



**MA (Sociology)
FIRST SEMESTER
MASOC 402**



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PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN SOCIETY

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PART 1

MA [Sociology]

First Semester

MASOC-402



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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Authors:

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Phone: 0120-4078999 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 7361, Ravindra Mansion, Ram Nagar, New Delhi - 110 055

• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Perspectives on Indian Society

Syllabi

Mapping in Book

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Colonial Legacy in Sociology and Social Anthropology in Post-Independence India

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GS. Ghurye

Louis Dumont

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M.N. Srinivas

S.C. Dube

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INTRODUCTION

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Sociology in simple terms is the study of society. It is a social science where various methods of investigation and analysis are used to develop knowledge about human social activity. This book, *Perspectives on Indian Society*, deals with various perspectives of Indian society.

In India, languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food and customs differ from place to place. However, they possess a 'unity in diversity'. Indian society is a mix of these varied sub-cultures. In Indian society, family, religion, as well as caste play important roles. For generations, Indian society has been stratified based on the hierarchical caste system. This caste system has resulted in the exploitation of the so-called 'lower' castes. Independent India has tried to undo the historical injustices meted out to them by incorporating features of positive discrimination in her policies. India also happens to be the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Islam is another important religion of India. All of the unique traditions of India's religions have combined to create a syncretic social culture that is both diverse and tolerant.

This book has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the 'Introduction' followed by the 'Unit Objectives' for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit. The 'Summary' and 'Key Terms' further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

This book is divided into five units.

Unit 1: Discusses the effects of British Imperialism on Indian society and economy.

Unit 2: Covers textual perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of G.S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont.

Unit 3: Describes structural-functional perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dube.

Unit 4: Discusses the Marxist perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of D.P. Mukherjee, A.R. Desai, R.K. Mukherjee and D.D. Kosambi.

Unit 5: Covers subaltern perspectives of Indian society, especially the views of B.R. Ambedkar and Ranajit Guha.

UNIT 1 COLONIAL CONTEXT

Structure

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sociology is the study of human society or societies. However, such a simple initial definition of the subject poses the question, 'What is human society?' There is a difference of emphasis between the singular form of a society and its plural form. 'Society', as a singular term, appears general and unlimited. The plural term, 'societies', sounds more like a set of container units distinct from each other, such that one can take them one by one to inspect their contents.

In fact, sociology has always studied societies, both, taken separately and together, as 'human societies'. The balance between the two aspects may vary, but in the end, the study of one absolutely requires the study of the other. Neither of them makes sense independently. For instance, considering India as a society, one can think of it in terms of cities, factories, schools, farms or prisons. One can also think of it in terms of politics, media or divinity. It is simple to connect all these factors. They can also be visualized as confined within the boundaries of the Indian states and referred to under the general heading of 'Indian society'.

The development of culture, ways of acting, thinking and feeling makes human society special as compared with the societies of other species. These features are transmitted from one generation to the next and across societies through learning, not through inheritance. Culture includes language and technology, both of which involve the communication of ideas and the possibility of sophisticated coordination of action. This vastly enhances adaptability.

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This unit will begin with an extensive look at the concept of colonialism and its impact in India.

Any study of Indian society would be incomplete without an understanding of the effects of colonialism. India was under British domination for around two hundred years, and this had an immense impact on the social, economic and the cultural situation of Indian society.

Colonialism is basically the establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one region by people from another. Simply put, it is a practice of domination which involves the conquest of one set of people by another. It implies various unequal relationships whose impact trickles down to almost all areas of life.

Thinkers are divided on the topic whether India's colonization by the British had a completely adverse effect or whether it also affected the nation positively in certain aspects. The economic historian Dr. Tirthankar Roy asserted that the regenerative role of colonialism played a significant part in shaping the present Indian socio-political system. However, scholars like Aditya Mukherjee and Bipin Chandra have taken a diametrically opposite stand and argue that the regenerative role of British administration was just a myth.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the outline of Indian society
- Discuss the features of colonialism in India
- Explain the stages of colonialism in India
- Evaluate the social and cultural impact of colonialism

1.2 EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA

The origin of Indian sociology as a distinct discipline can be traced back to the 1920s, during the colonial period. For smooth administration, the British administrators had to understand the Indian customs, manners and institutions. Christian missionaries were also keen to learn local languages, traditional beliefs, and culture for better social interaction. The origin, development and functioning of the various customs and traditions, the economy and polity of the village/tribal community, and the Hindu caste system and joint family system were some of the important themes of study by the British administrators and intellectuals. The first all-India Census was conducted in 1871. The various ethnographic surveys, monographs, census documents, and gazetteers produced during this era constitute a wealth of information on Indian sociology.

The formal teaching of sociology began only in the second decade of the 20th century—at the University of Bombay in 1914, at Calcutta University in 1917, and at Lucknow University in 1921. But in pre-Independence era, only three other universities—Mysore, Osmania and Poona—had included sociology as a course subject. But, there was no separate department of sociology; it was clubbed with the department of economics in Bombay and Lucknow universities, economics and political science in Calcutta

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University, anthropology in Poona University, and philosophy in Mysore University. Even in these universities, only a limited number of courses in sociology; such as social biology, social problems (crime, prostitution and beggary), social psychology, civilization, and prehistory; were taught. Strong scientific empirical traditions had not emerged in pre-Independence era.

The contributions made by pre-Independence scholars began to make an impact only in post-Independence, though the number of universities increased to 16 in 1945 (with only two sociology departments, and only one concerned for an independent degree in sociology). The percentage of universities having a sociology department began to increase after 1950. By 1965, among 95 universities, 51 accommodated sociology departments. According to the *Universities Handbook of India* (1973), 16 agricultural universities, 5 All India Institutes of Technology, the Indian Statistical Institute (Kolkata), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai), and Gujarat Vidyapeeth (Ahmedabad) also offered sociology as a subject of study and/or research. Today, sociology is taught at all levels—from graduation to MPhil/MLitt level—with some courses giving special emphasis to research methodology.

When the Five-Year Plans were introduced, policies and programmes concerning urban and rural community development, Panchayati Raj, education, abolition of untouchability, uplift of weaker sections (scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes), and rehabilitation of people affected by large-scale projects (constructions of large dams, industrial estates, capital cities, etc.) were important areas of research by sociologists. In the 1950s and 1960s, several micro-level studies of caste, joint families, and village communities were carried out. M.N. Srinivas introduced the concepts of dominant caste, Sanskritization, Westernization, and Secularization to understand the realities of inter-caste relations and their dynamics. You will learn about these concepts in unit 3 of the book.

Change in the structural and functional aspects of family in different parts of India was the focal point of most studies in the area of marriage, family and kinship. The village studies focused on stratification and mobility, factionalism and leadership, the *jajmani* (patron-client) relationship, contrasting characteristics of rural and urban communities, and linkages with the outside world. During the 1970s and 1980s, several social research institutes were established in different parts of India. Also, many universities established interdisciplinary women's studies. By now, several studies have been conducted in the fields of education, urban sociology, social movements, communication, voting behaviour, and industrial relations. Currently, sociologies of law, science, medicine, and so on, have earned due importance in the field of sociological research.

1.3 COLONIALISM IN INDIA

Differing views exist on colonialism. One school of thought considers it nothing more than foreign political rule. Another group of thinkers views colonialism as perpetuating a traditional socio-economic structure. Some scholars view colonialism as representing a transitional society, in the process of evolving from a traditional to a modern capitalist society. Yet others see colonialism as producing a society in which two sectors co-exist—one traditional and pre-capitalist, the other modern and capitalist. Colonialism is charged by some radical thinkers, with perpetuating, or at least failing to uproot, semi-feudal features. In fact, colonialism essentially involves two conditions: the land held as

Check Your Progress

1. When did the study of Indian sociology as a distinct discipline begin?

a colony has no real political independence from the 'metropolis', and the relationship between the two is one of exploitation.

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Colonialism is a system of economic and political control evolved by strong nations to exploit a weaker nation's markets and resources for the former's benefit. As the well-known Indian historian Bipan Chandra put it, colonialism 'is a well-structured "whole", a distinct social formation (system) or sub-formation (sub-system) in which the basic control of the economy and society is in the hands of a foreign capitalist class which functions in the colony (or semi-colony) through a dependent and subservient economic, social, political, and intellectual structure whose forms can vary with the changing conditions of the historical development of capitalism as a world-wide system'. Prof. J.A. Hobson defines colonialism as 'the migration of part of a nation to vacant or sparsely peopled foreign lands, the emigrants carrying with them full rights of citizenship in the mother country or else establishing local self-government in close conformity with her institutions and under her final control'.

The essence of colonialism is the idea of deliberate exploitation of another country, its resources and inhabitants. The political, economic or social development in a colony are devised in keeping with the interests of the metropolitan country rather than the needs of the colony itself. Colonialism envelops social, economic, cultural as well as political aspects.

India's case is considered by many scholars as that of the 'classic' colony; the basic features of colonialism and the different stages of colonialism are well illustrated by India under British rule. It may be pointed out that colonialism need not assume the same form at all times; while the basic goals of subordination and exploitation of the colony remain constant, the forms of subordination and exploitation may change in accordance with developments in the individual imperialist country, in the world or in the colony itself. Furthermore, the stages of colonialism are not watertight compartments in themselves: each merges into the next stage with some features continuing into the later stages with some distinct features.

1.3.1 Theories of Colonialism

The liberal and Marxist theories of colonialism emerge in the writing of a number of important thinkers. Karl Marx, in his writings, emphasizes the destructive role of colonialism and identifies some of the key structural features which the capitalism-colonialism interface was leading to. These features were not conducive to the growth of capitalism in the colony though they helped the growth of capitalism in the metropolitan or the colonising country. He clearly saw the unrequited transfer of capital from the colony to the metropolis in various forms, what the Indian nationalists called the 'drain', as a 'bleeding process' ruinous to the colony but critical to the process of primitive accumulation and, therefore, to the growth of industrial capitalism in the metropolitan countries.

Liberal theory is found in J.A. Hobson's work at the turn of twentieth century. Hobson, far from being a Marxist, was a conventional British Labour Party intellectual who propounded a theory of colonial empire building (his major work *Imperialism* was published in 1902). His interpretation of imperialism has shaped ensuing non-Marxist conceptions and influenced some Marxist conception as well. He thought that capitalism was bound to engender such expansionism or imperialism. The Capitalist system, he pointed out, means a very uneven distribution of income. Large profits accumulate in the hands of the capitalist and the wages of the worker are low. Thus, the low level of

income of the large mass of workers under capitalism keeps the level of consumption low. What is the result? On account of 'Under consumption' all the industrial products that are produced cannot be sold within the country, for there are no buyers. What can the capitalist do under these circumstances? He can try to sell the excess produce that cannot be marketed within the country to foreign markets. If all capitalist countries follow this policy, there will be a struggle to capture markets and to secure captive markets in the form of colonies. Thus, colonial expansion and conflict between capitalists of different countries, according to Hobson, were inevitable outcomes of the capitalist system. Further, due to the above constraint of 'under-consumption', the opportunities for investment for the capitalist become limited in the long run. At the same time, profit keeps on accumulating and there are savings waiting to be invested. This is what Hobson called 'over-saving' which again tended to push the capitalists towards colonial expansion: acquisition of colonies would make investment of surplus capital possible. To sum it up, Hobson's theories of under-consumption and over-saving suggested that colonial expansion or imperialism was a logical corollary of the capitalist system.

Even critics sympathetic to Hobson's work do not hesitate to attack his theory. Fieldhouse labelled Hobson's doctrine of imperialism 'a dogmatic interpretation', and one that cannot be explained in terms of economic theory and capitalism; yet he also acknowledged that Hobson's non-Marxist theory became generally accepted. Lichtheim considered the Leninist theory of imperialism as more firmly grounded because it avoids Hobson's 'theoretical mistakes of making capital investment abroad dependent on under-consumption at home'.

Eight years after the publication of Hobson's work, Rudolf Hilferding published another important analysis, focusing attention on finance capitalism. During this phase, capitalism as Hilferding pointed out, is dominated by huge banks and financial interests that act in close association with monopolist industrial business houses. This analysis of finance capitalism was further extended by V.I. Lenin in his tract on imperialism, *The Last Stage of Capitalism* (1916). Lenin's theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism is based on a closed analysis of several principal economic features. One is the rapid concentration of production in large industrial monopolies. Another feature is the role of the Bank, which concentrate into the powerful monopolies with control over money, raw materials and a means of production. The capital of industrial and bank monopolies combines into finance capital, a term Lenin attributed to Hilferding, who wrote, 'finance capital is capital controlled by banks and employed by industrialists'.

In 1913, Rosa Luxemburg also published her work on accumulation of capital and the stages of imperialist expansionism. She was a socialist leader who migrated from Poland to Germany. Intellectually and politically, she left a mark on the European socialist movement and continued to play an important part until she fell a victim to the Nazi onslaught. Her central concern was the examination of capital penetration into primitive economies. She distinguished three phases of capital accumulation. The first involves the struggle of capital with natural economy in areas where there are primitive peasant communities and a common ownership of land or a feudal system or an economic organization oriented to internal demand and where there is little surplus production or demand for foreign goods. In the second phase, capital struggles with a commodity economy. Finally, there is an imperialist phase of capitalist accumulation.

