarchy then Kshatriya then Vaishya, these three are twice born and Shudra are arranged at the bottom of hierarchy. Untouchables are arranged in the outside of the hierarchy.
3. Restriction on feeding and social intercourse: Caste made an unequal status like higher and lower in society. Today the food and social intercourse is more or less democratic, in certain regions. But caste system followed certain food habits like lower caste people eating food cooked in water which was known as *Kacha* food and the twice born caste people or higher caste people cooked food in ghee which was known as *Pakka* food. Higher caste people never eat *Kacha* food but the lower caste people eat *Kacha* food from the house of higher caste people. The caste system restricts the social intercourse or communication of people in society. The twice born caste people keep a fixed foot of physical distance from untouchables and Shudra. Purity and pollution are the two

principles associated with the social intercourse among different caste groups. The three caste groups arranged on the top of hierarchy, they are purified, Shudra are polluted caste.

4. Restriction on inter-dining: The food is different on the basis of caste. The inter-dining of higher caste and lower caste is not allowed. The people in lower caste were not eating food with higher caste people and vice versa.
5. Civil and religious disabilities: The untouchables or lower caste people have no right to enter temples and restriction on using public roads, wells, ponds, public schools etc.
6. Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation: Traditional occupation (inherited occupation) is the peculiarity of caste system. Each caste has its own occupation ultimately caste was a division of labour during Rig Vedic period. In early societies and in certain contemporary societies the caste members following their traditional occupation, there has no choice for selecting an occupation on the basis of their education and skills.
7. Endogamy: Caste is an endogamous group. Endogamy means a man or a woman marries within his/her own group which may be constituted on the basis of caste or religion or community or race etc. In early society the people are married in their own caste. The practice of inter-caste marriage was low in earlier society, even though the caste exogamy was occurred the couples are out caste.
8. Caste status based on birth: Caste status cannot change in accordance with the changes in skill, education and economy; it is determined by birth so caste status is an ascribed status. Persons have no freedom to determine his caste status, which is fixed by birth of persons in specific family, it is an inherited status.
9. Caste is a descent group: Descent group is a social group whose members have common ancestry. People in each caste believed that they are originated from a common ancestor that may be mythical or real.

10. Caste has a common name: Each caste has a specific name such as, Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Shudra etc. In Kerala society people are divided into different sub-castes which are categorized into the four Varna groups.

Indian Caste System

The people of Indian society is not uniform, they are different on the basis of biological traits, social and economic characteristics. Stratification is the basic characteristics of Indian society; people are divided into different strata on the basis of caste, economy, race, etc. Caste and class are the two stratification system, commonly existing in Indian society. Caste is the social stratification on the basis of birth, it is the peculiarity of Hindu religion.

Caste system is originated from Northern part of India as a division of labour then it spread all spheres of life like marriage, social interaction, status, customs, inter-dining, physical contact etc. and it grows as an exploitative system. The Indian origin of the term caste derived from Portuguese word '*casta*' meaning '*lineage or race*'. The Spanish were the first to use it, but its Indian application from the Portuguese, who had so applied it in the middle of 15th century. The current spelling of the word Caste is used after the origin of French word *caste*, which appears in 1740 in the academies.

Caste system is a stratification system, commonly related with Hindu religion. Caste status is an ascribed status determined on the basis of birth, it should not change as per status changed. Earlier theories concerned with caste, states that the system originated after the arrival of Aryans in India. Racial theory explains that the caste originated from two Varna known as *Dasa* Varna and *Dasyus*. Rig Veda also supports this conceptualization of racial theory. *Dasyus* are the dark skinned people; they are the earlier inhabitants in India. *Dasa* Varna is fair complexioned and migrant people. In Indian origin caste system derived from Varna, literally means complexion, some literatures states that the meaning of Varna is colour of skin.

The theory of Varna states that Hindu religion is divided into four Varna viz. Bramin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Brahmins are priest, Kshatriyas are involved in the duty of protection of region from external attacks, Vaishyas are the merchants, and these three groups are 'twice born'. Shudras are arranged at the bottom of hierarchy engaged in services like agriculture, sweeping etc. Untouchables are the group of people coming to the outside of hierarchy, they are engaged in the work of cleaning toilets, tanning the skin of dead animals etc. they are known as Chandalas or Panchamam. Divine theory of caste, it is also known as traditional theory of caste which explains that the different caste groups derived from the body of *purusha* or divine viz. the Brahmins from the mouth or head, their duties are fixed their origin.

They are doing the religious duties like teaching and studying the religious rules. Kshatriya people derived from hand of the god, they are warriors and Vaishya from the thighs, so they are merchants and Shudras from feet of the god, they engaged in duties like agricultural labourers, sweepers, etc. More and more theories are developed for conceptualizing the caste system; certain important theories are quoted above. The above mentioned theories are mainly states that the caste originated from Varna and occupation. The other theories like occupational theory, religious theory, political theory etc. states that the caste derived on the basis of different criteria like occupation, religion and political factors. In Indian context Hindu religion are constituted by different sub-caste and these sub-castes are fitted in four Varna hierarchy.

Caste, Varna and Jati

Varna and Jati are the two words used to denote caste. The term *jati* derived from Sanskrit word *jana* which means *birth*. The term Jati used as a colloquial term to denote the English term caste. Caste is a stratification system derived on the basis of occupation. In Ancient period caste is a hierarchical arrangement on the basis of occupation then the dominated people make an arrangement based on Varna, which is exploitative. Varna and Jati are interchangeably used to denote caste. Varna is Sanskrit term used in early theories to denote caste.

Origin of caste through Different Historical Periods

Every society is divided into different categories that may be on the basis of natural, biological and social peculiarities. Stratification is the nature of each and every society, caste system is a social stratification system based on social peculiarity. Various sociologists differently conceptualize the caste as an ascribed status, endogamous group, occupational group, etc. The different sociologists, Anthropologists, Historians, and Philosophers etc. are trying to conceptualize caste as a stratification system.

Govind Sadashiv Ghurye popularly known as the father of Indian sociology, M N Srinivas, S C Dube, McKim Marriott, A R Desai, Iravathi Karve etc. are important Indian Sociologists studied the specialty of Indian caste system. Besides them, Western sociologists, Anthropologists, etc. like, Herbert Risely, Louis Dumont, etc. had studied the peculiarity of caste system in India. The literatures picture that caste system developed as a division of labour then it control all spheres of life, it developed through different historical periods, which are given below

1. Caste in Ancient age (1500 BC- 1100 AD)
2. Caste in Medieval Age (1100 AD-1757 AD)
3. Caste in Modern Age (1757 AD- Till today)

Caste in Ancient Age (1500BC-1100AD)

Ancient age is constituted by Vedic and post-Vedic age. Vedic age is the period of the dominance of civilization based on Vedic literature. Vedas are considered to be the earliest literature. The term Vedas derived from Sanskrit word *Vid* which means *to know or knowledge*. There are four Vedas such as Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda. Vedic texts are the treasury of knowledge, it draws the social, economic and political conditions of Indian society. Rigveda is the first Veda, discusses the socio-economic, cultural and political conditions in India.

During this period mainly Hindu society divided into four Varna such as Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The Varna status is determined by occupation not birth. Brahmins performed religious duties, Kshatriyas are warriors or ruling class, Vyshyas are the tradres and Shudras are the servants. Besides Varna, four *Ashramas*, like *Brahmacharyam*, *Grihastham*, *Vanaprastham* and *Sanyasam* are the peculiarity of Hindu social system. These Ashramas are passing through the life of an individual from birth to death.

In Brahmacharyam an individual engaged in the learning from guru, Grihastham is the second stage when individual coming from gurukulam to home for carry out his duties towards his family and he get married. Vanaprastham is the third stage when man tries to withdraw from his household and enter into fourth stage Sanyasam. In fourth stage man's life goes to attainment of *Moksha*. The Post-Vedic period extended from the Rig-Vedic period to the beginning of Buddhism and Jainism. During this period caste system became rigid than Rig-Vedic period. The caste status on the basis of birth which means caste became an ascribed status. Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya are the dominant community and the Shudra become untouchables.

Caste in Medieval Age (1100 AD- 1757AD)

The Caste system originated in ancient period as a division in labour, then it was transformed by various ruling elites in medieval, early modern and modern India. Islamic religion came into contact with India in Medieval period. The indo-Islamic encounter was specifically motivated by an urge to eliminate caste from Indian society. Caste was a new phenomenon to Islam in India. In British period they try to understand Indians for their administrative purposes. The supportive administrators try to abolish certain cruel customs like Sati, Child marriage, restriction in acquiring education etc. The caste system was rigid among Hindus, but it was not rigid to British people. Religious conversions from Hindu to Islam and Christianity are occurred in this period. The Islam and Christians did not exist the caste system so the people arranged in lower strata of hierarchy were followed the Islam and Christian religion.

Caste in Modern Age (The period after 1757)

The modern period in which some major developments took place in caste system can be divided into two stages namely: Caste during British rule and second stage is caste in independent India. With the British rule British people become the political head of the society, the traditional form of caste system started taking a different shape. Till the western administration caste control the peoples' life as an inevitable social institution, after their administration the major decisions like marriage, divorce, crime and punishment etc. controlled and done by civil courts when the role of caste shrink as a religious institution and which set aside the authority of caste.

Certain legislations introduced by British like the Caste disabilities removal Act of 1850, The Special Marriage Act of 1872, The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 etc. which shook the integrity of caste system. Some social reform movements like Brahmasamajam, Aryasamajam, The Prardhana samajam, Ramakrishna Mission and other reform movements launched by social reformers during British rule, which affect the caste system. These make slight awareness in people about their living condition and rights in society.

Brahmasamajam is a social reform movement launched by Ram Mohan Roy in 1828 at Bengal. The movement tries to reform the evil practices in Hindu religion. Ram Mohan Roy advocates that the Hindu religion can reform through reading the real text of Hindu religion by the people. He studied the Hinduism, Islam religion and Christianity. Roy criticizes the evil practices in Hinduism like child marriage, practicing of Sati, abolition of widow remarriage, caste system, untouchability etc.

Aryasamajam is another social reform movement founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1875 at Mumbai. The movement acted against the Brahmanic supremacy, casteism and caste system. He tried to break the barriers of caste which separated man from man by propagating the doctrine of the universal brotherhood. Dayananda accepted the four fold

functional division of society, but he opposed the rigidity of caste system and the practice of untouchability.

Prardhana Samajam is a social reform movement founded by Atmaram Pandurang and Mahadeva Govinda Ranade in 1867 at Maharashtra. It aimed at reforming the Hindu religious thought and practice in the light of modern knowledge. It attempts to free religion from the hold of caste system. It encouraged inter-dining and inter-marriage among different castes. It tries to abolish evil practices like Sati, prohibition of widow remarriage, untouchability, caste endogamy etc. in Hindu society.

Ramakrishna Mission is a memoir of the Student Vivekananda to his guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa, which is founded in 1897 at Culcutta. Vivekananda condemned caste inequalities and exploitation of lower caste by higher caste through organization.

Theosophical society of Madam H P Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, Satyashodhak Samaj of Jyothiba Phule and SNDP of Sri Narayana Guru etc. are the other social reform movements fight against the evil practices of caste system. Almost all social reform movements support the religion and religious practices but oppose the caste system as an exploitative system. The activities of movement aware the people about the evil practices and they can understand caste as a system of exploitation made by powered people.

Spread of English education and influence of western ideas are the sources which influence caste system in modern age. Liberty, fraternity, equality, democracy, rationalism, secularism and humanism are the western ideas influence the western educated Indians. Indians can understand these ideas through modern education.

Urbanization and industrialization are other factors influence the caste practices. Urbanization is the result of industrialization, which means the mass migration of people from rural to urban area for job or education. These two factors help to emergence of class system in

India. During this period started the division of labour on the basis of skill, merit and education, which are reducing the severity of caste practices in certain regions.

Caste in Independent India

The political independence of the country, besides the process of industrialization and urbanization brought in a series of changes in the caste system. India became a democratic country after independence and a constitution made for the comfortable existence of people, which regulates the interaction of people in society. These changes are expressed in the traditional features of caste system and the role for functioning of the caste. Some of the traditional features have been radically altered. Restrictions on food habits have been relaxed and the distinction between the *Pakka* food and *Kacha* food has almost vanished. Food habits have become more a matter of personal choice than a caste rule.

Even though caste is an ascribed status, the people have choice to live in a caste framework or not. The choice of occupation is free in post-Independent period which is mainly on the basis of education, skill, age and merit than caste status. The practice of untouchability stops by law. Constitution assures an equal status to all people in mainstream society. In certain States like Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat etc. can see certain exploitative caste practices like untouchability even in Post-Independent period. With the emergence of democratic administrative system and framing of constitution assures equality in society which reduces the severity of evil practices related with caste system during post-independent period.

3.2 Caste and Class in India, Reservation Policies, Social Mobility

Caste and class are the topics highly discussed in present day society. Both of them are Indian social institution. As compare to caste with class, class is a modern phenomena and the status in it is fixed by economy than birth. Class considered as a transition space come after caste and hence it come after the social mobility occurred in caste. The reservation policies are closely related with caste and class. It helps to raise the status of lower caste into higher class.

3.2.1. Reservation Policies

India is a caste ridden society there people are arranged as hierarchy. Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaishya are the three Varna are considered as twice born, they are arranged at the top of hierarchy. Shudra Varna is arranged at the bottom and untouchables are placed at the outside of hierarchy. Shudra Varna and untouchables have certain civil and religious disabilities to freely use the facilities like public roads, wells, schools, ponds etc. in mainstream society as like higher caste people. They are suffering from various types of inequalities. Due to these disabilities and unequal treatment of society the lower caste people couldn't pursue their education so they cannot engage in other occupations based on education and qualification other than traditional occupation, and they could not participate in the programs in public places.

The social political and economic status of these people was low hence the government adopted certain policies and programs to uplift them in mainstream society, it is known as reservation policy. Other than the people come in lower strata of Varna hierarchy, minority groups also enjoy the benefit of the reservation. It is governed by constitutional law and local rules and regulations. The government adopted the reservation policy as a part of democratic principle, as per the principle the people should have equal representation in the all sections of the nation.

Based on the principle of democracy, reservation policy is a series of affirmative action's undertaken through reserving access to seats for equal representation in the education, government jobs and politics to providing reservation for socially, educationally, politically and educationally backward in India. Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes and Other Backward classes and in some States Backward Classes among Muslim, minority groups like Parsi, Sikhs and Jains are the primary beneficiaries of the reservation policies under the constitution. The spirit of equal representation pervades the provisions in the Indian constitution. The main aim of reservation policy was creation of an egalitarian society, but the result is negative.

Reservation is an affirmative action. Constitution of India assures the reservation through certain rules, which are executed through certain Articles, it is given below:

1. Article 15 (4) empowers the State to make special provisions for advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and for SCs.
2. Article 16 (4) nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which in the opinion of the State is not adequately represented in the services under State.
3. The Act amends Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution, by adding a clause which allows States to make “special provision for the advancement of any economically weaker sections of citizens.”
4. Article 46 of the Constitution states that “The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”
5. Article 330 provides reservation of seats for ST in the House of the people
6. Article 332 provides reservation of seats for ST in Legislative Assemblies of the States.

The term reservation means an act of reserving or with holding. The history of reservation started from 1902 with the attempt of Chatrapati Shahu, the King of princely State of Kolhapur introduced reservation to non-Brahmin and Backward classes. He provided free education to everyone and opened several hostels to make it easier for them to receive. He also tried to ensure that people thus educated were suitably employed. Following that the policy like in today started during the British period. In 1932 Dr. B R Ambedkar, a backward caste leader and popularly known as the father of reservation who demanded for separate electorate for SC like that of Muslim and other minorities, it was essentially a political reservation.

Ramsay McDonald, The Prime Minister of Britain, also conceded the award to the depressed class. The fast unto death of Gandhi led Poona pact in 1932 that modifies the communal award, and the reserved 78 seats other than separate electorates. Before independence the reservation system favouring certain castes and other communities existed before independence in several areas of British India. The British government introduced elements of reservation in the government of India Act of 1909 and there were many other measures put in place prior to independence. A significant one emerged from the Round Table conference of June 1932.

According to Communal Award separate representation was to be provided for Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo Indians and Europeans. The depressed classes were assigned a number of seats to be filled by election from constituencies in which only they could vote although they could also vote in other seats. The proposal was controversial, so Gandhi protests it, but certain people in depressed class and Ambedkar supported it. Gandhi protests it, after negotiations Gandhi reached an agreement with Ambedkar to have a single Hindu electorate with Dalits having seats reserved within it. Electorates for other religions such as Islam and Sikhism remained separate. This becomes known as Poona Pact.

After the independence of India in 1947 there were some major changes in favour of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. A common form of caste discrimination in India has been the practice of untouchability. Scheduled Castes were the primary targets of the practice which was outlawed by the new constitution of India. In 1954 the Ministry of education suggested that 20% of places should be reserved for the SCs and STs in educational institutions with a provision to relax minimum qualifying marks for admission by 5% wherever required. In 1982 it was specified that 15% and 7.5% of vacancies in public sector and government aided educational institutions should be reserved for SC and ST candidates respectively.

A significant change began in 1978 when the Mandal Commission was established to assess the situation of socially and educationally backward classes. The Commission did not have exact population figures for the OBCs and so used data from the 1931 census thus estimating the group's population at 52%. In 1980 the Commission's report recommended that a reserved quota for OBCs of 27% should apply in respect of services and public sector bodies operated by the Union Government. It called for a similar change to admission to institutes of higher education except where states already had more generous requirements. It was not until the 1990 the recommendations were implemented in Union Government jobs. Some committees and commissions are made for the implementation of reservation in India which is summarized below.

1. Hunter Commission was appointed in 1882 under the chairmanship of Sir William Hunter; its main recommendation was to give preference to literate candidates for government jobs in the later levels, along with expansion of primary schools in backward districts. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule made a demand of free and compulsory education for all caste along with proportionate reservation or representation in government jobs.
2. Kaka Kalelkar Commission was established in 1953 under the chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar to assess the situation of the socially and educationally backward classes. The report was accepted as far as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were concerned. The recommendations for OBCs were rejected.
3. Mandal Commission was established in 1979 to assess the situation of the socially and educationally backward. The commission didn't have exact figures for a sub-caste known as the Other Backward Class and used the 1930 census data further classifying 1257 communities as backward to estimate the OBC population at 52%. In 1980 the commission submitted a report and recommended changes to the existing

quotas increasing them from 22% to 49.5%. In 1990 the Mandal Commission recommendations were implemented in government jobs by V P Singh. Certain student organizations launched nationwide agitations. Rajiv Goswami, a Delhi university student attempted self immolation. Many students followed suit.

4. Sachar Committee was appointed in 2005 under the chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Sachar for the preparation of the report on the socio-economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. The Committee submitted its report in the 2006.

The main purpose of reservation policy was to ensure social and economic justice, thereby realizing the goal of the empowerment of the backward communities. It can address certain social inequalities that pervade Indian society for so long. For these social inequalities leave the so-called low castes deprived in everything from education to economy. Thus the policy of job reservations intends to bring about proportional representation as it is a mode of distributing benefits based on the proportion of population 15% for Scheduled Castes and 7.5% for Scheduled Tribes and 27% for Other Backward Communities. Totally 49.5% reservation has provided for backward communities. But even after 71 years of Independent India still reservation policy has not implemented fully. The ruling government has implemented only 8% reservation for SCs, 2.5% reservation for STs and 5% for backward community. Totally 15.5% has implemented. Still 33.5% reservation has remained in government jobs. Ruling Governments are not implementing reservation facilities provided in the Indian constitution.