Indian nationalists' view

Independent of this critique of imperialism developed by Hobson, Hilferding and Lenin, the nationalists in India in their scholarly and polemical writing offered a sharp and telling

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criticism of the colonial economic impact on India. The Indian intelligentsia over the second half of the 19th century began to see colonialism not as the harbinger of or route to capitalist modernization, but as the chief obstacle to the transition to capitalism in India, an understanding which was to lead them to demand the overthrow of British rule. In fact, the Indian early nationalists were among the first in the world, decades, before Hobson, Lenin or Rosa Luxemburg, to evolve a multi-pronged, detailed and sophisticated critique of colonialism.

They evolved the concept of the 'drain of wealth'. It was very much based on the wider understanding of the mercantilist policy of European countries like England, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Holland and their process of building their empires during the 17th and 18th centuries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The nationalists maintained that on the basis of their political and military power, the so called imperialist power drained their colonies. As a result, the prosperity and rapid economic development in the 18th and 19th centuries came in these European countries, which were mainly built on the foundation of the drain of wealth. It enabled the Western countries to draw vast real and financial resources from Asian, African and Latin American countries over which they had established political domination. Keeping this broader aspect in mind, nationalists developed the concept of the drain of wealth.

The drain of wealth concept was evolved in the writings of Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Gobind Ranade, Romesh Chandra Dutt and many others who developed a school of economic analysis which highlighted some important features of India's experience under British rule. To them, it meant the transfer of wealth from the late 18th century in the form of plunder and loot and illicit gains by servants of the East India Company and in the form of home charges, i.e., the expenses incurred by the Government of India in England out of its income derived mainly from the taxation of the Indian people and finally, in the form of interests and profits and capital transfer from India to England on private accounts. Nationalist critics pointed out how drain in these different forms impoverished India and increased the economic gap between India and England. They also pointed out how British regime brought about the destruction of the small-scale industries of India, a process that in more recent times has been called de-industrialization.

Moreover, the drain of wealth theory was developed by Indian nationalist thinkers mainly with a view to analyse one of the main causes of poverty in India. They defined this term 'as the unreturned surplus of exports over imports which were transferred of England'. The nationalist leaders were aware that the drain of wealth was harmful chiefly because it resulted in the depletion of productive capital. Dadabhai Naoroji's analysis chiefly emphasized this aspect and in fact formed the core of his drain theory. According to Dadabhai Naoroji, the economic drain from India arose because of the following factors:

- Remittances to England by European employees for the support of families and education of children – a feature of the colonial system of government;
- Remittances of savings by employees of the Company since most employees preferred to invest at home;
- Remittances for the purchases of British goods for the consumption of British employees as well as purchases by them of British goods in India;
- Government purchase of stores manufactured in Britain;
- Interest charges on public debt held in Britain (excluding interest payments on railway loans and debts incurred for productive works);

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G.V. Joshi also viewed drain as loss of capital. He showed deep insight when he wrote that the drain should be regarded not as a proportion of the annual gross national product but as a proportion of the annual net potential surplus or saving. He held that this drain bringing no economic return, accounts for the small accumulation of capital in the country. D.E. Wachha and S.S. Iyer also regarded drain as representing a significant amount of capital taken out of the country.

Another important issue on which nationalist thinkers questioned the policy of colonialism was the idea of free trade and laissez-faire. Nationalists contended that it led to a tariff and industrial policy which stifled the possibilities of growth of industries in British India. Consequently, India became 'the agricultural farm' of industrial England, i.e., a source of raw materials and foodgrains, dependent totally on industrial supplies from England. Further, the rate of taxation of agriculture was also criticized by

R.C. Dutt who felt that the burden of land revenue was excessive in areas which were subjected to periodical temporary settlements. This, in his opinion, was the cause of frequent recurrence of famines in British India. Wealth of the countryside was drained away through the revenue collection machinery, making the economic viability of farming so precarious that the farmer could not withstand failure of rain and other natural disasters.

Finally, an important part of the nationalist analysis of British economic policy in India was their criticism of government expenditure on the army, the police and other apparatus of government. The expenditure was so excessive that developmental investments were neglected. For example, the low expenditure on irrigation works contrasted sharply with the generous expenditure on the British Indian army, the railways, etc.

On the whole, the critique of imperialism offered by the Indian nationalist was one of the most powerful instruments of building national consciousness among the subjects of British India. The latter day nationalist spokesmen, like J.L. Nehru developed and strengthened this critique by incorporating into it some elements derived from the Marxian, Hobsonian and Leninist approaches to imperialism.

1.3.2 Features of Colonialism in India

There were four basic features of the colonial structure in India, listed as follows:

- (a) **Complete but complex integration of Indian economy with the world capitalist system:** India's economic interests were entirely subordinated to those of Britain. This is a crucial aspect, for integration with the world economy was inevitable and was a characteristic of independent economies.
- (b) **International division of labour and production system:** The British forced a typical structure of production and international system of division of labour upon India. India produced and exported foodstuffs and raw materials (e.g., cotton, jute, oilseeds and minerals) and imported manufactured products of British industry from needle to railway engines. Even after the development of a few labour-intensive industries (e.g., jute and cotton textiles) the policy of international division of labour continued in India. This policy helped the British produce high technology, high productivity and capital-intensive goods whereas India did the opposite. Till 1935-39, 68.5 per cent of Indian exports comprised food, drink, tobacco and raw materials whereas manufactured goods formed 64.4 per cent of her imports.
- (c) **Low level of capital formation:** The economic surplus or savings generated in the economy for investment and expansion of the economy are fundamental requirements of the process of economic development. The net savings in the

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Indian economy from 1914 to 1946 was only 2.75 per cent of Gross National Product (i.e., national income). Moreover, the share of industry in this low level of capital formation was also low. Machinery constituted only 1.78 per cent of GNP during 1914-46. A huge portion of India's social surplus or savings was appropriated by the colonial state and misspent. Another large part was appropriated by the indigenous landlords and moneylenders. It has been calculated that by the end of the colonial period, the rent and interest paid by the peasantry amounted to ₹14,000 million per year. By 1937, the total rural debt amounted to ₹18,000 million. The princes, landlords and other intermediaries appropriated nearly 20 per cent of the national income. Only a very tiny part of this large surplus was used for the development of agriculture and industry. The capital was being transferred to Britain by a unilateral process called the drain owing to export-import imbalance. It has been estimated that 5 to 10 per cent of the total national income of India was thus unilaterally exported out of the country during the British colonialism.

- (d) **The role of government:** The government played a crucial role in developing, determining and maintaining various strategies to continue the colonial structure. All the policies were framed in Britain in the interests of the British economy and the British capitalist class. There was no support from the government for industry and agriculture. On the other hand, approximately in all the capitalist countries, including Britain, government provided active support in the initial phases of development. The colonial government in India forced free trade in India and denied tariff protection to Indian industries contrary to the policies pursued in Britain, Western Europe and the United States. The colonial government used up almost all the income to meet the requirements of British-Indian administration. Most of the public revenue was spent on military and civil administration. After 1890, approximately 50 per cent of the Central government's income was absorbed as military expenditure. To summarize, it can be said that an enormous amount from Indian capital was taken up by the colonial government; however, Indian agriculture, industry or social infrastructure received little attention.

1.3.3 Stages of Colonialism in India

Colonialism in India may be divided into three distinct stages which were related to distinct forms of exploitation or surplus appropriation. Consequently, each stage represented a different pattern of subordination of colonial economy, society and polity and therefore, different colonial policies, political and administrative institutions, ideologies and impact as also different responses by the colonial people. Colonialism is not one continuous phenomenon or unified structure. The subordination of the colonial country and its exploitation remain constant, but the forms of subordination and exploitation undergo changes over time from one stage to another.

I. First Stage

Mercantilist Phase (1713-1813): This is described as the period of monopoly trade and direct appropriation (or the Period of East Indian Company's Domination, 1757-1813). During the last half of the 18th century, India was conquered by a monopoly trading corporation – the East India Company. The Company had two basic objectives at this stage.

The first was to acquire a monopoly of trade with India. This meant that other English or European merchants or trading companies should not compete with it in purchase and sale of Indian products. Nor should the Indian merchants to so. This would

enable the East India Company to buy Indian products as cheaply as possible and sell them in world markets at as high a price as possible. Thus, Indian economic surplus was to be appropriated through monopoly trade.

The English competitors were kept out by persuading the British Government to grant the East India Company through a Royal Charter a monopoly of the right to trade with India and the East. Against the European rivals, the Company had to wage long and fierce wars on land and the sea. To acquire monopoly against Indian traders and to prevent Indian rulers from interfering with its trade, the Company took advantage of the disintegration for the Mughal Empire to acquire increasing political domination and control over different parts of the country. After political conquest, Indian weavers were also employed directly by the Company. In that case, they were forced to produce cloth at below market prices.

The second major objective of colonialism at this stage was to directly appropriate or take over governmental revenues through the control over state power. The East India Company required large financial resources to wage wars in India and on the seas against European rivals and Indian rulers and to maintain naval forces, forts and armies around their trading posts, etc. East India Company did not possess such resources and the British Government neither possessed them nor was it willing to use them to promote the Company's interests.

Financial resources had to be raised in India for another reason. Indian money was needed to purchase Indian goods. This could be acquired either by sale of British goods in India or by export of gold and silver to India. The first method was barred because the British produced hardly any goods which could be sold in India in competition with Indian products. British industrial products could not compete with Indian handicraft products till the beginning of the 19th century. The British government, heavily influenced by mercantilist theories, was also unhappy with the export of gold and silver from Britain.

East India Company acquired direct control over the revenues of the Indian states. Moreover, both company and its servants extorted illegally immense wealth from Indian merchants, officials, nobles, rulers and zamindars. This lack of change also reflects in the ideology of the rulers. No need was felt to criticize traditional Indian civilization, religions, laws, caste system, family structure, and so on, for they were not seen as obstacles at that stage of colonial exploitation. The need was to understand them sympathetically so that political control and economic exploitation could proceed smoothly without arousing opposition from Indians on religious, social or cultural grounds. This wealth played an important role in financing Britain's industrial revolution.

II. Second Stage

Free Trade – Industrial Mercantile Capitalist Phase (1813-1858): This was a period of exploitation through trade and is also termed as 'Colonialism of Free Trade' during the 19th century. Immediately after the East India Company became the ruler over most parts of India, an intense struggle broke out in Britain to determine whose interests the newly acquired colony would serve.

They wanted India to serve as a market for their ever-increasing output of manufactured goods, especially textiles. They also needed exports of raw materials, especially cotton, and foodgrains from India. Moreover, India could buy more British goods only if it earned foreign exchange by increasing its exports. Increasing exports were also needed to enable dividends of the East India Company and profits of British merchants and earnings and pensions of British officials to be transferred to Britain.

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To suit the convenience of British industrial capitalists, British colonialism in India needed India to be a subordinate trading partner of Britain, as a market to be exploited and as a dependent colony to produce and supply the raw materials and food-stuffs Britain needed. India's economic surplus was to be appropriated through trade based on unequal exchange. As a result, Britain increasingly exported goods produced in factories using advanced technology and less labour with high level of productivity and wages. On the other hand, India produced agricultural raw materials through backward methods of production using great deal of labour leading to low productivity and low wages. This international division of labour was, moreover, not only highly unfavourable to India but was unnatural and artificial and was introduced and maintained forcibly through colonial domination.

The beginning of the change occurred with the passing of the Regulating Act of 1773 and Pitt's India Act of 1784 which were primarily the result of intense struggle within the British ruling classes. The East India Company was saved and given a reprieve by the French Revolutionary Wars after 1789. But the Company gradually lost ground. By 1813, when another Charter Act was passed, the Company had lost most of its political and economic power in India; the real power being wielded by the British Government, which ruled India in the interests of the British capitalist class. The British Indian Government attempted to integrate India's colonial economy with the British and world capitalist economy. The chief instrument was the introduction of free trade. All important duties in India were either totally removed or drastically reduced to nominal rates. Thus, India was thrown open to British manufacturers. Free entry was also now given to British capitalists to develop tea, coffee and indigo plantations, trade, transport, mining and modern industries in India. The British Indian Government gave active state help to these capitalists.

The agrarian structure of India was sought to be transformed in a capitalist direction through the 'permanent settlement' and the 'ryotwari systems'. The large-scale imports and their sale in land and even more the large-scale export of the bulky raw materials and their gathering at the ports from long distances inside the country required a cheap and easy system of transport and communications. Without such a system, India could not be opened to large-scale foreign trade. The government, therefore, improved rivers and canals, encouraged the introduction of steamships on the rivers and improved the roads. Above all, during the latter half of the 18th century, it encouraged and financed a large network of railways linking India's major cities and markets to its ports. By 1905, nearly 45,000 km of railways had been built. Similarly, a modern postal and telegraph system was introduced to facilitate economic transactions.