- i. Reservation in education: According to Article 21(A), every child should have free education under the 14 years old and in the case of education provision relates to non-discrimination in educational institutions, equal representation and measures for educational promotions. Article 29 (2) provides protection for admission and against discrimination in any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race,

caste, language or any of them. Even though these laws exist the condition of SC, ST is pathetic. As per 2011 census report the representation of SC in education is low,

- ii. Reservation in employment: The constitution provides for both appointment and promotion in the government services. Article 16 (4) empowers the State to make any provision for the reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens. Article 16 (4A) enables the State to make provision for reservation in matters of promotion to any group or groups of posts in the services under the State in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Article 335 states that the claim of the members of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration in the making of appointment of service and posts in connection with the affairs of the union or of a State.
- iii. Reservation in politics: The constitution empowers the State to take steps to provide due representation to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Various Articles contain provision for the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the nation's legislative assembly of the States. Article 332 in Municipalities, Article 243 T in various Panchayath (local self government) level bodies, namely village, taluk and district Article 243 D. In the Parliament caste and tribe based reservation are provided to make it more representative today out of 543 seats in India's parliament 84 (15.47%) seats are reserved for SC and 47 (8.66%) for ST. Allocation of seats for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in the Lok Sabha are made on the basis of proportion of SC and STs in the State concerned to that of the total population. A similar percentage of exclusive seats have been provided for members of designated SC and ST in

each State legislature. Local self government has SC, ST and gender based reservation system in place.

Reservation policy is governments attempt to raise backward caste, it is mainly for social development. Due the peculiar social conditions like caste system, illiteracy, economic inequalities and personalization of the problem India couldn't attain the goal of reservation policy. But slight variations came in status of certain communities with reservation policy.

3.2.2. Social Mobility

Indian society is a caste ridden society, which divides people into four Varna like Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudua. Besides theses Varna hierarchy certain regions in India can found different sub-castes, which are fitted in this Varna hierarchy on the basis of similarities of culture of specific Varna and its position in regional hierarchy. Caste is a rigid stratification system, the membership is fixed on the basis of birth, and it is an ascribed status. Social mobility means the changing of position or status of a group of people in a status scale that may be upward or downward. In early society the mobility was very difficult in caste hierarchy. In accordance with time changing the mobility was practical. The national leaders' agitation and the advancement of education, make aware the people about their downtrodden condition in society. The people understand they can escape from this inequality through changing their caste status.

Social mobility is a way of the escape of people from caste exploitation. Sociology analyzed social mobility as a factor of social change. It is the upward or downward movement of an individual or a group of individual in status scale. If the movement is upward in status scale is known as upward mobility. If the direction of movement is turn towards the downward of status scale is known as downward mobility. The concept social mobility was introduced by American sociologist, Pitirim A Sorokin in his work entitled as *Cultural and Social Mobility*. Different Sociologists like M N Srinivas, G S Ghurye, S C Dube, MaCkim Marriot, A R Desai, Yogendra Singh, Iravati Karve etc. try to explain about the peoples' attempt to take out from

caste exploitation. Those are the prominent Indian sociologists discussed the social mobility in Indian society.

M N Srinivas Indian Sociologist, born in Karnataka who identified this mobility as sanskritization, westernisation and modernisation. It is the first systematic attempt to analyze the mobility in caste system. MaCkim Marriot presented this mobility as the processes of *universalization* and *parochialisation* in his work *Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization*, the great tradition and little tradition are the two mobility related concepts analyzed in this work. These are the important attempts of Indian Sociologists to analyze the social mobility in caste. Pauline Kolenda a South Asian Anthropologist presented different ways of social mobility in caste system in his work entitled as *Caste in Contemporary India* which are given below

- 1. Through warfare (through conquer) and peaceful occupancy:** Until the British unification of the Indian subcontinent in the 1st half of 19th century the most effective way to rise the caste status was by the acquisition of territory either through conquest or by peaceful occupancy the land had previously been sparsely populated or empty. For example, Shivaji a great Maratha conqueror of central India in 18th century, the Mughal Empire which had dominated much of India in the 17th century was in decline by the early 18th century. Shivaji's father had been a Jagirdar (Vassal to the Muslim ruler of Bijapur), who principally subordinate to the Mughal emperor. Shivaji overthrow the Mughal rule and established his empire. His caste was Maratha, which was considered to be Shudra Varna but after the conquest of Mughal dynasty who claims the Kshatriya status, war is the occupation of Kshatriya.
- 2. Lower caste people claiming the higher status through servicing rulers:** The people who live in lower caste status served either Hindu or non-Hindu rulers likewise attained higher rank Varna. The *Patidars* of Gujarath a peasant group of Shudra Varna supported

the Maratha descendants of Shivaji, who ruled central Gujarath. The *Patidars* they working as agricultural labourers, gradually claim the Kshatriya status.

3. **Through assigning the higher status to lower caste by census commissioners:** During the 19th century, the census takers recorded caste membership of residents claims to high Varna status were often made. The Shanans of Southern Tamil Nadu, whose traditional occupation was tapping the palmyra tree for its juices used to make palm sugar and toddy drink claimed that they were really Kshatriyas and should be called *Nadars* meaning the lord of *nad* or land. The sweepers of Kalapur claim that they are the descendents of Valimiki, who is the author of Hindu epic Ramayana. The lower caste people claim the higher status through their names connecting to higher caste's name and claiming of similarities in occupation.
4. **Sanskritization, westernization and elite emulation:** Sanskritization is a concept put forwarded by M N Srinivas an Indian sociologist to denote upward mobility in caste system. It is a process of the imitation of cultures of the twice born especially the Brahmins, by people in lower strata of caste hierarchy, for example certain caste groups adopt vegetarianism and others give up drinking liquor. At the same time certain untouchables Chamers, Khatiks give up their traditional occupations. Westernization is a process of following the life style of western people. This concept is presented by M N Srinivas to denote social mobility in caste. *Elite emulation* is another discourse founded by Owen M. Lynch an Anthropologist.
5. **Claim the higher status through equating caste with five Varna:** Certain places people in lower caste claiming higher status through equating the occupation or the name of caste with higher caste.
6. **Effect of education:** During British administration Shudra and untouchables are influenced by the reform movements like Brahmasamajam and Aryasamajam and the

missionary activities of Christians. All these movements and Christian missionaries try to give education to untouchables and Shudra. They founded schools for them and provide free education to them. Educated untouchables are aware about their pathetic condition and try to emulate the life style of twice born caste, through which the untouchables claim the higher status.

7. **Claiming higher status in hierarchy after the geographical movement:** Sometimes certain lower caste people move from their place of origin to new place that may be sparsely populated places or isolated places or the land abandoned by the rulers after their conquest or barren land, there they claim higher caste status.
8. **Out-casting:** It is a downward mobility widely occurring in earlier period. For example the Pramalai Kallar is a dominant caste in Madurai district those married lower caste people, through this endogamous marital system they were out casted from their own caste.

Social mobility is the peculiarity of any social stratification system. Even though the caste system has no changes the people in India seen social mobility as a chief way for rising their status in caste hierarchy. The intensity of caste practices was different in various societies so the social mobility helps to raise the status of people in certain regions where the intensity of caste practices are low.

3.2.3. Caste and Class in India

Caste and class are the two stratification system commonly found in India. Max Weber opined that both of them are status group. A status group simply means the collection of people who share a distinctive style of life and a certain consciousness of kind. Class means a collection of individuals sharing similar economic circumstances. The term class derived from Latin word *classis* means *the division of Roman people or a grade or class of pupils*. The term class first came into wide use in the early 19th century replacing such terms as rank and order as descriptions

of the major hierarchical groupings in society. Class has certain characteristics which are given below.

1. **Class is economic in nature:** It is the basic feature of society. Class is constituted by a group of people they are in same economic status. The position of people may change in accordance with economic status changed.
2. **Class status is an achieved status:** The status of an individual in class is fixed on the basis of his efforts performed in his life time. The class status is not hereditary, it is achieved an individual in his life time.
3. **Class is a wide and simple stratification:** Mainly class is divided into three such as upper, lower and middle class but these three classes again divided into upper upper class, upper middle and upper lower, each main classes divided like this so it is a wide stratification system. The status is decided on the basis of economic status only.
4. **Class is an open stratification system:** The class status achieved by a person in his life time through his effort. An individual class status may change in accordance with fluctuations in economic status so we can say class is an open system.
5. **Class is a dispersed inequality:** The class system stratified people into different groups, it is not an interrelated or interdependent group
6. **Class is an urban phenomenon:** Class is mainly an urban phenomenon, it the nature of urban society.
7. **Class is only a status symbol not works as a political force:** Class is only a status symbol not determined the political forces in society.
8. **Class system is flexible:** The status in class is flexible because the entry and with drawl in from class are simple and any person can change his class status during his life time.

9. **Class is a universal stratification system:** Class stratification is not confined in a specific region like caste system, it is a universal phenomenon found in western as well as Indian society.

Caste is another stratification system commonly found in Indian society. The caste system derived from the earlier Varna system, basically four Varna constitute the Varna hierarchy, but more and more caste and sub-castes are included in each varna. It developed as a division of labour then it control all aspects of life like, marriage, food habits, social intercourse etc. Caste has some characteristics which are summarized below.

- i. **Caste status is an ascribed status:** The status of an individual in caste system is decided on the basis of birth.
- ii. **Caste is a small and complex stratification system:** Caste is basically stratified into four Varna but the membership is fixed by birth, caste status hasn't change during his life time.
- iii. **Caste is a closed and rigid system:** An individual cannot change his caste status in his life time. The entry and withdrawal of individuals from the caste system is not possible. An individual born, living and died in same caste status. It is basically an inherited status group.
- iv. **Caste system is characterized by cumulative inequality:** The members of a caste have either high or low ritual status in relation to other castes.
- v. **Caste has organic character:** The term organic is used to denote the interdependence of parts of the maintenance of system as a whole. Even though it is segmented division of labour its segments are mutually interrelated by the principle of reciprocity.
- vi. **It is a rural phenomenon:** Caste system is the peculiarity of rural society. it is a rural social institution which decides rural social structure.

- vii. **It works as an active political force:** Caste is a rural social phenomenon; it controls the all aspects of life of individuals. In rural society caste Panchayath controls the behaviour of members.