Many changes were now brought about in the administrative field. Administration was made more elaborate and comprehensive and it reached down to the villages and far flung areas of the country so that British goods could reach, and agricultural products drawn from, its interior villages and remotest parts. The legal and judicial structure of India was overhauled to promote capitalist commercial relations and maintain law and order. The changes, however, related to criminal law, law of contract and level procedures. Personal law, including that relating to marriage and inheritance, was largely left untouched since it did not in any way affect colonial transformation of the economy. Furthermore, it was in the 1830s and 1840s, that English replaced Persian as the official language in India. Lord William Bentinck's resolution dated March 7, 1835 stated that the funds appropriated to education would be best employed in English education alone.

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Modern education was now introduced basically with the objective to man the new, vastly expanded administration. But it was also expected to help transform India's society and culture. This transformation was needed for two reasons; it was expected to:

- (i) Create an overall climate of change and development
- (ii) Generate a culture of loyalty to the rulers

It is to be noted that it was around this period that many Indian intellectuals like Raja Ram Mohan Roy began to work for social and cultural modernization for different reasons, mainly as part of national regeneration.

III. Third Stage

Finance Capitalism (1860-1947): This is described as the era of foreign investments and international competition for colonies. During this final phase of colonialism, India was converted into a fertile country for foreign investment, which was made under the guarantee system. A new stage of colonialism was ushered in India from about 1860s. This was the result of several major changes in the world economy:

- (i) There was spread of industrialization to several countries of Europe, the United States and Japan with the result that Britain's industrial supremacy in the world came to an end.
- (ii) There was intensification of industrialization as a result of the application of scientific knowledge to industry. Modern chemical industries, the use of petroleum as fuel for the internal combustion engine and the use of electricity for industrial purposes developed during this period.
- (iii) There was further unification of the world market because of revolution in the means of international transport.

Colonialism at the stage also served important political and ideological purposes of the imperialist countries. Chauvinism or aggressive nationalism based on the glorification of the Empire could be used to tone down social divisions at home by stressing the common interests in the Empire. The British, for example, raised the slogan that 'The Sun never sets on the British Empire' to spread pride and a sense of contentment among workers on whose slum houses the Sun seldom shone in real life. The French talked of their 'Civilising Mission', while Japan talked of Pan-Asianism and claimed to be the champion of the Asian people.

India also performed another important role for Britain. Its army – men and financial resources – could be used to fight Britain's rivals in the struggle for the division and re-division of the world. In fact, the Indian army was the chief instrument for the defence, expansion and consolidation of British Empire in Africa and Asia. The result was a costly standing army that absorbed nearly 52 per cent of the Indian revenues in 1904.

Politically and administratively, the third stage of colonialism meant renewed and more intensive control over India. Moreover, it was now more important than even before that colonial administration should reach out to every nook and corner of India. The administration now became more bureaucratically tight, efficient and extensive than earlier. Railways were built at an even faster rate.

1.3.4 Impact of Colonialism

The colonial policies that governed India under British rule reduced India to the position of a market for British manufacturers and a source of raw materials and foodgrains.

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Investment of British capital in India was selective, intended to profit the British rather than develop the Indian economy. The British Empire in India was a colonial empire from the beginning to end. The objective of which was to exploit India and to drain off her wealth, raw materials and resources for the enrichment of the colonial people. British imperialism was corollary or a mere instrument to achieve the colonial objectives. The following factors led to the transformation of Indian economy into a 'classic colony' in the words of Karl Marx:

- By the right of duty-free trade
- By building the tariff wall in England against Indian export
- After the Battle of Plassey, India was reduced from a manufacturing country to a raw material producing country
- After the annexation of Bengal when England became a potential power, the Indian economy was made subservient to the British colonial interest.

Bipin Chandra, in his seminal work *Colonialism and Modernization*, argued that colonialism in India did not lead to capitalist modernization, neither did it create certain conditions in that direction, i.e., it was not as if it led to 'partial' or 'restricted' modernization or that it had some 'residual' benefits, despite the overall exploitative character, which could be of some advantage after independence. Noticeably opposite to Roy's claims that in two hundred years of colonial 'benevolence' of the British, gave India the advantages, of 'commercialization', 'exposure to the world market', 'transport and communication', 'a strong state', 'western scientific skills', etc., benefits that India hardly would have achieved. However, historians like Aditya Mukherjee and others also do not attest to Roy's claim. The British historian Angus Maddison's monumental work shows that India was the largest economy of the world for thousands of years accounting for close to 30 per cent of the world's GDP. Till as late as the beginning of the 18th century, India was the largest economy with about 25 per cent of the world's GDP, more than eight times that of the United Kingdom. The decline started soon after British colonization and at the end of nearly two hundred years of colonial rule, India's share had been reduced to a mere 4.2 per cent in 1950.

In other fields, the situation was equally depressing. At the time of independence, the average life expectancy was barely 30 years. 84 per cent of people (92 per cent women) were illiterate. The poor obviously died much younger. India was faced with acute food shortages creating near famine conditions repeatedly in different areas. The Bengal famine of 1943, just four years before the British left, claimed more than four million lives. The growth of per capita income in India in the colonial period was either zero or very low, remaining way below that of the independent countries of Europe, USA and Japan between 1820 and 1913. Similarly, the colonial period saw a process of de-industrialization where traditional industry was largely destroyed and modern industry grew very slowly. Positive developments in the Indian economy till 1947 remained essentially backward and structurally colonial. The Indian economy at independence was still basically dependent on a stagnating, low productivity, 'semi-feudal' agriculture with modern industry (in 1950) contributing a mere 6 to 8 per cent of the national income and (in 1951) employing 2.3 per cent of the labour force (in 1946).

During the World War years, the persistent efforts of Indian entrepreneurs to enter frontier areas of industry in India such as automobile, aircraft and locomotive manufacture, shipbuilding, manufacture of armaments, engineering goods, machine tools, and so on, were smothered by the colonial state, using fiscal, monetary and other

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instruments of state policy such as the 'Capital Issues Control', all in the name of the 'War effort', but in actuality in deference to imperial interests and even the interest of the white colonies. Except for a few pockets of progressive industrial activities, the Indian economy remained stagnant practically throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. While the British did give to India things like law and order, centralized political and judicial administration, roads and railways, new system of education and so on, the price which they extracted in the form of the drain was excessive, leaving the Indian economy stagnant and vast Indian masses poor and miserable. Agriculture, the largest sector of the Indian economy, was in a state of ruin under colonialism. Per-capita agricultural output actually fell at the rate of 0.72 per cent per year during 1911-1941. Per-capita food grains output fell even more sharply by 1.14 per cent per year, a 29 per cent fall over the period. All crop yields per acre declined by 0.01 per cent per year during 1891-1946 and again foodgrain yields declined more rapidly by 0.18 per cent, and even more sharply by 0.44 per cent per year during 1921-46. India was in fact losing to Britain as drain or tribute an equal proportion, if not more, of what was invested in India. However, defenders of British colonialism were not impressed with this argument and asserted that Indian growth story was written at the time of colonial administration. They argued that British colonialism brought law and order and modern transport and communications, led to growth of foreign trade and integrated the colony with the global market, brought in resources to India through British investments (drain was persistently denied), made major changes in property rights in agriculture and improved irrigation, all factors leading to unprecedented economic development in India. Historians like Tirthankar Roy made the claims that it would be better for nationalist historians and Marxists to look within for the weaknesses and flaws in Indian system like rigid social customs, inflexible social institutions, orthodoxy in values and habits instead of blaming the British. Further, he argued that over-population, shortage of capital, lack of ambition, geographical weaknesses, harsh climatic conditions, spending extravagantly on weddings, and other factors played major role in India's underdevelopment rather than policy of the drain or free trade. However, Roy's admiration for the British and his appreciation for modernization, industrialization and integration of Indian economy with the world were exposed by nationalist thinkers on substantial grounds.

There are following sectors which were badly affected by British colonial policy:

General economic impact

- The ruin of Indian trade
- De-industrialization
- Foreign economy dominance on Indian economy
- The ruin of Indian handicrafts and industries
- Drain of wealth

Agriculture impact

- Change in agrarian life
- Growth of rural indebtedness
- Recurrent famines
- Pressure of population and land

Political sector

- Unification of administrative system

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- Introduction of new constitutional provisions
- Emergence of new political institutions

Social and cultural impact

- Rise of the middle class
- Socio-religious movements
- New education system
- Introduction of printing press
- Disintegration of the village community
- Disintegration of joint family system and village panchayat

The ruin of Indian trade

By 1717, the East India Company had become a monopolistic organization. When the British gained political power, they turned the trade and tariff in their favour. India was converted into a readymade market and exporter of raw material. Indian handicrafts and industries were ruined.

- By the right of duty-free trade the company became a monopolistic organization and eliminated all sorts of competition.
- When the company became a political power, it formulated the trade policies to serve the British colonial interests by raising the tariff wall.
- After the success of Industrial revolution in England, India was converted into the biggest open market for British goods and an exporter of raw material.
- Trade was a powerful channel for the drain of Indian wealth, i.e., for the exports from India, the country got nothing in return.

Under the British rule, almost every core area of Indian economy was under colonial control. This led to the transformation of Indian economy into dependent and under-developed colonial economy.

Indian handicraft and industries were ruined on account of British import policy due to:

- Imposition of heavy duties on Indian manufactures
- British trade and tariff policy
- Indian handicraft could not compete with the British industrially produced goods
- Growing unemployment and poverty in India

De-industrialization

The destruction of traditional Indian industries was one of the earliest consequences of colonialism to be noticed and documented in this country. While it was evidently connected with the growth of modern factory industry in England, the beginning of the process of destruction of Indian cottage industries lay further back, in the 18th century, when the products of Indian industries were still prized as valuable items of commerce.

The artisans were also facing great hardships. Restrictions were imposed on import of Indian textiles in Britain while the British could bring their machine-made textiles virtually without any taxes to India. The Indian artisan was not in a position to compete with the goods produced by machines in England. With the coming of machines, the artisans had suffered in England. But in that country, they were soon compensated

by alternative employment opportunities in new factories. In India, machine-made products were coming from England, and, the development of factories in India was very slow as it was disfavoured by the State. This being the situation, a large number of artisans were rendered jobless. The workers in factories, mines and plantations also suffered. They were paid low wages and lived in extreme poverty.

The newly emerging Indian industrialists also faced hardship due to the government's policies relating to trade, tariff, taxation and transport. They could see how Britain was using India mainly as a source of raw materials for British industries or, in the later period, as a place for the investment of British capital. The British capitalists who had vast resources were provided with all the facilities. The Indian capitalist class that had just started emerging and needed government patronage, was, on the other hand, completely ignored.

Agriculture

The British agrarian policy was mainly aimed at drawing out the maximum land revenue. In the Permanent Settlement areas, the land revenue was fixed for the zamindars (to be paid to the State). The zamindars kept charging more from the peasants than what they had to pay to the State. Most of the time the peasants had to borrow money from money lenders. The money lenders charged exorbitant rates of interest for the money they lent to the peasants. Whenever the peasants tried to resist the exploitation by landlords and money lenders, the official machinery helped the latter. A large number of cash crops (like indigo, cotton, sugarcane) were taken by the British on dictated prices to be used as raw materials. Cotton and indigo cultivators were the worst affected. As a result of the British land revenue policy, a large number of peasants were reduced to landless labourers. The number of landless labourers was as high as 20% of the population (52.4 million with their dependents) in 1901.

The poorer peasants were raising crops for the market virtually hypothecated in advance to the money lender, the better-off section of the peasantry was relatively free. The latter could store their goods, and wait for better prices than what prevailed during the glut in the market after harvest. They could also cart their crops to markets in towns to obtain a better price than what the village *bania* or itinerant *dallal* offered. Furthermore, they could make their own decision as to which crop to grow while the poorest farmer was virtually forced to raise crops as demanded by the village *bania*. In some regions, the rich peasants themselves became money lenders to poorer peasants and thus the process of differentiation was accentuated.

According to estimates based on the 1931 census, we get the following picture of social strata in village India. At the bottom of the pyramid were the landless agricultural labourers (including bonded labourers) accounting for 37.8% of agriculturists. The stratum above them had the farmers with very small holdings of below 5 acres (9%) and various types of tenants-at-will and share croppers (24.3%). The layer above consisted of the better-off section of farmers with land above 5 acres in size (about 25.3%). Finally, at the narrow top of the pyramid were the members of the rent receiving class, many of whom did not actually cultivate land themselves (3.6%). The condition of the bonded labourers was the worst: they worked all their life, and sometimes for generations, for the 'master'.

Under British rule, more and more areas were brought under commercial crops such as indigo, opium, sugarcane, cotton, tea, coffee, etc. Commercialization of agriculture was mainly motivated on account of British revenue from this industry. As regards the

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colonial motives, the commercialization of Indian agriculture was promoted to provide raw materials to the British industries and to convert India into a raw material producing country. On account of commercialization of agriculture, more areas were brought under the commercial crops leading to the shrinking of areas growing food grains. Indian agriculture was linked to the world markets. It also led to the emergence of new merchandise class who further exploited the peasants. The tragedy of commercialization of agriculture was the coercive hold of the Zamindars, the moneylenders, the merchants, the British planters, lease holder, and so on, on the peasantry. Commercialization further exposed the peasantry to exploitations and opened the floodgates for the drain of Indian wealth.