Caste and class are two stratification system commonly found in Indian society. Class is a modern phenomenon; its status is fixed by the achievements in life. Caste is a social institution which controls all aspects of life. But class is a simple stratification system constituted by the individuals in same economic status, but they have a collective consciousness.

3.3 Caste and Politics- Politicization of caste, Caste organizations

Caste and politics are the relevant topics mostly discussed in present day society. Both of these depend on each other. Caste organizations are an institution widely seen in India, which are organized for the protection of the interest of people who are the members of specific caste group, certain institutions have political base and others are not.

3.3.1 Caste and Politics

Caste is the building block of Indian rural society. The term politics used in social structure to denotes the administrative system in particular society. In earlier rural societies caste were a political institution, it regulates the administrative system of society. But today with the emergence of democratic administrative system the role of caste system changed from political institution to religious institution in certain regions. In present day society certain regions caste system working as administrative unit, like caste Panchayath control certain region in Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc. this system rarely found. Today the attempts related with politicization of caste was seriously occurring; this attempt was started from the granting reservation to backward caste in election during British period. Different sociologists analyzed caste and politics, among those Rajni Kothari, Anil Bhatt, Rudolf, Andre Betteille, M N Srinivas, and Kathleen Gough etc. are the prominent sociologists.

M N Srinivas discussed the politics and dominant caste and who opined that political process tends to strengthen the loyalties of caste and the universal adult franchise strengthen caste. But Gough's opinion is just opposite of Srinivas' view that saw politics as a disruptive force of caste. Rudolf, an American sociologist called politicization of caste as the 'democratic incarnation of caste'. Ideologically caste and politics differ from each other. Caste advocates fragmentation and it is underlying in inequality and power. Democracy is the chief political system in India, which highlights the principle of equality and social integration, so both of these cannot co-exist. The relationship between caste and politics may be analyzed at two levels:

1. How caste affects politics
2. How Politics influence caste

Caste affects Politics

Caste is a social institution in rural India; it is not merely a stratification system or not a simple compartmentalization of labour but a system which controls all aspects of life. Caste and politics are closely related due to once caste regulates the governmental aspects in society. Caste is part of belief and people in same caste have feeling of oneness, so easily can mobilize caste to politics. Today widely discuss the politicization of caste. Caste provides various facilities for accommodating politics. Rajni Kothari a well known political scientist deeply analyzed the interrelationship of caste and politics by highlight the peculiarity of caste to work in politics. Rajni Kothari identified three aspects of caste system like secular aspect, integration aspect and aspect of consciousness draw the politics to caste. The organizational and psychological conditions of caste organization are turned into a resource for politics. The three aspects of the caste system attract the political behavior, the three aspects are explaining below:

1. Secular aspect
2. Integration aspect
3. Aspect of consciousness

- 1. Secular aspect:** Democratic politics is decentralized, the authorities are divided into different sections for convenience, and like that Kothari highlights the stratified structure of caste system. In which the distances are rigidly maintained through endogamy, pollution and the legitimacy of rituals. The prominent characteristics of caste system such as factionalism, caste cleavages, pattern of alignment and realignment among the various strata and a continuous striving for social mobility heightens the inequality in society. These features are highly relevant from the point of development. Governmental aspect and political constitute are the two aspects inherent in caste system, which express the secular organization nature of caste. Governmental aspects of caste system mean the caste councils, village arbitration and procedures. The political constitute contains the authority in caste and the authority among different caste, status alignment and cleavages, which are strengthened by the authority relationships of local elites with the central political system or systems. Caste system was a rigid stratification and yet religion, occupation and territory provided the bases for secular mobility. Strong formation of horizontal solidarities results from the domination of land owning castes other than Brahmins, this features are very useful in political organization.
- 2. Integration aspect:** Even though democracy is a decentralized system, integration necessary for the existence of political system. The traditional approach highlights the stratification nature of caste system, but among these strata has integration. These ideas of caste system influence the politics. Caste system not only determines individuals' social status on the basis of the group to which he is born but also differentiates and assigns occupational and economic roles. It thus gives a place to every individual from the highest to the lowest and makes for a high degree of identification and integration. Caste system is the integration structure of a specific type, namely one that is more intense in its small group orientation and particularistic loyalties and where wider loyalties operate only when they structured through the prevailing differentiations. Even though early theorists considered caste system was underlying

in differentiation and segmentation, it has an agglomerative dimension. Through these, caste system provides a structural framework for understanding the structural impact of democratic nation building.

Varna is the vertical homogeneous class and status but *Jati* was the horizontal heterogeneous and segmental form. In actual operation (real life) caste affiliations takes the horizontal heterogeneous and segmental form of *Jati*. And yet the system that has survived for so long creates a powerful symbolism, rationale and mythology of its own. The *Varna* referent (peculiarity of particular *Varna*, its status, occupation etc.) represents a scale of values which provides both a spur to integrative behavioural patterns and a symbol of competition that enables the aspiring and mobile groups to lay claim to high status still affirming widely prevalent values. *Varna* provides an all India frame into which number of *Jatis* in any single linguistic area can be fitted. Furthermore, certain *Varna* also provides symbols of high status and symbols of opposition. The *Varna* and *Jati* are intimately connected in the Indian system which has made for a high degree of integration and containment (control) of structural and psychological strains inherent in the process of technological and political change.

3. Aspect of consciousness: Ideational underpinnings are the inevitable characteristic of every social system. Sociologists neglect this quality of caste system and highlight segmental division as the basic feature. The contest for positions between various *Jatis* often follows some variation of *Varna* either by approximating the reality or by claiming the other caste status which has from time to time ensued in various region following real shifts in the social and economic positions of different groups. *Varna* and *Jati* are different from each other, the former has a neat and logical structure but the later is characteristically ambiguous. *Varna* has several meanings; among that segmentation was one meaning. By shifting from one referent to another, it demonstrates the basis continuity between the various referent-territories, economic, occupational and ritual. It also shows the difficulty of describing caste

by and single set of attributes. Indeed by being different things at different points in social interaction, it provides for immense flexibility, continuity and tension management capabilities. It thus enables people to draw themselves and others at different orders of existence and in different contexts as the situation demands. The secular integrative and ideational aspects of caste have provided a sophisticated and differentiated cultural background for receiving the modernist impacts and responding to them with freely.

Politics and caste are two interrelated concepts. In contemporary society philosophers highly discussed the politicization of caste and the factors which draw the caste to politics. Caste system provides various facilities like secular, integrative and consciousness features to the caste members, those attract politics to caste. Caste system also provides certain structures segmentation, alignment of authority, functional divisioning, legitimacy of rituals supporting untouchability and pollution etc. for smooth functioning of politics. Caste system also provides the consciousness to members for existence of society, which helps to understand society in accordance with changing society. This feature is necessary for the smooth existence of political system in society.

How Politics Influence Caste

India is a multi-religious country, where caste confined among Hindus as a religious phenomenon. Even though India is a democratic country, the over influence of caste is found in our society. In democratic administration system people select the rulers through voting system. The members in one caste have a caste consciousness and feeling of oneness. People prefer to vote for a candidate of their own caste irrespective of the merits or demerits of the candidate. At the same time the leaders of particular caste prefers to select people in his own caste to different posts. Caste provides leadership to political structure for political mobilization. People selects their representatives through election process, the members in each caste reserve their vote for its own members irrespective of the merits or demerits of the candidates. Rajni Kothari (1928-

2015) an Indian political scientist, political theorist and Academic writer examined the relationship between caste and politics by analyzing the issue as to what happens to political system because of vote of castes. He found that the following factors draw the caste system to democratic politics:

- **Liberal Education:** In early society only Brahmins support and accept the education so they have political awareness. In accordance with time changing people in other castes try to accept education especially English education which awakes the people about the political rights so the spread of liberal education draw the caste system to politics.
- **Government patronage (administrative patronage):** It means to protect people from different conditions like exploitation, marginalization, oppression etc. The governmental patronage known by educated people that is dominated caste, who were the first responded to new educational opportunities. Then ascendant caste started to accept new educational opportunities which help to know about the patronage of government to caste.
- **Economic benefits:** The process of interaction between caste and modern institutions was selective which affects on certain aspects of castes like the power structure of the caste system and the distribution of economic benefits.
- **Positions of power offered new institutions and new leadership:** The political parties provide various positions of power in party and other local self governing bodies and the new leadership attract the caste system to politics.
- **Slowly expanding franchise:** Expansion of Right to vote is a factor of make awareness about the benefits of caste in politics. Once whole people have no voting right, and then they got voting right through passing of universal adult franchise.

Rajni Kothari also presented the relationship between caste and politics through three stages that are given below:

First stage involves the politicization of powerful elite caste, usually one which responds earliest to the opportunities for western education. In which the elite caste in a region face the politicization. Kothari called elite caste as entrenched caste which was educated and politically conscious and they have the political awareness. In Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu elite castes was Brahmins and in Bihar Kayastas. The entrenched castes are more or less politically success. The other high caste in the region known as ascendants caste, they respond with resentment to modern education slowly they feel the relative deprivation and antagonism.

Second stage the caste in region faces factionalism and fragmentation due to competition among the members in same caste and among different caste which leads to develop the multi-caste and multi-factional alignments. Lower castes are often brought into support high caste leaders and to strengthen a faction. On the basis of ideology and perception certain people do not support their own caste, when these people join in the faction similar to their ideology which is leading to develop multi-caste alignment.

In third stage the caste identity become weak with the progress in education, urbanization and the development of an orientation toward individual achievement and modern status symbols. Thus there emerge cross cutting alliance.

Anil Bhatt, a well known contributor in the writings of relationship between the caste and politics, who is the teacher in Center for studies of Development studies in New Delhi. He analyzed the political interest of different castes like high caste, middle caste and low caste on the basis of four aspects like, interest of castes in politics, political knowledge and political awareness of caste, identification of castes with political parties and influence of castes on political affairs. He studied the persons of high, middle and low caste with different backgrounds in four States (Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh).