Under the commercialization of agriculture, the production was not made for consumption but to cater to the market needs.

Growth of rural indebtedness

On account of the very nature of British land revenue settlements, the peasantry had little or no surplus. In case of crop failure or social needs, they had to depend on money lenders who were buyers cum creditors, i.e., the money lenders bought the produce from the indebted peasant at the dictated prices.

The recurrent famines under British rule

The economists Dr. Amartya Sen and Dr. Jean Dreze have shown through their research that during the periods of British rule, India experienced a major famine every decade and a minor famine in different regions every alternate year. Famines were followed by epidemics in which millions of people perished. Beginning with famines in 1770, till the great famine of Bengal in 1946, more than two hundred million people perished.

The worst feature of the famines was that they did not result due to the issue of monsoon or non-availability of food grains. The majority of the starvation took place because the starving population had no money to buy foodgrains. Thus, it can be stated to be deliberate British imperialist policy.

Pressure of population over land

Under the British rule, the handicraft and the industries had been completely ruined. This led to growing pressure on land. However, the land could not support the total population because the agriculture had become unprofitable.

1.3.5 Positive Impact of British Rule

The presence of a colonial government on Indian soil played a complex, yet decisive, role. The impact of British rule on Indian society and culture was widely different from what India had known before. The establishment of colonial rule in India was followed by a systematic attempt to disseminate colonial culture and ideology as the dominant cultural current. Faced with the challenge of the intrusion of colonial culture and ideology, an attempt to reinvigorate traditional institutions and realize the potential of traditional culture was made during the nineteenth century.

The impact of modern Western culture and consciousness of defeat by a foreign power gave birth to a new awakening. There was an awareness that a vast country like India had been colonized by a handful of foreigners because of internal weaknesses within the Indian social structure and culture.

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Role of press and literature

The second half of the nineteenth century saw an unprecedented growth of Indian-owned English and vernacular newspapers, despite numerous restrictions imposed on the Press by the colonial rulers from time to time. In 1877, there were about 169 newspapers published in vernacular languages and their circulation reached nearly 1,00,000.

The Press, while criticizing official policies, on the one hand, urged the people to unite, on the other it also helped spread modern ideas of self-government, democracy, civil rights and industrialization. The newspapers, journals, pamphlets and nationalist literature helped in the exchange of political ideas among nationalist leaders from different regions.

Western thought and education

Introduction of a modern system of education afforded opportunities for assimilation of modern western ideas, which, in turn, gave a new direction to Indian political thinking, although the English system of education had been conceived by the rulers in the interest of efficient administration. The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Paine, Spencer and Voltaire helped many Indians imbibe modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist ideas.

The English language helped nationalist leaders from different linguistic regions to communicate with each other. Those among the educated, who took up liberal professions (lawyers, doctors, etc.) often visited England for higher education. There they saw the working of modern political institutions in a free country and compared that system with the Indian situation where even basic rights were denied to the citizens. This ever-expanding English educated class formed the middle class intelligentsia who constituted the nucleus for the newly arising political unrest. It was this section which provided leadership to the Indian political associations.

1.4 INDIAN SOCIETY AS FRAGMENTARY AND STATIC IN COLONIAL ETHNOGRAPHY

In India, languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food and customs differ from place to place. However, they possess unity in diversity. The culture of India is a mix of these varied subcultures. India happens to be the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. The Afghans, Turks and Persians invaded India and made the country their home. They also contributed significantly to the culture of their new home. As a result, we now have an India that is really colourful and extremely tolerant.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, India was prosperous and trade was booming. The export was done on a large scale to various Asian and European markets. After the colonizers took over during the late 1700s, they discouraged the export of finished goods from India. This was the first step by which the Indian market was compromised in order to increase the benefit of the markets of England.

Due to the restrictions that were imposed on the export of products and the shipping of raw materials from India, many Indian traders lost their wealth. This was basically a phase of 'deindustrialization' in India. Before colonial rule, people were enthusiastic about pursuing trade as their livelihood, but with the beginning of the colonial

Check Your Progress

2. What is the essence of colonialism?
3. Why was the drain of wealth theory developed?
4. What did British colonial policies reduce India into?
5. What was the main purpose of British agrarian policy?
6. Why was the commercialization of Indian agriculture promoted by the British?
7. What was the role of the Indian Press during British rule?
8. List one advantage of the introduction of a modern education system in British India.

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rule, that enthusiasm was thwarted. Now the inclination shifted towards agriculture, but even that was not an encouraging option for the common man. Taxation on agricultural produce was even heavier as compared to the pre-colonial rule, which itself was quite a lot.

Some of the British historians are of the view that British rule brought calmness and stability into the Indian administration and brought a sense of unity among various regions in the Indian economy. These claims, however, are completely rejected by Indian historians but we cannot deny the fact that the administration was weak in India. Also there was a lack of unity which allowed the British to take over India in the first place.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the Indian economy during the pre-colonial period or the Mughal era, contributing the biggest source of income as well as the biggest employment generator. The major crops produced during this period included millet, oilseeds, cereals, hemp, chilli, sugarcane, cotton, indigo, betel and other cash crops; indigo cultivation was largely seen in Agra and Gujarat while Ajmer was famous for the production of sugarcane. The founder of the Mughal dynasty Babur introduced the cultivation of many central Asian fruits in India; this was followed by the cultivation of tobacco and potato introduced in India by the Portuguese during the reign of Jahangir. Aside from agriculture, trade, handicrafts, silk weaving, were also important sectors in the Mughal era Indian economy. The period also saw improved transport and communication which contributed to the development of the economy. As the textile industry was flourishing there was also a tremendous demand for silk and cotton.

The lifestyle of the Mughal rulers also encouraged the flourishing of art, handicraft, architecture and trade in the country. Merchants started gaining prominence under their rule and trade within and outside the country grew exponentially. One reason for this was that the Mughals unified large parts of India under one single entity; something that had not happened for centuries. After the arrival of European traders, cities like Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore and Agra, Cambay, Broach and Surat became huge centres of trade. All of this contributed to immense wealth being generated within India. According to the British economist Angus Maddison, India's GDP in 1700 was about 27% of the world's GDP.

According to historians, one of the most notable shortcomings of the Mughal rulers was that they did not do enough to change the social conditions of the agrarian community. Not only did they fail to take any steps to increase the total area under cultivation; no innovative methods were introduced to increase the productivity of the cultivable land. Hence, the Mughal Era was plagued by periods of famines some of which were the worst in the history of India. The famines had a detrimental effect on the economy. Economy in the Mughal epoch started to deteriorate subsequent to Aurangzeb's death.

The great Mughal Empire was so much extensive and strong as compared to other empires of its time that they could easily be jealous of it. It was founded by Babur, consolidated by Akbar, prospered under Jahangir and Shah Jahan and attained its zenith at the time of Aurangzeb. But immediately after Aurangzeb's death, began that process of disintegration and decline which led to its being limited to areas in the vicinity of Delhi by AD 1750. In AD 1803, the English army occupied Delhi and the great Mughal Empire became a mere pensioner of the English East India Company.

An important way to understand the socio-economic life in modern India is to understand the nature and character of the British colonial power, which shaped the Indian socio-economic life. The emergence of the British colonial state should be seen as a steady process. Earlier, political institutions and state-society relations were

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restructured within the broad discourse of enlightenment. Instead of falling in a linear progression, the evolution of the colonial state was marked by constant interaction between the state and public that created multiple sets of discourses and institutions in accordance with strategic imperatives. The power of this state was derived not only from sheer brute military force, but also from the 'grand discourses of European rationalism'. The colonial state generated many theories, self-definitions, narratives and strategies, which were used to define the state and society in the colony. It used various tactics and also negotiated with the natives, which resulted in greater control over the alien social world that it had entered. Hence at different phases of colonial expansion, the state refashioned its institutions and discourses in accordance with the larger politico-economic ideas, and relations between different class/caste forces within the colonies. The process of colonial expansion is best understood as based on shifting alliances, whereby it uses various political idioms, cultural symbols and discursive practices to create hegemony in the colonies. At each stage of colonial expansion, differing sets of discourses were used strategically to legitimize the colonial rule and also negotiate with various indigenous groups.

1.4.1 Orientalists and their Impact on Indian Society

In the early phase of colonial expansion, mercantilist ideas dominated the relations between the Company and indigenous institutions of power. It is important to note that by the eighteenth century, the Company had resorted to an expansionary logic based on the image of dominance and deployment of 'force' against regional elites. The establishment of forts and port cities were not only defensive postures, but were also linked to the protection of English sovereignty, especially its property and extra-territorial rights. Further, forts acted as alternative centres of authority which could forge relations with mercantile interests against the sovereign empire. After the Battle of Plassey, the Company got effective diwani rights of revenue collection while maintaining the Mughal political and legal institutions. Hence, a dual power institution had been developed, which 'masked the real nature of Company's sovereignty'. While the Company undertook territorial expansion and revenue exactions, it had to mediate constantly with the larger public opinion in England that critiqued the Company for its profit orientation.

The expansion of the Company coincided with the emergence of orientalist scholarship which attempted to understand the Indian past through its textual sources. In the initial stage, the East India Company's position in India was precarious and unsettled. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth, Company officials pursued a policy of conciliation towards the native culture of its new dominion. Orientalism was facilitated by a number of academics who were attracted to the Indian civilization. The promotion of knowledge of Asia had attracted scholars as well to the Company's service. In 1784, the Asiatic Society was founded in Calcutta by William Jones. Soon, Jones advanced his famous thesis on the common origin of Indo-European languages. Some British scholars devoted themselves to the study of Sanskrit, philology and Indian culture and history. Sir William Jones identified Chandragupta Maurya with Sandrokottus of Greek. James Prinsep and Henry Masser deciphered the Brahmi script, translated the Ashokan inscriptions and many texts of Buddhist literature. This opened a new chapter in the history of ancient India. Further, the efforts of William Jones, Jonathan Duncan and other orientalists rekindled interest in the study of ancient Indian literature.

However, the so-called tolerating and synergetic orientalism was after all an ideology which stemmed from the need of the British rule to legitimize their rule in India.

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It, therefore, produced knowledge about the Indian society, a process which has been called as 'reverse acculturation'. It was precisely this political vision of informing the **European rulers of the customs and rules of the land** in order to assimilate them into subject population and to help administrate more efficiently, that Fort William College was established at Calcutta in 1800. The orientalist discourse had political agenda. It is also important to note that if orientalist discourse was initially premised on a respect for the ancient traditions, it did produce knowledge about the subject society, which ultimately prepared the ground for the rejection of orientalism as a policy of governance. It was, for example, highlighted that the once magnificent Aryan civilization underwent degeneration due to the supposed impact of Islam and the Mughals in India, thus sowing the seeds of communalism. British rulers, missionaries and historians like James Mill later denounced the culture, character and social structure of the native Indians. This legitimized more authoritarian rule and administration over India, i.e., it sanctioned British rule over India, if India needed to be rescued from the predicament of its own creation and elevated to a desired state of progress as achieved in Europe. The British also propagated theories of racial superiority of the white race to justify their domination over dark races of the globe. Men like William Jones typified the 'radical at home and nonetheless the upholder of authoritarian rule'.

The racial discrimination that was built into the colonial politico-legal system and which became a matter of daily experience was further aggravated by the Arms Act and the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 followed by the Elbert Bill. Surendranath Banerjee's imprisonment in a case of contempt against court in 1883 helped sharpen the militant edge of late nineteenth century nationalist consciousness; a defensive attitude and the consequent delight in a glorious Hindu past, being its important components. This revived interest in one's own community led to a sharper consciousness of other groups that inhabited the subcontinent. One of the most dangerous features of this aggressively Hindu orientation was the tendency to disregard Muslim rule of the preceding centuries. The question of historicity being always important, the revivalists sought a 'non-existent' patriotic tradition in the heroic Rajput and Maratha resistance to Mughal dynasties.

The xenophobic strand of nationalism eventually manifested itself in the form of communal politics. The seeds of communalism were sown during Lord Lytton's viceroyalty (1876-80). On 30 December 1906, a separate party—the Muslim League—was launched to pursue and safeguard Muslim interests. Their demands were accepted through Minto-Morley Reforms, known as the Government of India Act of 1909. This Act devised a novel method to distribute and balance the power. It came as the first effective dose of communalization of Indian politics. After gaining the loyalty of Muslims during the second half of the nineteenth century, the British turned their attention to uplift non-Brahmin castes. In many ways, the colonial rule redefined the caste system. The orientalist scholars immersed themselves in understanding the ancient past. They focussed on classical texts often ignoring the Indian customs that were not part of scriptures, but were equally important in governing the social life. Their interpretation of classical texts highlighted the caste system as the most essential form of Hindu social organization, thereby giving it a rigid definition. Furthermore, colonial ethnographers provided a new understanding of caste system in India by providing a racial dimension to the concept of caste. They argued that the fair-skinned higher castes represented the invading Aryans, while the darker lower castes were the non-Aryan autochthons of the land. Caste was gradually given an official legitimacy.

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1.4.2 Colonial Discourses and the Indian Society

During the second phase of colonial expansion, the state assumed a more interventionist stance in response to the ideological currents of evangelism, utilitarianism, and liberalism. This resulted in the reconstitution of state-society relations whereby the authoritarian forms of governance developed along with new legitimizing discourses based on rational education, universalistic history and enumeration of societies. Utilitarians like Bentham and Mill used the trope of oriental despotism in their narratives of ancient Indian civilizations and advocated individualism through just laws and governance. Some of these intellectual currents developed in the context of industrialization and there was a shift in the colonial relations from being a surplus market to a market for manufactured products. The rhetoric of civilization superiority and reform characterized the state's administrative policies which constantly mediated between publics in the metropole and the incipient capitalist class and traditional elites in the metropole.

Along with the expansion of administrative bureaucracy, certain forms of knowledge or discourses were generated around tribes and castes, whereby the colonial state objectified communities according to reified categories. Hence from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, there was a systematic effort at compilation of information regarding customs, kinship patterns, religions and ritualistic practices of various communities aimed to fit them into neat categories. It is interesting to note the ways in which the ideology discourse on the criminal tribes was used to effectively categorize communities as 'professional criminals' which legitimized extra-legal forms of coercion. Stewart Gordon in his study of the Bhil tribes has pointed out to the development of a colonial discourse on the criminal tribes which was linked to the nineteenth century British conception of criminals as constituting a 'professional class' having their own ways of life. With the sedentism of the agrarian societies, marginal groups with their shifting economies began to be characterized as constituting tribes having inherent criminal traits. Alternative legal systems like the informer system, community membership of the *thagi* and the expansion of the *thagi*/dacoity department within the police services, had formed. Much of these discourses were based on their mediations with the landed communities whose social prejudices and economic interests also influenced much of the assessments.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, systematic efforts were made for an all-India classification of societies, based on a Brahminic theory of caste classification which did not correspond to the actual relations between the castes. Some ethnologists used the occupational criteria to describe castes, while others employed pseudo-scientific racism and anthropometry for racial classification. Hence, the colonial understanding of castes and tribes was based on the categorization of communities according to immutable social, religious and occupational traits. Susan Bayly argued that the colonial administration of this period was more interested in understanding the 'biological and moral' traits of the race rather than the ideologies of the caste. Hence, attempts were made at creating radical and linguistic classification based on anthropometric data.

Ajay Skaria, author of *Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers and Wildness in Western India* has argued that the colonial discourse based on the 'anachronistic' ranking of society, constructed stereotype like primitiveness, evilness and masculinity on various trivial communities. These discourses were used for the formulation of legislations like the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 which proclaimed 'any tribe, gang or class or person' as a 'criminal tribe if it were addicted to the systematic commission of non-boilable offences'.

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Hence, tribes like the Magyar Doms and Kunjars were all categorized as criminal castes, and were subjected to enhanced surveillance and control both by the state and the landed elites. Anand Yang has argued that the Criminal Tribes Act and the discourse on race should be linked to the larger imperial ideology which sought the justification of British rule, and its establishment as a paternalistic state. With the shift towards authoritarian liberalism, severe legal regulations within the criminal penal codes were used for dominance over the marginal groups, especially crimes against property. At the same time, while the state assumed authoritarian forms, discourses on western education and scientific rationalism resulted in the opening of consultative and interventionist channels within the administration. Hence, attempts were made at the accommodation of newer classes within the administrative and judiciary services, under the centralized command of the British administrative services. The discourses on western education and rationalism were internalized by the emerging elite class forces within India, thus providing an ideological legitimacy for colonial expunction and its reforming agencies. Therefore, it is by using the tropes of civilizational superiority, rationalism and western education that the colonial state in its mediations with the emerging capitalist and landed communities created a hegemonic discourse in the metropole.

1.4.3 Women and the Indian Society

The status of women became the main focus of the reforming activities of the colonial state as well as of the educated Indians. When civilizations were ranked and compared, the position of women determined the progress of the civilization. Indians were increasingly under attack by the Western observers, from missionaries to civilians. The Indian civilization was considered backward because it assigned a low status to women. So, the Indian intelligentsia also responded to this civilizational critique by advocating and supporting reforms to improve the status of women in the Indian society. Also, with these early nineteenth-century public discourses on reform, one witnesses a strengthening arena reserved for women. It was earlier proposed that the western influences, especially British, brought to India by the small English educated elite provided stimulus to the intelligentsia to bring women's issue to the fore. These debates over women's issues, however, were essentially male dominated and in no way did they focus on women.

The new language of nationalism increasingly came to use the vocabulary of religion and sacrifice, and hence, women's participation in the nationalist movement gained acceptance. The rising wave of nationalism incorporated the women's question in a way that there was a clear-cut division between the polluted public space outside the household and a pure private space within the home. The male nationalist patriarch had to bear with the intervention of a foreign regime at his workplace, but he chose to keep his personal space, i.e., home out the purview of the state. The West was seen as a consumerist, materialist world in complete opposition to the spiritualist East. The nationalists sought to depose a similar distinction between their homes, and the world outside the home was to be the preserve of spiritualism where the state could not interfere. The woman of the household emerged as the new champion of self-identity of the Indians in the newly imposed schema. The new role, however, did not seek to place women in a position that was divorced from modernity. The plethora of literature produced for women's improvement is reflective of the stress laid on the creation of this 'new woman'.

It is in this context that Partha Chatterjee, author of *Women and Social Reform in Modern India*, speaks of a reconstructed 'classical' tradition which was distinct both

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from the West as well as the prevalent popular culture. The 'new' woman of the 'new' patriarchy was quite the reverse of the 'common' woman in her behaviour, etiquette, education and morals. The mounds of prescriptive literature being published were meant for an 'all round' improvement of women. The publication of such a large body of literature as well as the reformist zeal stressed on educating women. Women's education was also deemed important for their new role of the 'companionate wife' who would be mentally in tune with her English educated husband. It was common for reformers to take the initiative in educating their wives. Special texts for women were produced. Now broadly categorized as improvement texts, they described all aspects of daily living for a good religious and rational being. The prescriptions of these texts aimed to clearly outline the identity of a good Hindu or Muslim, especially a good Hindu or Muslim woman.

In the face of opposition to schools run by Christian missionaries, the Indians themselves began to open schools for girls. A 'feminine' curriculum was designed to prepare the new women, proficient in the running of the household and catering to needs of all members of the family and at the same time, capable of nurturing the home on indigenous and rationalistic grounds. The early educated women were also eager participants in the propagation of nationalist ideas of the new woman. Men's compromise with the colonial regime had to be compensated for by the women by continuing the observance of rituals that men were finding hard to follow in the changed times. The changes brought about in the women's world, as Partha Chatterjee asserts, were both through force and persuasion, garbed in the language of love, religion or tradition. Women emerged as mascots of the 'untouched' and pure India. This process did not always lead to greater confinement of women. In fact, it often allowed them space in arenas outside the home too. This was done through a gradual and systematic decasualization of the image of the women, reflective in the changing iconography of the time. The icon of Kali (Shakti) gave way to that of chained Mother Goddess in need of rescue, by the turn of the century.

1.5 INDIAN SOCIETY AFTER INDEPENDENCE

India is a vast country with the geographical area of 3,287,240 sq km and a population of over one billion people. The society in India is quite old and complex in nature. Many scholars have diverse opinions on the origin of Indian society. However, the old heritage of Indian society has shown enough evidence of immigrants from various racial, ethnic and religious groups. India's cultural heritage is one of the most ancient, extensive and varied among all those who make up the cultural heritage of mankind. Throughout the ages many races and peoples contributed to India's culture. Some came into contact with her only temporarily, others settled permanently within her borders. The keynote of the distinctive culture thus evolved was synthesis on the basis of eternal values. So India has a long history and its cultural tradition is very rich.

It is often said that there is no other country that offers the same cultural diversity as India. India is indeed unique when it comes to diversity, with 29 different states each with their own distinct traditions and character, and a population rich with diverse religious faiths, dress and accents. Such a level of diversity could perhaps be found elsewhere in an entire continent such as Europe; however, in India this diversity is contained within the boundaries of a single nation.

India is a vast country and from north to south and east to west various cultures have amalgamated, promoting cultural pluralism amidst cultural diversity. The composition

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of Indian society reflects the various diversities existing in India. It is essential to remember that the bulk of the Indian population represents racial admixture in varying degrees. Racial origins, however tenuous, are a part of the ethnic memory of most of the communities. This plays a significant role in shaping their identity and self-image. In this unit we will discuss the religious, linguistic and cultural composition of India and observe how these act as diversifying factors and at the same time have an underlying unity. Diversity in India is found in terms of race, religion, language, caste and culture. Sociologists say that Indian unity has been both politico-geographic and cultural in nature. The diversities have remained, but simultaneously provided for a mainstream culture.

Let us look at some of the unique features of Indian society:

(a) Religious composition and diversity

Indian society is divided into a large number of religious communities. Broadly there are seven major religions in India, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. In India, Hindus constitute the majority of the population (80.5%). The Muslims are the second largest religious group (13.4%). The Christians (2.3%), Sikhs (1.9%), Buddhists (0.8%), Jains (0.4%), and other religions like Jews, Zoroastrians, Parsis, etc., comprise 6 per cent. All these religions are further divided into various sects. Though the other religious communities are numerically less, their contribution to India's cultural heritage is noteworthy.

All religious groups are further divided internally. The Muslims make up a large proportion of the total population in Jammu and Kashmir. Some coastal districts in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and in Lakshadweep comprise entirely of Muslims. Sikhs are more numerous in Punjab. Christians are found all over India, but are a majority only in the state of Nagaland. Buddhists are mostly found in Maharashtra, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh and the Zoroastrians in and around Mumbai. Traditionally, all religions have existed in India in peaceful coexistence.

The secular nature of Indian society was well acclaimed worldwide. But the British policy of 'Divide and Rule' and the partition of the country led to various communal tensions. Communalism, which is blind loyalty towards one's own religion, has created conflicts and tensions among various religious communities. Politics practised in the name of religion has further aggravated the problem as such politics is based on narrow vested interests. Article 25 of the Constitution gives all religious communities the right to 'profess, propagate and practice their religion'. It is pertinent to know that the right to propagate one's religion was included in deference to the concerns of the minority communities, particularly Muslims and Christians, who maintained that preaching and propagating their faith was an essential part of their religion.

Hinduism is the oldest religion in India and is divided into various sects and cults. Hinduism is basically divided into *Shaivite* (worshippers of Lord Shiva), *Vaishnavite* (worshippers of Lord Vishnu), *Shakta* (worshippers of Shakti or Mother Goddess in different incarnations like Durga, Kali, Parvati, etc.) and *Smarta* (worshippers of all the three Gods). Even among these, there are further sub-divisions making Hindu religion more complex. Moreover, the Hindu religion has accommodated many Gurus, saints and their followers like Swami Chidanand, Shivanand, etc.

Some sects like *Satnami*, *Kabirpanthi*, *Radhaswami*, *Swaminarayan*, and so on, are also prevalent in Hinduism. Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj are also a part of Hinduism. Therefore, Hinduism with its diverse cults, sects, rituals and numerous doctrinal differences accommodates many believers.

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Muslims are divided into two major groups, Sunnis and Shias, out of which Sunnis have a larger population than Shias. Indian Christians are divided into Catholics and Protestants; whereas Buddhism is also divided into two, Mahayana and Hinayana based on differences in religious doctrines. The Jains in India are divided into Digambara (unclothed) and Svetambara (white robed). The Jains do not practise untouchability and no restrictions are observed with regard to commensality and social intercourse. It is interesting to note that both Buddhism and Jainism evolved as a protest against the Brahminical social order and the superior position ascribed to Brahmins in Hinduism.

Sikhism is a synthesizing religion and the majority of the Sikhs are found in Punjab. However, after partition there has been a large scale migration and now Sikhs are found almost everywhere in India and even in other countries like the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. Their unique tradition of *Langar* (free food for all) has brought together many religious communities and also inculcated the feeling of community and service to mankind. Sikh places of worship, Gurudwaras, are found everywhere in the country.

The Parsis and Jews in India are small religious communities who have contributed a lot towards the industrial development of India, e.g., Jamshedji Tata who founded the Tata group of industries. The Parsis are mostly found in Mumbai and Jews are found in Kerala and Maharashtra.

While the religious composition of Indian society has also resulted in the diversifying of religion, there is no denying the fact that religion has also acted as a unifying force. While most societies grant individuals the right to religious belief, in India, communities enjoy the right to continue with their distinct religious practices.

Perhaps the most significant part of this is that in all matters of family, individuals are governed by their community personal laws (Larson, 2001). Religious communities also have the right to set up their own religious and charitable institutions; they can establish their own educational institutions, and above all, these institutions can receive financial support from the state. Taken together, these are the ways by which public recognition has been granted to different religious communities and space given to them to continue with their way of life (Mahajan, 1998).