Analyzing the political interest by taking all castes together, high castes have the high interest in politics. With regard to the awareness of political changes and major political problems in the country high caste have the more interest in politics. The high castes are politically influential while middle and low castes dominate only in few villages. Politics is the competitive enterprises; its purpose is the acquisition of power for the realization of certain goals and its process is one of identifying and manipulating existing and emerging allegiances in order to mobilize and consolidate positions. Politics provide certain conditions to draw caste to politics like prestige and power, economic benefits and administrative patronage. Caste is hierarchical division in society; the status is fixed by birth. The status and power in caste system on the basis of the position of caste in hierarchy, but political system provide status and power on the basis of democratic principle.

Economic benefit is another attraction of politics, in election the candidates or political organizations considered people as vote banks, they provide cash to people for their vote, besides the political leaders also get cash. The new institutions in post-colonial India and the new leadership offered economic opportunity to people actively participate in politics. People suffered some patronages in administration, which encourage, support and insist the people that attract the caste to politics. Administrative mechanism works on the basis of equality but caste works as inequality so politics easily attract caste system. Caste and politics are the two different concepts, but caste provides resources to politics.

Once caste system was a political organization in India, but today with the emergence of democratic political system its position confined to religious organization. The peculiarity of caste, which provides a structure for politics and the politics provide facilities to caste. Both of these are interrelated.

3.3.2. Caste Organizations

Caste system is the peculiarity of Indian social structure, it is a stratification system. Organization means an instrument for achieving organizational goals. It is a social unit or group of people whom come together to achieve specific goal. People organize for achieving their goal, the organization on the basis on goal. People in a same caste permanently organized for their social, political, and educational upliftment, or for raising or equalizing their status in social status scale or caste hierarchy, etc. it is a formal organization. Caste association is another term used to represent the idea of caste organization. These two terms are interchangeably used to represent the permanent grouping of people in same caste for acquiring a common goal.

Caste system is the peculiarity of Hindu religion, which is firstly seen in Northern part of India. Some noticeable process in caste in the last quarter on the 19th century was their changing functions and organizational forms. During this period caste organizations had increasingly been formed. These associations wanted the status of the caste to be improved not only in the cultural realm but also in the educational, occupational and economic realms. It is strained for caste consciousness and solidarity. They fought for equality and social rights. In the first two decades of 20th century many such institutions were established. Various castes with an ambition for raising their status hosted conferences of their members and caste based councils to take steps for a honourable position in the society.

The leaders of some higher caste frankly looked upon the census reports as an opportunity for obtaining some recognition of social claim. The process of sanskritisation was achieved by a caste by forming caste association. Various Indian sociologists analysed the emergence and proliferation of caste associations in India. Bailey, a well known Anthropologist and M N Srinivas a Prominent Indian Sociologist noted the birth and proliferation of caste association as a modern adaptation of traditional caste forms. Ghurye, father of Indian Sociology opined that caste association is tendency of caste in Hindu society during contemporary century, the

association comprising all members of the caste speaking the same language. Pauline Kolenda opined that caste association as a voluntary organization composed of members from a single caste. Who also opined that caste associations are emerged for linking members of a caste within a region.

The history of caste organizations in started during colonial period, but which are not an official organizations due to people commonly involved in protection against colonial exploitation. In early societies various social reform movements like Brahmasamajam, Aryasamajam, Prardhanasamajam, Satyasodhaksamajam etc. protests against the evil practices in caste system. Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) was an organization in India founded at National Convention of Scheduled Caste at Nagpur by Ambedkar in 1942 it is a campaign for the rights of the Dalit community. The Organization highlights the necessities of Dalits to improve their status in society. The caste organizations developed in various regions in India, the caste associations in certain regions are mentioned below:

1. **Kammala Organization:** Kammala is an artisan caste found in south India. In order to protect their profession from local powers the Kammalas wanted to strengthen their local institutions. Consequently the Kammala association came into being.
2. **Naidu Sangam:** Naidu Sangam set up in Madras city in 1910. Parthasarathi Naidu was the founder of this organization.
3. **The Kshatriya Mahajana Sangam:** The organization started by Nadars for their upliftment. Nadars or Shanars are the Palmyra tree climbing and cultivating community in southeastern portion of Madras Presidency. Early in 19th century the high caste considered the Nadars as the most defiling and degraded caste. The Nadars suffered several social disabilities and were one of the most economically depressed communities in south India. For the upliftment of the Nadars some prominent Nadars assembled at Madhurai in 1895 and they started Kshatriya Mahajana Sangam.

4. **Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP):** Sree Narayana Guru a social reformer in Kerala, who founded SNDP in 1903. Earlier the association worked for the upliftment of socially and economically depressed castes. Then its activities confined for the upliftment of Ezhava, a backward community in Kerala engaged in coconut climbing, toddy tapping etc.
5. **Adi Dravida Mahajan Saha:** Among the Scheduled Caste organizations started by Dalit leaders in 1892, which was the earliest one. The organization tirelessly represented the problem of SC to the Govt.
6. **Nair Services Society (NSS):** NSS is an organization created for the social advancement and welfare of the Nair community that is founded primarily in the State of Kerala in South India. It was established under the leadership of Mannath Padmanabhan in 1914, its headquarters at Perunna in the town of Changanassery in Kottayam.

Caste organizations are the group of people in same caste organized for attaining their goals like acquisition of social identity, social rights, to rise their representation in education and in politics. The above mentioned organizations are not political. More and more regional organizations organized by different sub-castes are founded in certain places of India.

MODULE IV

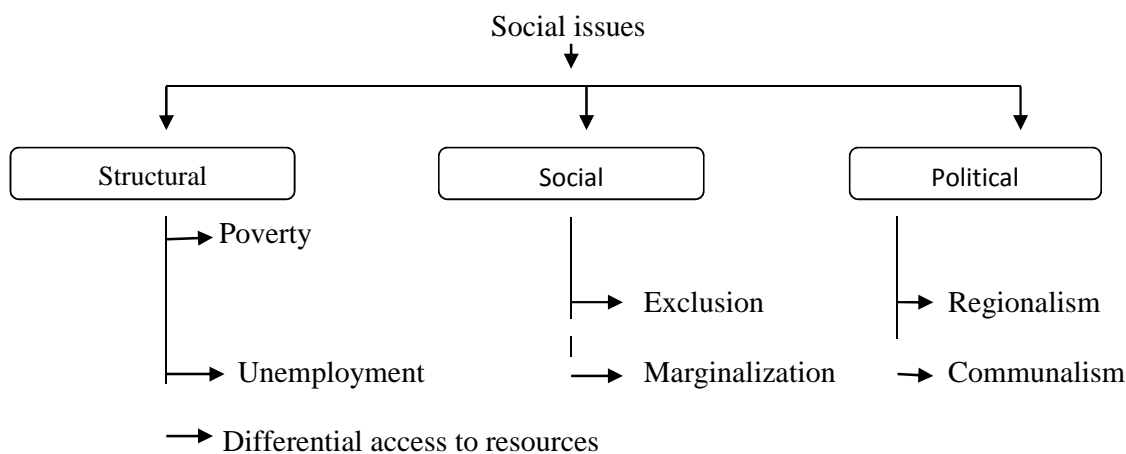
CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES

The fourth module deals with contemporary social issues in Indian society. Social issues mean a condition or situation which disturbs the social order and hinder smooth functioning of social institution. The term social problems and social issues are interchangeably used to denote the social disorder in society. It is classified as structural, social and political. These are not a watertight compartmentalization of the social issues. Structural social issues are produced by the technological changes, which influence the structure of society. Poverty, unemployment and unequal distribution of resources are the major structural problems analyzed in this module. Marginalization and social exclusion are the two social problems delineate in this module, these are the problem of minorities are the serious contemporary issues faced by our society. Regionalism and communalism are the two political issues faced by contemporary society. The module helps to make a clear view about the contemporary social issues faced by our people.

Social Issues

Social issue is the phenomenon or condition, which disturbs the social order and hinders smooth functioning of social institution. It is a factor of social disorder. Social is the chief concern of sociology, hence as a factor, of social disorder sociology deals with the social issues. Social problem is another term used to denote social disorder. These two terms social problem and social issues are interchangeably used to denote social tensions. Social issues negatively affect the society. Social issues are directly or indirectly disintegrate social system. It causes dissatisfaction, suffering and misery to social groups. At the same time it seriously affects the value of society. Social issues are the product of one more conditions or causes; sometimes one cause is so interwoven with other problems that it cannot be solved apart from them. Social

issues are interconnected. Even though the social issues generally produce negative results, sometimes it produces certain positive result, but sociology identifies as a negative force leading to social disorder. Social issues are classified as structural, social and political, it is a general classification on the basis of characteristics of occurrence and which aspect of society effects. Different types of social issues are briefly explained below.



4.1 Structural: Poverty, Unemployment, Differential Access to Resources

Social structure is the chief concern of sociology which is organized set of social institutions and patterns of institutionalized relationships that together compose society. Social structure is both a product of social interaction and directly determines it. Structural issues simply mean the conditions which disintegrate the structural arrangement of society. Poverty, unemployment and Differential access to resources are the major structural problems widely seen in contemporary Indian society. These three are the product of social system and these are interrelated issues. Differential access to resources means the unequal access of resources that may be due to the peculiarity of social stratification system, like unequal access on the basis of gender, economy, caste, education, culture etc. It is the root cause of the poverty and unemployment.

4.1.1. Poverty

Poverty literally means scarcity or few. From social and economic perspective it refers to the state or condition which fails to provide minimum necessities of life. Poverty simply means man's inability to fulfill the basic needs like food, shelter and dress. It is a relative concept. No individual or country is absolutely poor or rich. A man is poor or rich in comparison to the other. The criteria for defining poor are changed in accordance with variations in place and time. In developed countries determinants of poverty fixed based on the possessions are insufficient according to prevailing standard of living. Therefore it can be said that poverty is the condition of the absence of fulfillment of the minimum necessities of life according to the prevailing standard of the society.