India has many religious festivals which are celebrated amongst all religious communities. Festivals like Diwali, Id-ul-fitr and Christmas are celebrated by all religious communities. Centres of pilgrimage such as Badrinath, Rameshwaram, Kedarnath, Ajmer Sharif and many more attract people from every corner of India across religious lines and strengthen the process of national integration. The tourist places portraying beautiful Muslim architecture like the Taj Mahal, Lal Quila, Qutub Minar, and so on, attract people from all walks of life.

(b) Linguistic diversity

India has always been a multi-lingual country. Language has also been an important source of diversity as well as unity in India. According to the Grierson (Linguistic Survey of India, 1903-28) there are 179 languages and as many as 544 dialects in the country. The Constitution of India, in its 8th Schedule recognizes 22 official languages with English as an important associate language. All the major languages have different regional variations and dialects. Some of the dialects of Hindi are Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, and Haryanvi. Originally, only 14 languages were included in the 8th Schedule. Bodo, Dogri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Nepali, Santhali and Sindhi were recognized later. India's first PM Jawaharlal Nehru had remarked, 'The makers of the Constitution were wise in

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laying down that all the 13 or 14 languages were to be national languages.' The languages listed in this schedule have acquired different names at different stages and are better known as the scheduled languages now. The Minorities Commission report and the official Language Resolution 3 of 1968 considered languages listed in the schedule as major languages of the country.

The 'Programme of Action' Document, 1992 of the National Policy on Education, 1986 considered them as modern Indian languages. The highest literary awards in the country are given to 24 literary languages in India by the Sahitya Academy, and newspapers and periodicals are published in 35 languages every year.

English is recognized as an important instrument of knowledge dissemination, commerce and maintenance of international relations. A provision was made to extend the use of English language in the article 343 as 'Official language of the Union' for all official purposes of the Union even after a period of fifteen years with a provision that 'the President may, during the said period, by order authorize the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language'.

Originally among the scheduled languages, the speakers of Hindi had the highest percentage (41.03%). However, it is noticed that the linguistic regions in the country do not maintain a sharp and distinct boundary; rather they gradually merge and overlap in their respective border zones.

Though all the languages spoken in India are different from each other, yet they may be grouped into four linguistic families; the Austric Family (*Nishada*), Dravidian family (*Dravida*), Sino-Tibetan Family (*Kirata*) and Indo-European Family (*Arya*). The languages of the Austric family are spoken by tribal people in Meghalaya, and in parts of Central Indian tribal belts like Ranchi, Mayurbhanj, etc.

The languages of the Dravidian family are spoken in southern parts of India.

The dialects and languages of the Sino-Tibetan family are spoken by the tribal people of the North-Eastern region and in the sub-Himalayan region in the North and North-West. People in the Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh also speak these languages. The speakers of the languages of Indo-European family are found in North India. The majority of the people in the North Indian plains speak Indo-Aryan (Indo-European family). Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh also have large population of speakers of these languages.

The degree of linguistic diversity in India is perplexing, not only for visitors but also for Indians. Each of the country's 29 states has adopted one or two of the 22 official languages. India's linguistic barriers are compounded by the fact that each language also has a unique written form, with an alphabet that is unrecognizable to people who are ignorant of that language.

The linguistic diversity found across India stems from a history that saw numerous ancient kingdoms, each with its own language. These languages remained distinct to the area even after a kingdom was dissolved or merged with another.

State lines later drawn by the colonial rulers often crossed former political and linguistic boundaries.

After Independence, many of the southern states in India opposed the installation of Hindi as India's national language. Simultaneously, there was a strong lobby across different regions of the country for organization of states on a linguistic basis. This has resulted in the protecting and encouraging of linguistic diversity.

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The formation of groups based on common linguistics, each with the political rights to administer itself within the structure of the federal system, resulted in that particular linguistic community becoming the majority in that specific region. Slogans like 'Tamil Nadu for Tamils', 'Maharashtra for Marathi's', and so on further aggravated the language problem.

Although there is a great diversity of languages and dialects in India, fundamental unity is found in the ideas and themes expressed in these languages. Sanskrit has influenced many languages in India. However, in spite of diversities, Hindi continues to be the national language and people of one State can communicate with people of another State as a national language generates national sentiment.

(c) Cultural diversity

India is a multi-cultural society and is a fine example of diversity and unity in cultures. India's rich natural resources have attracted many from across the world bringing about great diversity in human cultures. Powerful kingdoms and empires contributed to the shaping of India's cultural regions. The various conquests in the historical past have also been responsible for creating diversity. The bulk of the Indian population represents racial admixture in varying degrees. Unlike several other lands where the dominant human cultures have tended to absorb or eliminate others, in India the tendency has been to nurture diversity, which has been favoured by the diversity of the country's ecological regimes (Gadgil and Guha, 1992). From the beginning, Indian civilization has witnessed a pluralistic culture.

This pluralistic culture which has its roots in the Vedic period, was enhanced by the upsurge of Buddhism and Jainism, and was further reinforced during the early medieval period, which saw the founding of the Bhakti Movement. Vedic society was an admixture of different cultures. It was a combination of Aryan and non-Aryan, with a mix of tribal elements added. There are many cultures which coexist simultaneously in India. Communities in India demonstrate commonalities in culture traits irrespective of the religious background they belong to, even though these religious groups are further subdivided.

Many studies on cultural diversity and syncretism have been conducted by sociologists and anthropologists like Y. Singh, N.K. Das, Madan, Majumdar, etc., which adhere to various sociological approaches like structural functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown or functionalism of Malinowski. However, all this research proves that in spite of there being so many contrasts and diversities, there exists an underlying thread of unity which is seen in cultural and regional traits. India has undergone many cultural changes since independence. On one hand, where ethnic and regional groups or castes, tribes, minorities and other groups are fighting for their individual identities, there is a pervasive commonality of many integrative cultural processes. In India, we can now increasingly see a rise in 'inter-regional migration' which results in the merging of regional cultural traits, cooking patterns, cultural performances, ritual forms, styles of dress and ornamentation. A sense of synchronization is evolving which helps in dissolving prevailing differences and contributes towards cultural consistency.

Moreover, the role played by Indian religion, philosophy, art and literature in strengthening India's unity is praiseworthy. India celebrates various festivals together which reflect the solidarity of people of India amidst cultural diversity.

Thus, it is to be noted that diverse societies in India have evolved through dialogue and interactions at different levels. The multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and

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multi-religious society in India is the result of a constant exchange of ideas amongst the various groups. India is the best example of portraying various diversities and within this diversity a peculiar thread of unity prevails, making India a unique nation.

1.5.1 Indian Social Structure in Post-Independence

India's culture is diverse. Different regions have different cultures and traditions. At the same time, you can find a lot common in them. Let us try and look at the various social formations which lend different characteristics to the Indian society.

- **Caste system**—India's social structure is founded on its caste system. The caste system is divided into four major castes—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. Brahmins are the priests and the uppermost caste. Kshatriyas are the warriors, Vaisyas the business class, and Sudras are the working class. Inter-caste marriages, once forbidden, are commonplace in the urban areas today. Untouchability still persists, with the Dalits treated as untouchables and reduced to menial jobs like cleaning the streets etc. Today, with burgeoning urbanization, the caste system does not have an influence it once did on society.
- **Family**—The family unit is given great significance. Divorces are not appreciated. Couples try their best to adjust rather than break up and cause children (also given high importance) distress. Nowadays, due to modernization, divorces do take place with greater regularity; still, on the whole, couples look at retaining the family unit first.
- **Women**—In the past, women have played an important role in the India's political and social structure. That sadly changed over time. Women remain submissive in many regions of the country, although lately, with better education, they are more confident in general.
- **Men**—The man's authority in the Indian social system is still unchallenged. He is very dominating by nature, due to his position as the head of the family.
- **Patriarchal setup**—The Indian family is patriarchal, with the father as the head of the family unit. The eldest male member is respected and has much influence over matters of the family.
- **Matriarchal setup**—In Kerala and Meghalaya, however, the woman is the dominant force, and 'the' authority on family matters.
- **Marriage**—The Indian society gives the institution of marriage a lot of importance. Marriages are usually arranged, but people in urban areas have started choosing their own partners. Marriages are conducted with intricate rituals and celebrated with much pomp.
- **Birth**—This is viewed as an auspicious occasion warranting much celebration. The birth of a male child is much sought after. In some regions, the birth of a girl child is considered unfavourable.
- **Death**—Elaborate ceremonies are held when people die, and rituals are held every year in their remembrance.

Unity in Diversity

When India became independent in 1947, freedom fighters and those who framed our Constitution worked on a document which provided for a culturally diverse state. Independent India had to allay the fears of its people and the leadership was urged to

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keep to its promise of providing equality to all the people of India. Respect for the individual could only come about through respecting the diverse beliefs and traditions that the people represent.

Unity in diversity expresses the opinion that India can remain a strong and unified country while retaining its cultural diversity. As a result of the geographical mobility of people, various parts of the country are found to have commonalities in their ways of life. Religious communities share many common cultural rights but this does not extend to them having any separate political rights, whereas recognized linguistic communities enjoy cultural and political rights. These rights have simultaneously encouraged diversity and strengthened democracy.

Other areas like judiciary or law are also based on the principle of equality.

A single Constitution, a national flag, common currency, national anthem, and so on, further strengthen the unity of India. All Indians are conscious that they have a distinct national identity amidst various diversities. The various historical monuments, temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras attract lot of tourists and reinforce the bond of unity.

In situations of war and natural disasters, this unity in diversity can easily be seen, when the entire nation comes together in support of one another. Even during sporting events, the entire nation supports the national team, which itself may comprise members from various regional and religious backgrounds.

In spite of the many differences that the potpourri of cultures inevitably entails, India's people are united with a common cultural heritage. There is no doubt that India is a vast land of myriad physical features. The country is blessed with mountains, hilly terrains, plains, and coastal areas, among other geographical features. There are seemingly countless religions, languages and castes. The type of food varies in different regions. Still, people are united and share basic human values.

India's culture is vibrant and tolerant. Even with the advent of foreigners over the last four or so centuries, little has changed. In fact, one can say that the foreign cultures have blended with the Indian culture and the country is better for it. However, narrow-mindedness can weaken national unity. Thus, it is up to people to feel proud of being 'Indian' while retaining their unique features. As for now, India remains one of the best examples of the term 'Unity in Diversity'.

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Check Your Progress

9. How many languages are present in India?
10. What are the four linguistic families in India?
11. What is the meaning of the phrase 'unity in diversity'?

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1.6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The origin of Indian sociology as a distinct discipline can be traced back to the 1920s, during the colonial period. For smooth administration, the British administrators had to understand the Indian customs, manners and institutions.
- The origin, development and functioning of the various customs and traditions, the economy and polity of the village/tribal community, and the Hindu caste system and joint family system were some of the important themes of study by the British administrators and intellectuals.
- The formal teaching of sociology began only in the second decade of the 20th century—at the University of Bombay in 1914, at Calcutta University in 1917, and at Lucknow University in 1921. But in pre-Independence era, only three other universities—Mysore, Osmania and Poona—had included sociology as a course subject.
- In post-independence India, when the Five-Year Plans were introduced, policies and programmes concerning urban and rural community development, Panchayati Raj, education, abolition of untouchability, uplift of weaker sections, and rehabilitation of people affected by large-scale projects were important areas of research by sociologists.
- In the 1950s and 1960s, several micro-level studies of caste, joint families, and village communities were carried out. M.N. Srinivas introduced the concepts of dominant caste, Sanskritization, Westernization, and Secularization to understand the realities of inter-caste relations and their dynamics.
- Colonialism is a system of economic and political control evolved by strong nations to exploit a weaker nation's markets and resources for the former's benefit.
- India was a colony of the British Empire for over a century and it had an immense impact on the socio-economic development of the political system of India.
- Colonialism is basically the establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one region by people from another.
- Thinkers are divided on the topic whether India's colonization had a completely adverse effect or did it also affect the nation positively in certain aspects.
- Bipan Chandra states that colonialism 'is a well-structured whole, a distinct social formation (system) or sub-formation (sub-system) in which the basic control of the economy and society is in the hands of a foreign capitalist class which functions in the colony (or semi-colony) through a dependent and subservient economic, social, political, and intellectual structure whose forms can vary with the changing conditions of the historical development of capitalism as a world-wide system'.
- There are various theories of colonialism such as the liberal and Marxist views and the views of the Indian nationalists.
- It led to the complete but complex integration of India's economy with the world capitalist system but in a subservient position.