Different philosophers like Malthus, Karl Marx, Feurbach etc. are analyzing about poverty as a social issue. In early period poverty is the chief concern to economists, then all social scientists analysed it as a chief social issue and a hindering factor of social development. Malthus identifies poverty as the product of inadequate correlation of the population growth and the production of food, but Karl Marx conceptualization was too different, who said the poverty is the main result of the exploitation of labourers by capitalists. Early theorists mainly presented poverty a one dimensional concept but the modern concept of poverty is a multidimensional, it has more and more reasons like biological, social, cultural, economic, political etc.

When the concept of the development becomes changed, the poverty becomes the chief concern of Academicians and world development planning agenda. In 19th century some researchers are trying to measure poverty precisely, for that they create a yardstick known as poverty line, which helps to establish a fixed level of poverty. The concept was firstly mooted in India by the Indian Labour Conference in 1957. The poverty begins at the below poverty line and ends at the above of line. Poverty appeared in developing and developed countries are different on the basis of consumption expenditure.

Absolute poverty is a type of poverty commonly found in developing countries, which is the state in which an individual's or group's living standard or the consumption expenditure is below the specified minimum standard. The specified minimum standard of living is fixed on the basis of countries average development concept. Relative poverty is another type of poverty found in developed countries, it is a condition or state in which the level of income or consumption expenditure of a family or an individual below the pre-determined level of living standard. Poverty is the products of social system which is produced by the interplay of different factors which are explain below:

- Personal factors
- Biological factors
- Geographical factors
- Economic factors
- Social factors
- Political factors

- **Personal factors**

Personal factors are the factors produced and affected the person alone. In our day to day life we can see the poverty produced by this causes. The personal factors of poverty are given below

1. **Sickness:** Certain diseases like allergies, cancer, any other genetic diseases like schizophrenia, etc. hinder the persons to engage in jobs and the costly treatments are necessary for certain diseases it also leading to poverty. This type poverty is commonly found among low class or average class families.
2. **Mental diseases:** It is another cause of poverty. The frequent or rare mental diseases may create poverty. The mental diseases may with draw the individuals from the regular employment and besides that the treatment cost is highly for this disease. Mental diseases may come as inherited causes and the social conditions.

3. Accidents: The accidents are another cause of poverty. The serious accidents from vehicles or other employment field may produce handicap the persons, it hinder the person to engage in regular employment.
4. Idleness and extravagance: Idleness means persons' mental and physical withdrawal from the jobs due to some unnecessary judgments. Extravagance means a person allocate more money than his income, it may lead to poverty.
5. Demoralization: It means the lowering of character and morale, which leads to personal disorganization and finally to poverty. Alcoholism, gambling, prostitution etc. will affect the persons' life.

- **Biological factors**

1. Population: Population means the number of people living in a specific area on a specific time. Population growth will affect the distribution of resources in a particular region. Population is a factor of poverty
2. Aging: Age is a biological phenomenon, which heightens the severity of poverty among the manual labourers and other backward classes. After the passing of working age of people they couldn't work due to the tiredness of body.

- **Geographical factors**

Certain factors related with geographical structure barrier the individual to do work for his existence. The geographical factors are given below

1. Unfavorable climate and weather: Climatic conditions like rainy, high winter, severe hot, continuous wind etc. affect the working condition of people.
2. Absence of natural resources: In some places like hilly areas, marsh land, barren land etc. the availability of natural resources low. Natural resources have the important role in production of resources.

3. Natural calamities: Natural calamities like draught, flood, cyclones etc. negatively affect our working condition and economy as a whole.

- **Economic factors**

1. Unwise economic policy: Economic policy means a course of action that is intended to influence or control the behaviour of the economy. Economic policies are typically implemented and administered by the government. Sudden planning implementations and unplanned industrial start ups etc. leading to the entering of the resources to deserved categories.
2. Unequal distribution of resources: Our society is competitive and all are competing for the resources. The resources are concentrating in wealthy peoples.
3. Backwardness of agriculture: Rural economy is agricultural economy. The mechanization is not occurred in agriculture timely. Agriculture is under the surveillance of climatic condition. If the climate becomes bad, it also affects the agriculture.
4. Slow and defective industrialization: Government's industrialization policy mainly concentrates the rich people so it negatively affect poor people.

- **Social factors**

1. Caste system: Traditional occupation is the peculiarity of caste system in India, there has some restrictions in freedom in choice of occupation. In modern society it is difficult to compete with traditional occupation to modern mechanized occupations. Majority people opts the speedy and mechanized services in their life, it leading to poverty of certain group.
2. Cultural factors: Culture means the way of life. Cultural factors means the customs or the routine activities related with our way of life. Occupation, choice of occupation, the

marital celebrations, fatalism, rejection of common societal norms like hard work, and rationality etc. leading to poverty.

3. Illiteracy and Ignorance: Due to lack of awareness about education and economic causes leading to illiteracy which are leading to poverty.
4. Gender discrimination in wages: Even though the gender discrimination in wage was removed by law, it still exists in present day society. In certain cases the women become the main income generators of family, when gender discrimination in wages leading to poverty.
5. Religious belief: Certain religious believes may hinder the people from earning the income above a peculiar level. And the religious belief control the pledging, borrowing, which will also lead to poverty.

- **Political factors**

1. International wars: The wars between countries leading to certain uncertainties in country which also lead to poverty.
2. Unplanned economic policy leading to instability in economic growth, which can make countries depend indefinitely on foreign aid
3. Unplanned public debt: Public debt means the total amount borrowed by a government from other countries. The unplanned borrowing of money from other countries shakes the economy of the borrowing country, which highly influence the lower class people.
4. Political Instability: Due to international war or unplanned international relations affect the political stability of a country.
5. Poor governance and corruption: The inexperienced administrators create certain confusions in administration. Corruption is a form of dishonesty or criminal offenses undertaken by a person or organization entrusted with a position of authority to

acquire illicit benefit or abuse power for one's private gain. Corruption and misuse of public funds resulted in a reduction in the quality of all public services like police, justice system and provision of elemental infrastructure etc. in the country.

4.1.2. Unemployment

Unemployment is a serious social issue commonly found in India. Early academicians confined unemployment as an economic issue. In accordance with the expansion of interdisciplinary approach in academics started to analyze unemployment as a social issue. It is the measure of healthy economy. It is a situation where a person is able and willing to work at the prevailing wage rate but does not get the opportunity to work. Normally in our country we regard those people who are between the ages 15 and 58 as being economically active. In fact these people have the potential of being gainfully employed. Till recently women were considered in this category since a large section of women (married women mainly) do household work.

However in recent years this has been considered economic activities. The census of 1991 and 2001 has taken this into consideration. Today unemployment is an indicator of social development. It is the persons above a specified age (usually above 18) are not in paid employment or self-employment. The unemployment is measured by the unemployment rate as the number of people who are unemployed as a percentage of the labour force. Unemployment in India statistics routinely collected, compiled and disseminated once every five years by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, primarily from sample studies conducted by the National Sample Survey Office. Unemployment is growing in India due to certain causes which are explained below:

- Increased population growth: Population means the number of people in a geographical area. Population is dynamic, which may be increase or decrease. In India the number of people is increasing, it affects the social development. In accordance with time changing the population increased but the new opportunities for employment were not formed.

- Slow economic growth: Because the Indian economy is relatively underdeveloped, economic growth is considerably slower than it might otherwise be. The slow growth of economy fails to provide enough unemployment opportunities to the increasing population.
- Shortage of means of production: Production is quite simply limited by the amount of materials, equipment and energy available to fuel it. Shortage of raw materials, facilities, fuel and electricity means decreased production of goods which logically results in decreased availability of jobs.
- Ineffective economic planning: It is a major source of unemployment in India. Problematically, there were no nationwide plans to account for the significant gap between labour supply and labour demand. It is crucial that the supply and demand of labour be in balance to ensure that those who need jobs are able to get them; otherwise many individuals will compete for one job.
- Expansion of Universities: In accordance with time changing the importance of education widen. The number of universities increased, it produced large number of educated people, and they are waiting for white collar jobs. In accordance with increasing the number of educated people, the employment opportunities suitable for education were not created it produce the unemployment and the condition of underemployment. Underemployment is a situation in which a person have no a regular employment as per his skill or qualifications.
- Defective Education: Our education system is traditional oriented not professional oriented. So our education system heightens the unemployment rate.
- Inadequate employment planning: The employment planning of government is not adequate in comparison to population growth. In India near about two lakh people are added yearly to our existing population. But the employment opportunities did not

increase according to the proportionate rate of population growth. As a consequence a great difference is visible between the job opportunities and population growth. Due to faulty employment planning the problem of unemployment increasing day by day.

- The caste system: Even though our constitution assures the equal rights and privileges to all citizens in India. The reflections of caste system are found in certain regions, there certain jobs are restricted to people belongs to certain caste. The caste system also hinders the smooth acceptance of education which leads to unemployment.
- Seasonality of agricultural occupations: Agriculture offers unemployment for a large segment of the population, but only for several months out of the year. The result is that of a considerable portion of the year, many agricultural workers lack needed employment and income.
- Loss of small scale or cottage industries: India is the land of rural society where people are engaged in small scale or cottage industries. The materials produced in small scale industries cannot compete with the products produced in large scale industries, which condition rise the unemployment rate in rural society.
- Inadequate access to irrigation: Even though Indian economy is a mixed economy, large number of people in rural areas was engaged in agriculture as a means of livelihood. In recent years, less than half of India's total cultivable land has access to irrigation. Due to this large areas of land can only grow one crop per year. Many farmers are unemployed for the majority of the year, during this off-season, due to lack of irrigation facilities.
- Labour immobility: Culturally, attachment and maintenance of proximity to family is a major priority for many Indian citizens. The result is that people avoid travelling long distance from their families in pursuit of employment. Additionally language, religion and climate can also contribute to low mobility of labour.

Unemployment is a serious problem still suffering from people in every society. In fact the characteristics of unemployment are different from society to society. On the basis of these characteristics unemployment are classified into various types which are given below:

1. Open unemployment: This type unemployment commonly found in rural area, where people are willing and able to do the work but they cannot find any work.
2. Disguised unemployment: It is commonly found in agricultural sector. In this case more workers than required are engaged on the farm, where not all of them are actually productively contributing to creating output. Thus the marginal physical productivity of many workers is zero. This happens when almost the members in joint family engages in farm production.
3. Seasonal unemployment: In which the workers remain out of work for a particular season. In agriculture people remain unemployed after the harvesting.
4. Technological unemployment: This type of unemployment produced with the technological advancement. It occurred during the technology upgrades and the workforce is unable to cope with the new technology.
5. Educated unemployment: This type unemployment is commonly found in contemporary society. In which the educated youth are unable to find appropriate jobs to suit their qualifications. With an improvement in education over time, skilled workers have increased in number but the number of available jobs has not increased correspondingly.
6. Voluntary Unemployment: People who are unwilling to work at prevailing wage rate and people who get a continuous flow of income from their property or any other sources and need not to work such people are voluntarily unemployed.
7. Frictional unemployment: This type of unemployment widely seen in India. It is caused due to improper adjustment between supply of labour and demand for labour. Lack of

correct and timely information, seasonal nature of work and immobility of labour are the important causes of frictional unemployment.

These are the common type of unemployment widely seen in contemporary Indian society. It is not merely a personal problem; in fact it is a social problem. Unemployment is highly produced in India due to lack of planning in economy, employment policies, and creation of vacancies in governmental institutions. Unemployment rate is the criteria of the inefficiency of planning in a country.

4.1.3. Differential Access to Resource

Differential access to resources is the indicator of social inequality. It is a structural issue in contemporary Indian society. Resources simply mean the goods and materials as well as symbolic that can be accessed and used in social actions. The resources are accessed on the basis of norms of exchange. Karl Marx identified the differential access of resources are leading to class conflict and who analyzes it as a cause of poverty. Poverty and marginalization are the conditions produced with the differential access of resources. Weber also identified power and status unequally distributed in society, who concluded that social inequality as the inevitable characteristic of stratified society. The access of resources varies from society to society, which is based on the peculiarity of stratification system still existing in society. Caste system is a dominant stratification system in India, where the resources are accessed on the basis of positions in hierarchy of caste. Generally the access is different on the basis of race, age, gender, caste, geographical area etc.

People from lower castes, from the weakest economic segment of rural society are limitedly access the resources like education, technology and health care. The economy, status, geography etc. are the indicators of social inequality. The access of education different on the basis of caste status, but today slight variations is coming in this process. Dalits or untouchables are the people coming outside of caste hierarchy their condition are so pathetic. They couldn't attain education

so they are not aware about health and health care so they access a differentially the health care. Education is another source distribute differently on the basis of caste and poverty. The lower caste people and Dalits were mainly concentrated in rural area; it is the centre of underdevelopment there has no transport and communication. So the backward caste couldn't accept the education equally.

Differential access to resources is a serious structural issue in contemporary Indian society. India is the country of multi-religion, certain religions are majority and others are minority. These minority religions are differentially access the resources. Even in post-independent India people are suffering from poverty, illiteracy, low health status etc. which are produced by the differential access of resources. Differential access of resources occurring in two types one is differential access of opportunities and second is differential access of conditions. Employment is a social issue produced by differential access of opportunities. But poverty is due to differential access of conditions.

4.2 Social: Marginalization, Exclusion

- Marginalization
- Exclusion

4.2.1 Marginalization

Marginality is a social issue that affects millions of people throughout the world. It is an experience of the people. Marginalization is a process by which an individual or groups are ignored or relegated to the sidelines of development (social, economic, political etc.) or power position. The term marginalization constituted by the term marginal, which means the people remaining in the outside of mainstream society. The marginalized are living at the margins of those in the centre of power, of cultural dominance and economic and social welfare. They have relatively little control over their lives and the resources available to them. This results in making them handicapped in delving contribution to society.

The term mostly appeared in recent literatures but rarely defined. Just prior to 1970, marginal section took on the sense that is most commonly encountered today to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position. This use of the word can be found as far as back as 1968 an article in Los Angeles Times, the article deals with Negrito. The Negrito was kept aside, marginalized thus composing in its large majority the chronically poor. The term coined since the emergence of human race, but the term frequently appeared in literatures after the advent of post-colonial literature. Various philosophers differently conceptualize marginalized, Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator and Philosopher and a leading advocate of critical pedagogy. Pedagogy of oppressed was an influential work of him, who called marginalized as *oppressed*.

Karl Marx, a German Philosopher and Classical sociologist identified them as *proletariat*. At the same time Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Philosopher, whose concept is different and new who produced marginalized as *subaltern*, but Michel Foucault, the French Philosopher and a strong supporter of modernity identified them as *powerless*. Marginalization became a major topic of sociological research in the 1960s, largely in response to the realization that while certain developing countries demonstrated rapid economic growth, members of these societies were receiving increasingly unequal shares of the rewards of success. The marginalized literatures mainly based on exploitation, agonies, pains and suffering.

Marginalization is a global issue suffering from people in contemporary society. It is a process of restricting the people from mainstream society due to various causes like peculiarity of language, culture, race, age, sex, religion, region etc. The Constitution assures equality to all even though the marginalized live as unequal. The process of marginalization may occur in different levels like individual, community and global. The discussion of marginalization took place related with the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion. The term marginalization and social exclusion are interchangeable used to denote the people remaining in the outskirts mainstream society. Both are a form of discrimination.

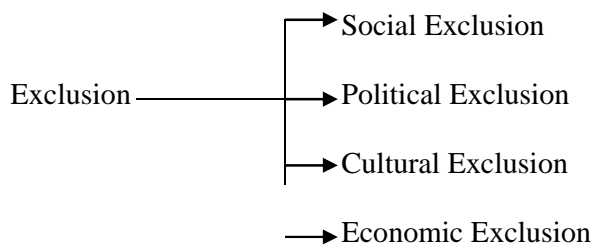
Minority is another concept related with marginalized, but which are different from another. Minority means a small group of people (less than half of total majority) as compared to the majority groups. They are minoritised on the basis of religion, language, culture, race, region, etc. Almost all minorities are marginalized, but all marginalized are minorities. Due to low economic, educational status may marginalize the majority group. The criterion of minority is the number of persons in a particular region or group, it is one-dimensional, but the term marginal is multidimensional in criteria, like social exclusion. Marginalization or social exclusion is an experience facing by the minority. It is the result of minoritization.

Definition

Razer defines "marginalization as a feeling produced by the state of social exclusion."

4.2.2. Exclusion: Meaning and Forms

Exclusion is a form of discrimination and challenge facing by people in contemporary society. It is a process in which the individuals are blocked or denied from full access to various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of a different group. It occurs when people are wholly or partially excluded from participating in the economic, social and political life of their community, based on their belonging to a certain category. In India exclusion occurs on the basis of identities including caste, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, diseases and certain disabilities. Its occurrence is different in degree, sometime socially excluded people can't accept the resources fully another time exclusion is partial. Sometimes exclusion is deliberate and implicit. Exclusion can be classified as social, political, cultural and economic. This classification based on peculiarity of the criteria exclusion.



Sometimes the exclusion may occur due to ethnic character and gender character, the exclusion resulted from these characteristics is known as social exclusion. In another case the exclusion may occur as the denial of citizenship rights such as political participation, the right to organize, rule of law, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity, when the people excluded on these causes is called political exclusion. Culture is another aspect of inequality, in certain contexts people are excluded from mainstream society due to peculiarity of culture, like language, region, norms, values etc. this form of exclusion is known as cultural exclusion. Economy is the backbone of any society, the people excluded on the basis of the degree of access of economic aspects like labour, wage, capital etc. Poverty is the best example of this type exclusion. Marginalization or social exclusion has certain causes which are briefly explained below.

1. Social attitude: Social attitude means a state of constituted by our culture or living experiences of a group of people towards the social phenomena. Socialization helps to create social attitudes. For example caste is a social stratification based on division of labour, the social attitudes transform the system as an exploitative system. So the social attitudes leading to exclusion or marginalization
2. Ethnic background: The ethnic group is a category of people who identify with others based on similarities such as common ancestry, language, society, culture etc. The ethnic background of India is diverse due to migration and inter-group marriages. Negrito, Austroloid, Dravidian etc are important ethnic groups found in India. Among those certain ethnic groups are higher and others are lower. The latter groups are marginalized from mainstream society.
3. Ethnocentrism: It is an attitude or a belief of the people, who believed that his/her own culture is superior to other cultures. This belief makes certain disgust in people towards particular culture, religion, region etc. Ethnocentric attitude forms from socialisation.

Besides the disgust, the over attachment towards a specific phenomena also leading to the social exclusion, a group of people valued their culture of any other peculiarities are superior to others the people may excluded from the mainstream society.

4. Migrant statuses: Migrant means an individual or a group of people permanently change their residence from place of origin to place of destination due to social, political, economic or cultural causes. The migrant feel that his place of destination as an unfamiliar, so he/ she himself excluded from other groups, in another case the original inhabitants may exclude the migrants as minority group in their place.
5. Health status: Health simply means the state of being free from illness or injury. The health status is fixed by the health of people, sometimes people may suffering from diseases like AIDS, Cancer, etc. which make an exclusion from society
6. Religious background: Religion means the beliefs, values and practices related to sacred or spiritual concern. India is a space of religious diversity, where majority and minority religious groups are found. Muslim, Sikh, Jains etc. are the religious minority groups they are excluded from mainstream society. Majority religious groups are dominated in society they marginalise the minority.
7. Unemployment: It is a situation in which the persons are capable of working both physically and mentally at the existing wage rate but does not get a job to work. Unemployment makes some frustrations in individual he may withdraw from mainstream society as valued his unemployed condition as his failure or disqualify. In another case society valued the unemployed person as badly through which society marginalize him/her.
8. Sexual orientation: It means a person's sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted. It is an attraction or affection of an individual to other individual. Our culture fixes a particular kind of sexual orientation that is heterosexual. But some other

orientation like lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc are common in our society. The people lived in these varieties of sexual orientation, society excluded them as bad.