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- To suit British industry, a peculiar structure of production and international division of labour was forced upon India
- A point that is basic to the process of economic development is the size and utilization of the economic surplus or savings generated in the economy for investment and therefore expansion of the economy.
- The State played a crucial role in constructing, determining and maintaining other aspects of the colonial structure.
- Colonialism may be divided into three distinct stages which were related to distinct forms of exploitation or surplus appropriation. Consequently, each stage represented a different pattern of subordination of colonial economy, society and polity and therefore, different colonial policies, political and administrative institutions, ideologies and impact as also different responses by the colonial people.
- The impact of British rule on Indian society and culture was widely different from what India had known before. The establishment of colonial rule in India was followed by a systematic attempt to disseminate colonial culture and ideology as the dominant cultural current.
- Orientalism was after all an ideology which stemmed from the need of the British rule to legitimize their rule in India. It produced knowledge about the Indian society, a process which has been called as 'reverse acculturation'.
- If orientalist discourse was initially premised on a respect for the ancient traditions, it did produce knowledge about the subject society, which ultimately prepared the ground for the rejection of orientalism as a policy of governance.
- The orientalist discourse essentialized certain Brahminical texts and the Islamic laws as constituting the indigenous body of legal knowledge, which resulted in the translations of dharmasastras and Halhed's Code of the Gentoo laws.
- The founder of ethnographic studies in India was Herbert Risley. In his book *Caste and Tribes of Bengal* published in 1891 Risley talked about Brahminical sociology, and discussed ethnography of the castes.
- Along with American sociologists like Parsons and Merton, Marxist thinkers continued to influence Indian sociologists in the post-independence period.

1.7 **Y TERMS**

- **Colonialism:** Establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one region by people from another
- **Finance capitalism:** A term in Marxian political economics that denotes the subordination of processes of production to the accumulation of profits in a financial system
- **Zamindar:** A zamindar was an aristocrat, typically hereditary, who held enormous tracts of land and held control over the peasants, from whom the zamindars reserved the right to collect tax.
- **Monopoly:** It is the exclusive possession or control of the supply of or trade in a commodity or service.
- **Laissez faire:** Laissez faire is an economic system in which transactions between private parties are free from government interference such as regulations, privileges, tariffs, and subsidies.

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1.8 **ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'**

1. The origin of Indian sociology as a distinct discipline can be traced back to the 1920s, during the colonial period.
2. The essence of colonialism is the idea of deliberate exploitation of another country, its resources and inhabitants. The political, economic or social development in a colony are devised in keeping with the interests of the metropolitan country rather than the needs of the colony itself.
3. The drain of wealth theory was developed by Indian nationalist thinkers mainly with a view to analyse one of the main causes of poverty in India.
4. The colonial policies that governed India under British rule reduced India to the position of a market for British manufactures and a source of raw materials and food grains.
5. The British agrarian policy was mainly aimed at drawing out maximum land revenue.
6. The commercialization of Indian agriculture was promoted to provide raw materials to the British industries and to convert India into a raw material producing country.
7. The Press, while criticizing official policies, on the one hand, urged the people to unite, on the other it also helped spread modern ideas of self-government, democracy, civil rights and industrialization.
8. Introduction of a modern system of education afforded opportunities for assimilation of modern western ideas, which, in turn, gave a new direction to Indian political thinking, although the English system of education had been conceived by the rulers in the interest of efficient administration. The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Paine, Spencer and Voltaire helped many Indians imbibe modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist ideas.
9. According to the Grierson (Linguistic Survey of India, 1903-28) there are 179 languages and as many as 544 dialects in the country. The Constitution of India, in its 8th Schedule recognizes 22 official languages with English as an important associate language.
10. The four linguistic families in India are the Austric, Sino-Tibetan, Dravidian and Indo-Aryan.
11. Unity in diversity expresses the opinion that India can remain a strong and unified country while retaining its cultural diversity.

1.9 **QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES****Short-Answer Questions**

1. Write a short-note on the emergence of sociology in India.
2. What were the views of Indian nationalists with regards to British colonialism in India?
3. Describe the second stage of capitalism in India.
4. What were the positive impacts of British rule in India?

5. Write a short-note on religious composition and diversity in Indian society after independence.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of colonialism.
2. What were the Marxist views on colonialism?
3. Explain the concept of 'Drain of Wealth'.
4. Write a detailed note on the features of colonialism in India.
5. What was the general economic impact of colonialism on India?

1.10 FURTHER READING

MacIver, R.M and C. Page. 1962. *Society: An Introductory Analysis*. New York: Macmillan.

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UNIT 2 COLONIAL CONTEXT

Colonial Context

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Colonial Legacy in Sociology and Social Anthropology in Post-Independence India
- 2.3 Summary
- 2.4 Key Terms
- 2.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.6 Questions and Exercises
- 2.7 Further Reading

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Sociology is the study of human society or societies. However, such a simple initial definition of the subject poses the question, 'What is human society?' There is a difference of emphasis between the singular form of a society and its plural form. 'Society', as a singular term, appears general and unlimited. The plural term, 'societies', sounds more like a set of container units distinct from each other, such that one can take them one by one to inspect their contents.

In fact, sociology has always studied societies, both, taken separately and together, as 'human societies'. The balance between the two aspects may vary, but in the end, the study of one absolutely requires the study of the other. Neither of them makes sense independently. For instance, considering India as a society, one can think of it in terms of cities, factories, schools, farms or prisons. One can also think of it in terms of politics, media or divinity. It is simple to connect all these factors. They can also be visualized as confined within the boundaries of the Indian states and referred to under the general heading of 'Indian society'.

The development of culture, ways of acting, thinking and feeling makes human society special as compared with the societies of other species. These features are transmitted from one generation to the next and across societies through learning, not through inheritance. Culture includes language and technology, both of which involve the communication of ideas and the possibility of sophisticated coordination of action. This vastly enhances adaptability.

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This unit will begin with an extensive look at the concept of colonialism and its impact in India.

Any study of Indian society would be incomplete without an understanding of the effects of colonialism. India was under British domination for around two hundred years, and this had an immense impact on the social, economic and the cultural situation of Indian society.

Colonialism is basically the establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one region by people from another. Simply put, it is a practice of domination which involves the conquest of one set of people by another. It implies various unequal relationships whose impact trickles down to almost all areas of life.

Thinkers are divided on the topic whether India's colonization by the British had a completely adverse effect or whether it also affected the nation positively in certain aspects. The economic historian Dr. Tirthankar Roy asserted that the regenerative role of colonialism played a significant part in shaping the present Indian socio-political system. However, scholars like Aditya Mukherjee and Bipin Chandra have taken a diametrically opposite stand and argue that the regenerative role of British administration was just a myth.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the outline of Indian society
- Discuss the features of colonialism in India
- Explain the stages of colonialism in India
- Evaluate the social and cultural impact of colonialism

2.2 COLONIAL LEGACY IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

It is difficult to understand the development of sociology in India without alluding to its colonial history. By the 1850s, the colonial state in India was about to experience numerous critical changes.

Land, and the revenue and authority that accumulated from the relationship between it and the state, had been central to the formation of the early colonial state, eclipsing the formation of East India Company rule in that mixture of formal and private trade that itself marked the formidable state-like functions of the country.

The most significant event that took place was the 1857 War of Independence, which suggested showed that the British did not know anything about the folkways and

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customs of the Indian people. If they had, the revolt would not have occurred. One of the significant impacts of the 1857 revolt the advent of ethnographic studies. It was with the advent of ethnography, anthropology and sociology that began to provide empirical data of British rule.

The founder of ethnographic studies in India was Herbert Risley. In his book *Caste and Tribes of Bengal* published in 1891 Risley talked about Brahminical sociology, and discussed ethnography of the castes. It was his work that made the British realise the importance of caste in India. As the scholar Nicholas Dirks observes, 'Risley's final ethnographic contribution to colonial knowledge thus ritualised the divineness of caste, as well as its fundamental compatibility with politics only in the two registers of ancient Indian monarchy or modern Britain's benevolent despotism'.

In the British period, sociology and social anthropology developed in India in the colonial interests. The British administrators wanted to obtain knowledge of Indian customs, manners and social life so as to rule India better. Sociology developed due to the intellectual curiosity of western scholars and the reactions of Indian scholars to them.

Moreover, Christian missionaries wanted to know local Indian languages, folklore and culture to help them in their missionary activities. These overlapping interests led to a series of tribal, caste, village and religious community studies and ethnological and linguistic surveys. On the other hand, some western scholars were attracted by the Sanskrit language, Vedic and Aryan civilization, others were attracted by the nature of its ancient political economy, law and religion. These scholars were by in large labelled orientalist. Beginning from William Jones, Max Muller and others, there was a growth of Indological studies.

The political theorists and philosopher Karl Marx was attracted by the nature of rule in India to help him in his theory of the evolution of capitalism. In the same way, the scholar Henry Maine was interested in the Hindu legal system and village communities to establish the theory of status to contract.

Therefore, Indian society and culture became the testing ground of various theories, and a field to study problems like the growth of towns, poverty, religion, land tenure, village social organization and other native social institutions. The wide array of Western scholarship on Indian society in the pre Independence period also had an impact on Indian sociologists. Some Indian sociologists like G.S. Ghurye were inspired by indological perspectives, others like M.N. Srinivas were inspired by the structural functional and R.K. Mukherjee.

After Independence

An important change in Indian sociology after independence was in regard to the external intellectual influences. Before independence the teaching of sociology and social anthropology was mainly, if not wholly, influenced by the then current theoretical concerns in Great Britain. Indian sociologists are by in large influenced by diffusionism and functionalism (of Malinowski). The syllabi in the pre independence period also reflected traditions of ethnology, evolutionism and Indology. After independence, however, American sociological traditions significantly influenced the teaching of sociology in India. This can be seen from the type of subjects that were taught. For example, structural-functional theory (Parsons and Merton) and research methodology. Along with American sociologists like Parsons and Merton, Marxist thinkers continued to influence Indian sociologists in the post-independence period. In the middle of such diverse intellectual stimuli, Indian

Check Your Progress

9. How many languages are present in India?
10. What are the four linguistic families in India?
11. What is the meaning of the phrase 'unity in diversity'?

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sociologists began to criticize, modify and develop different sociological methods in the study of Indian society and culture, and these were echoed in the syllabi of different Indian universities.

2.3 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The origin of Indian sociology as a distinct discipline can be traced back to the 1920s, during the colonial period. For smooth administration, the British administrators had to understand the Indian customs, manners and institutions.
- The origin, development and functioning of the various customs and traditions, the economy and polity of the village/tribal community, and the Hindu caste system and joint family system were some of the important themes of study by the British administrators and intellectuals.
- The formal teaching of sociology began only in the second decade of the 20th century—at the University of Bombay in 1914, at Calcutta University in 1917, and at Lucknow University in 1921. But in pre-Independence era, only three other universities—Mysore, Osmania and Poona—had included sociology as a course subject.
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- Colonialism is basically the establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one region by people from another.
- Thinkers are divided on the topic whether India's colonization had a completely adverse effect or did it also affect the nation positively in certain aspects.
- Bipan Chandra states that colonialism 'is a well-structured whole, a distinct social formation (system) or sub-formation (sub-system) in which the basic control of the economy and society is in the hands of a foreign capitalist class which functions in the colony (or semi-colony) through a dependent and subservient economic, social, political, and intellectual structure whose forms can vary with the changing conditions of the historical development of capitalism as a world-wide system'.
- There are various theories of colonialism such as the liberal and Marxist views and the views of the Indian nationalists.
- It led to the complete but complex integration of India's economy with the world capitalist system but in a subservient position.

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- To suit British industry, a peculiar structure of production and international division of labour was forced upon India
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2.4 KEY TERMS

- **Colonialism:** Establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one region by people from another
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- **Laissez faire:** Laissez faire is an economic system in which transactions between private parties are free from government interference such as regulations, privileges, tariffs, and subsidies.

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2.5 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The origin of Indian sociology as a distinct discipline can be traced back to the 1920s, during the colonial period.
2. The essence of colonialism is the idea of deliberate exploitation of another country, its resources and inhabitants. The political, economic or social development in a colony are devised in keeping with the interests of the metropolitan country rather than the needs of the colony itself.
3. The drain of wealth theory was developed by Indian nationalist thinkers mainly with a view to analyse one of the main causes of poverty in India.
4. The colonial policies that governed India under British rule reduced India to the position of a market for British manufactures and a source of raw materials and food grains.
5. The British agrarian policy was mainly aimed at drawing out maximum land revenue.
6. The commercialization of Indian agriculture was promoted to provide raw materials to the British industries and to convert India into a raw material producing country.
7. The Press, while criticizing official policies, on the one hand, urged the people to unite, on the other it also helped spread modern ideas of self-government, democracy, civil rights and industrialization.
8. Introduction of a modern system of education afforded opportunities for assimilation of modern western ideas, which, in turn, gave a new direction to Indian political thinking, although the English system of education had been conceived by the rulers in the interest of efficient administration. The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Paine, Spencer and Voltaire helped many Indians imbibe modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist ideas.
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11. Unity in diversity expresses the opinion that India can remain a strong and unified country while retaining its cultural diversity.

2.6 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short-note on the emergence of sociology in India.
2. What were the views of Indian nationalists with regards to British colonialism in India?
3. Describe the second stage of capitalism in India.
4. What were the positive impacts of British rule in India?