9. **Social Status:** Status is a term used to denote the comparative amounts of prestige, difference or respect accorded to persons who have been assigned different roles in a group or community. The status of individual in society determined on the basis of social criteria like economy, caste etc. The status of a person is high or low if the role he is playing. The status of person is based on social evaluations. Some person's status may higher or lower on the basis of fluctuations in economy, or Caste status. The untouchables are arranged the at the bottom of hierarchy.
10. **Poverty:** Poverty is an important problem suffering from India, which lead to marginalization. Poverty is a state or condition which fails to provide minimum necessities of life. Normally the poor people's status is economically, socially, educationally and politically deplorable.
11. **Ageing:** It is an inevitable process in life. It is a major cause of social exclusion. The society considered the elderly people as useless and they cannot live with the expectation of young. As compared to young people the medical expenditure is very high to elderly. Sometimes the elderly cannot adjust in accordance with the changing situation so they are excluded from mainstream society.
12. **Disability:** People with disabilities mean differentially able people. These people are highly marginalized in society. People with disabilities have lower education achievements, less economic participation, poorer health outcomes and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities thus they are marginalized from mainstream society.

Exclusion is the problem suffering from people in our society. It is faced by newborn to the elderly for different causes like diseases, caste, group, ethnic peculiarity, age, any disabilities etc.

4.3 Political- Regionalism, Communalism

Issues are the phenomenon or situation which overthrow the social order and hinder the social development hence issues are the subject matter of social science, especially sociology. Political issues are the form of issue which mainly affects the political systems like civil rights, Governmental systems, State, Citizenship etc. Political issues are the social issues which not only affects the political system alone but the social structure as a whole hence it barriers the social development. As a factor of social order and social change, it deserves highly relevance in sociology. Regionalism and communalism are the two political issues facing by our society since independence of India till today. The political issues are widely analyzed below

4.3.1 Regionalism

Regionalism is a challenge facing by in India even after 72 years of Independence. The term region means a geographical unit or an administrative unit is delimited from each other. Regionalism is a strong feeling of pride or loyalty that people in a region have for that. Region as a social system reflects the relation between different human beings and groups. Regions are organized cooperation in cultural, economic, political or military fields. It acts as subject with distinct identity, language, culture and tradition. Regionalism is an ideology and political movement that seeks to advance the causes of regions. As a process it plays role within the nation as well as outside the nation i.e international level. Both types of regionalism have the negative as well as positive impact on society, polity, diplomacy, economy, security, culture, negotiations etc. At the international level regionalism refers to transnational cooperation to meet a common goal or to resolve a shared problem.

India is a country of unity in diversity where the power of unity is strong in spite of diversities in area, population and human-cultural factors. The rise of regionalism in India is due to diversity and variation in economic and social culture. Regionalism is a situation made by various reasons which are given below:

1. **Language:** Language is a vehicle of ideas used in communication. It is an inevitable part of our culture and civilization. It is an unavoidable factor of integrating people and emotional attachments are developed, consequently the demand of linguistic States started. Although the intensity of the demand of linguistic States has been decreased now, yet the regional conflicts keep rising in the interest of language. Therefore the problem of determining the national language of India has been an issue for a long time. The movements are occurred for linguistic States before Independence. Orissa province became the first Indian State (Pre-independence period) organized on a linguistic basis due to the effort Madhusudan Das who is considered as the father of Oriya nationalism. During the post- Independence period, the first State created on a linguistic basis was Andhra in 1953, created out of the Telugu speaking northern parts of Madras State. Goa is a State organized on the basis of language.
2. **Religion:** It is also one of the major factors of the regionalism. In religion based regionalism people advocate for a region for particular religion for example the demand of three autonomous States in Jammu & Kashmir. The base for their demands is Kashmir for Muslim dominated, Jammu for Hindu dominated and Ladakh for Biddhists.
3. **Regional culture:** In Indian context the historical or regional culture considered the prime components of regionalism. The historical and regional components interpret regionalism by way of cultural heritage, folklore, myths, symbolism and historical traditions. The north-east States were created on the basis of cultural aspect. Besides the

economic issue, the regional culture played a significant role in the formation of Jharkhand as a State, in 2000 November 15.

4. Economic backwardness: It is also major factor for the regionalism in India because the uneven pattern of socioeconomic development has created regional disparities. The categorization and sub-categorization of the States on the basis of socioeconomic indicators have generated resentment against the central leadership. Under Gadgil formula the States like Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are given special status and received 90% Central Financial Assistance. On the other hand, backward State Bihar getting only 30% waiver. Under the planned development, the differences between agriculture, industry and other infrastructural development encourage the regionalism.
5. Rise of political parties: The elitist character of leadership and unwarranted intervention by the centre in the affairs of the State has rendered the State vulnerable to regional forces. Sometimes regional parties ignore the national interests and promote the regional interest only. Sometimes regionalism helps to safeguard the minority interests. Jharkhand Mukthi Morch, ADMK, AIDMK, Telugu Desam, Assam Gana Parishad, Akali Dal, TYC etc. belongs to this category of the regional political parties.

4.3.2 Communalism

Communalism is a contemporary social issue in India. The term communalism derived from the idea related with community which is a group of people who sharing a common territory, common values and believes and they are closely and informally related. The term communalism was used in a sense that a system or theory of government in which the State is seen as a loose federation of self governing communities. Communalism has been defined differently by different scholars. In fact in English language it is considered as positive rather than pejorative term. New Webster's dictionary defines it as something "belonging to a community" or "a

system of decentralized government by which large powers are delegated to small communities.” However in Indian context it is used in a negative and condemnatory sense. In Indian context communalism defined as secular conflict between two religious communities or it can also be defined as an attempt to achieve secular goals through religious means.

India is a multi-religious country, we do not hear of communal conflict between Hindus or Muslims in the Sultanate or Mughal period. This conflict came under colonial rule. In colonial period the administrators used the term communalism to denote conflict between people in different religious groups. It is a big challenge facing by India. Communalism is an ideology not confined in religion. It is mainly the conflict among different collectivities that may be based on caste, race, tribe etc. The idea of communalism is vary from society to society, certain society dominated by religion; others are racial, tribal etc. India is a multi-religious country, so we relate the idea of communalism to the religious conflict. It is mainly psychological in sense, communalism is a feeling of certain similar characteristic group, and the groups express antagonism to other communities. Communal violence is the expression of communalism. Murray Bookchin an American social theorist popularly known as the father communalism. He identified it as a theory of government or a system of government in which independent communes participate in a federation as well as the principle and practice of communal ownership. Mainly the historians handled the concept in earlier societies, then sociologists, Anthropologists and Psychologists are conceptualized the idea of communalism. Following are the definition of different theorist on communalism.

- ❖ Bipan Chandra defines “communalism as a belief that because a group of people following a particular religion, they have common social, political and economic interests.”
- ❖ Harbans Mukhia defines “communalism as phenomenon of religious differences between groups often leading to tension and even rioting between them.”

Causes of communalism

1. Role of British Empire: First war of Independence is the response of Indians to destruction of religion. Then they adopted the policy of divide and rule for easy administration.
2. Temperament of partition of India: Partition of Bengal (1905) and the Partition of Pakistan are the expression of religious discrimination and continuity of divide and rule. During the partition of Bengal there was Hindus are minority and Muslims are majority, administrators expected that Hindus oppose the partition but Muslims support it. Partition of Pakistan is another expression of communal award. Even today India facing the communalism as a continuity of partitions.
3. Nature of freedom struggle in India: The 1857 revolt was show of Hindu Muslim unity to British. Both of them fight against a common enemy. So British administrators take policy of divide and rule to Indians.
4. Communal parties and organizations: A number of communal and sectarian political parties and organizations were formed in India. Hindu Maha Sabha and Muslim League are the two communal parties in early India. They are directly or indirectly responsible for the emergence of communalism. Certain political leaders preach communalism for attain their immediate political goal. They have become leaders and continue to remain as such only due to the adoption of communal and sectarian interest. The so called secular political parties also enter into alliance with communal forces for electoral benefit. Candidates are selected by different political parties taking into account the communal composition of the constituency.
5. Constitutional hypocrisy: Constitutional hypocrisy means much distorted the constitution for private purposes, for example recently we have seen to amend Citizenship rights in India.

6. Socio-economic inequality and class conflict: India is a multi-religious country where Hindus and Muslims are the majority. Muslims are minority and they are economically low. The socio-economic inequality on the basis of religion leading to emergence of separate groups, then it leading to communalism.
7. Political opportunism: It means an attempt to maintain political support (increase political influence) possibly in a way which disregards relevant ethical or political principles. Certain political parties make political support through groupism on the basis of religion. For example Viswa Hindu Parishad, they gained political support on the basis of religion and the rules claimed as the basic of Hindu religion. Muslim League, a political party organized for the protection of the rights of Muslims, but today it misused for increasing the political influence.
8. Electoral compulsion: Electoral compulsion means compulsorily cast the votes of voters. It is executed in India. Without a sufficient cause an individual cannot evade from his right to vote. Sometimes the minorities are not interested to cast their votes when the govt. or communal parties pleaded them to cast their votes this commonly lead to communalism.
9. Communal media, literature and textbooks: Communal media have high participation to promote communalism, Television, newspapers, communal literatures and textbooks are widely seen in India, these have big role to promote communalism in India.
10. Political competition: Political competition simply means the competition for administration. Sometime people become only vote banks, during that time politicians try to mobilize people on the basis of caste or religion especially politicization of caste or religion occurring in society.
11. Economic backwardness of minorities: The largest group of minorities in India still remains orthodox and traditional in outlook which contributes to communal feeling. For

example the Muslims are a minority group in India, they are failed to adopt the western scientific, technological and philosophical education. Owing to their educational backwardness the Muslims have not been represented sufficiently in the public services, industry, trade etc. This causes leading to a feeling of relative deprivation.

Communalism is a serious social issue in contemporary Indian society, which is produced by the unequal distribution of political, economic, social factors.

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