5. Write a short-note on religious composition and diversity in Indian society after independence.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of colonialism.
2. What were the Marxist views on colonialism?
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2.7 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 INDOLOGICAL OR TEXTUAL PERSPECTIVES

NOTES

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 G.S. Ghurye
 - 2.2.1 Contribution of G.S. Ghurye to Sociology
 - 2.2.2 Caste System and Its Characteristics
- 2.3 Louis Dumont
 - 2.3.1 Little and Great Traditions
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.7 Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you were introduced to the emergence of society and sociology in India. You also learned about the impact of colonialism on the Indian economy and society. We will now go on to discuss various perspectives of looking at Indian society.

Indian sociology has followed many perspectives to explore Indian culture and society, which have developed through constant interaction with the Western systems of knowledge as well as through indigenous knowledge systems. These perspectives are developed by scholars who are placed in certain socio-cultural milieu and their ways of looking at social reality differs with regard to their differential experiential domains and social contexts. These perspectives help in exploring social phenomena, social processes and social reality in general in the Indian sub-continent. This unit will focus on indological or textual perspectives of Indian society, specifically the views of the social thinker G.S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont.

G.S. Ghurye is one of India's most renowned sociologists. His seminal work delineated the characteristics of the caste system in India, examining the caste system through both cultural and structural viewpoints. The French sociologist Louis Dumont, a towering figure in the field of sociology and anthropology in the world, specialized in the unique culture and society of India.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the theories propagated by G.S. Ghurye
- Analyse the characteristics of the caste system as given by G.S. Ghurye
- Discuss Louis Dumont's approach to the study of Indian society

3.2 G.S. GHURYE

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Govind Sadashiv Ghurye was born on 12th December, 1893 in a Brahmin family on the west coast of India. He grew up to become the first and one of the finest exponents of sociology in India. He studied sociology and social anthropology at Cambridge University. On his return from Cambridge, he continued with his research and teaching and spent long years at Mumbai University. Ghurye died at the age of 90 on 28 December, 1984. He remained intellectually agile till his death and published 31 books during his lifetime. He is often considered to be the 'Father of Indian Sociology'.

Ghurye's most enduring contribution to Indian sociology is his fruitful synthesis of the indological and sociological perspectives. Despite his training at Cambridge under the British anthropologist WHRV Rivers and his broad acceptance of the structural-functional approach, Ghurye did not strictly conform to the functionalist tradition while interpreting the complex facets of Indian society and culture which he chose to investigate. Indeed, Ghurye helped the emergence of sociology as a distinct discipline in India from its early beginnings in Indology and descriptive ethnology. The exploration of diverse aspects of Indian culture and society through the use of Indological sources is the most outstanding achievement of Ghurye. His monographs on *Indian Sadhus* (1964), on *Religious Consciousness* (1965), on *Gotra and Charan as the two Brahmanical Institutions* (1972), among others, reflect his scholarly bent. Ghurye's work, *Caste and Race in India* (1932) combined the historical, anthropological, and sociological approaches. Later, he made a comparative study of kinship in Indo-European cultures. In his studies of kinship and caste, Ghurye emphasized two points: First, the kin and caste networks of India had parallels in some other societies. Second, kinship and caste served in the past as integrative frameworks. The evolution of Indian society was based on the integration of diverse racial and ethnic groups through these networks.

The *gotra* and *charana* were kin-categories of Indo-European languages which systematized the rank and status of the people. These categories were derived from *rishis* of the past. These *rishis* were the real or eponymous founders of the *gotra* and *charana*. According to Ghurye, the rules of endogamy and commensality which marked them into a totality or collectivity. The Hindu religion provided the conceptual and ritualistic guidelines for this integration. The Brahmins in India played a key role in legitimizing the caste structure through their interpretation of *dharmashastras*, which were the compendia of sacred codes.

Ghurye introduced a down to earth empiricism in Indian sociology and social anthropology. He was not dogmatic in the use of theory and methodology.

Ghurye's works on tribes were general as well as specific. He wrote a general work on scheduled tribes in which he dwelt on the historical, administrative and social dimension of Indian tribes. He also wrote on specific tribes such as the Kolis of Maharashtra. Ghurye was of the view that the Indian tribes were like 'backward Hindus'. Their backwardness was due to their imperfect integration into Hindu society.

Ghurye made original contributions to the study of Indian religious beliefs and practices. He wrote three books on this in the period between 1950 and 1965. He argued that the religious consciousness in ancient India, Egypt and Babylonia was centred around temples.

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In his work on Indian sadhus, Ghurye examined the paradoxical nature of renunciation in India. In Indian culture, the sadhu or *sannyasin* is supposed to be detached from all caste norms, social conventions, etc. In fact, he is outside 'the pail of society.' Indian sadhus have acted as the arbiters of religious disputes, patronized learning of scriptures and even defended religion against external attacks. Thus, Ghurye believed that renunciation has been a constructive force in Hindu society.

Ghurye also wrote on Indian art but unlike Radhakamal Mukherjee, who viewed it as a vehicle of values, norms and ideals of a civilization which had thrived through the centuries, Ghurye was looking at art as a specifically Hindu configuration. According to him, the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist artistic monuments shared common elements. In contrast, Hindu and Muslim monuments were grounded in diverse value systems. The Indian temples were indigenous in inspiration. But Muslims art was Persian or Arabic and had no roots in this soil. He did not agree with the view that the Muslims monuments in India represented a synthesis. The Hindu elements merely remained decorative in Muslims buildings.

3.2.1 Contribution of G.S. Ghurye to Sociology

As stated before, G.S. Ghurye contributed immensely to the study and growth of sociology in India. His most enduring contribution to Indian sociology is his attempt to synthesize Indological and sociological perspectives. He helped sociology emerge as a distinct discipline in India from its early beginnings in Indology and descriptive ethnology. His own classic study about caste, published in his book *Caste and Race in India*, moved the focus of sociological study from a reconstruction of a social institution, i.e., caste, from Sanskrit texts to a study of how it functioned in the modern social reality. Other contributions of Dr Ghurye include *Caste and Race in India*, *Scheduled Tribes*, *Social Tensions in India*, *Vedic India* and *India Recreates Democracy*. In addition to his various publications, he had also earned international reputation in the field of sociology and won several awards and prizes.

Ghurye examined the caste system from both the cultural and structural viewpoints. He highlighted the dynamism of the caste system in India.

Ghurye's writings reveal a central theme, i.e., his conviction of the presence of an overall cultural unity of the Indian population or the Hindu population to be more precise. He says that this unity is manifest in the process of acculturation, which has been going on across the country. This acculturation, which began with the arrival of the Aryans, has proved to be a great tool of unification and has kept the people together despite their diverse racial and cultural background.

Ghurye founded the prestigious Indian Sociological Society in 1952 and started its bi-annual journal sociological bulletin. Thus, he created effective forums for the exchange of views of various eminent scholars and thinkers.

3.2.2 Caste System and Its Characteristics

According to Dr. G.S. Ghurye, any attempt to define caste 'is bound to fail because of the complexity of the phenomenon.' He has outlined the following characteristics of the Indian caste society in his book *Caste and Race in India*:

- **Segmental division of society:** A caste society is divided into several small groups called castes. Each of these castes is a well-developed social group; the membership of which is based on birth. Since membership is based on birth,

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mobility from one caste to another is impossible. Each caste has its own traditional social status, occupation, customs, rules and regulations. Castes are groups with a well-developed and distinct life of their own.

- **Role of caste panchayats:** There are caste councils or caste panchayats to regulate the conduct of members. During the early days, every caste in every village used to have its own caste panchayat. It consisted of five chosen members who enjoyed social privileges and respect. The caste panchayat used to perform a number of functions. It used to make the members comply with caste rules and regulations. Settling caste disputes and giving its final verdict on matters referred to it, were its other functions. It used to award punishments to those who violated the caste rules and obligations. Yet another function of the caste council was to safeguard the interests of the caste members. Thus, Ghurye wrote, 'a caste was a group with a separate arrangement for meting out justice to its members apart from that of the community as a whole, within which the caste was included as only one of the groups.' From this, Ghurye concluded that the members of a caste ceased to be the members of the community as a whole in so far as that part of their morals, which is regulated by law was concerned. It is clear that caste almost enjoyed quasi-sovereignty from the fact that the caste council was prepared to retry criminal offences already decided by the courts of law.

The types of punishments that the councils awarded were as follows:

- Temporary or permanent outcasting
- Fines
- Feasts for the members of their caste
- Corporal punishment
- Religious expiation

Prof. Ghurye emphasized that in a caste-bound society community feeling must have been restricted. People owed greater allegiance to their caste than to the community as a whole. This is what he meant by segmental division of Indian society.

He also discussed the close bonds between people of the same caste. In times of need, festivities (like marriages) or tragedies (like untimely deaths), it is the caste members who are the first to be there to either help or participate. Hence, he says, castes are small and complete social worlds in themselves though existing within the larger society.

- **Hierarchy:** According to Ghurye, one of the principal characteristics of caste society is the hierarchy of groups. It is found all over the country. Caste groups are arranged into a four-fold social and ritual hierarchy, with Brahmins at the top and Shudras at the bottom. The Kshatriyas are placed after the Brahmins and the Vaishyas come in at number three. In the social hierarchy, the lowest rung of the caste society is occupied by the Shudras, who are treated as untouchables. Ritually, they are considered to be the most impure. Thus, the concept of hierarchy forms the crux of the caste society.

Ghurye observes that though this general four-fold gradation is valid, the place due to each caste or sub-caste is not easily determinable. Further, there is no acceptable common principle by which to grade the castes. With the exception of the Brahmins at the top and the degraded castes at the bottom, the members of a large number of intermediate castes think that their caste is better than their neighbour's caste and should be ranked accordingly.

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- **Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse:** Every caste imposes restrictions on its members with regards to food, drink and social intercourse. Caste often decides who can accept what kind of food from whom. All food is divided in two classes, *Kachcha* and *Pakka*. The general rule is that the members of a caste should accept *Kachcha* food—the food which uses water in its preparation—only from either their own caste members or from members of a ritually higher caste. A Brahmin would accept *Pakka* food—food cooked in *ghee*—from members of some lower castes but would never accept *Kachcha* food from them. Generally, any kind of food prepared by the Brahmins is acceptable to members of all castes.

There are also widespread beliefs of pollution by touch, which forces members of certain castes to maintain a social distance from members of a different caste. Ghurye has observed that ideas about the power of certain castes to convey pollution by touch is not so highly developed in Northern India as it is in Southern India. In some parts of the country, like Maharashtra, even the shadow or view of a Shudra or untouchable is sufficient to pollute a man from a higher caste. In Tamil Nadu, the *Shanar* or toddy tappers were supposed to keep twenty four paces away from a Brahmin. In Kerala, a Nayar would approach a Nambudiri Brahmin but could not touch him; whereas a Tiyan was supposed to keep himself at a distance of thirty six steps from a Brahmin (Ghurye 1950). Therefore, traditionally, the castes considered to be untouchables were forbidden entry into the upper-caste houses.

- **Civil and religious disabilities and of the different sections:** In a caste society, there is an unequal distribution of privileges and disabilities among its members. While the higher caste members enjoy all the privileges, the lower caste people suffer from all kinds of disabilities. According to Dr. Ghurye, 'Segregation of individual castes or of groups of castes in village is the most obvious mark of civil privileges and disabilities, and it has prevailed in a more or less definite form all over India. Segregation is more severe in the South than in the North.' The untouchables are not only segregated, but also forced to live separately on the outskirts of the residential area of the higher castes. They did not have any rights and were not allowed to move freely in the community.

Caste discrimination and exploitation of the lower castes was universal across the country. All over India, the impure castes are debarred from drawing water from the village well, which is used by the members of other castes. In Maharashtra, the *Mahars*—an untouchable caste—were prevented from spitting on the road as a pure caste Hindu might get polluted by touching the spit with his feet. A Mahar had to carry an earthen pot with him and spit into it. Further, he also had to drag a thorny branch with him to clean his footprints so that nobody got polluted by walking on his footsteps. Besides, he had to lie prostrate on the ground at a distance if a Brahmin was passing by so as to ensure that his shadow did not pollute the Brahmin. Members of the Mahar and *Mang* castes were not allowed to enter the city of Poona (Pune) before 9.00 a.m. and after 3.00 p.m. lest their long shadows pollute the high caste people. In Punjab, where such discrimination was less stringent, the schools run by the Government practically shut their doors on the students from impure castes like *Chamars* and *Mahars*. The teachers and students belonging to pure castes made life miserable for them and they found it difficult to sit in the same class rooms.

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In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the life of the lower castes was severely regulated. The upper castes prescribed to them the kind of houses they could build for themselves and what building materials they could use. The *Shanars* and *Izhavas*, toddy tappers of the eastern and western coasts, were not allowed to construct houses higher than a single storey. They were not allowed to carry umbrellas, wear shoes and gold ornaments, milk cows or use the ordinary language spoken by others.

The Brahmins were given more liberty because they were believed to be born 'pure' and 'superior'. Education and teaching were almost the monopoly of the higher caste people. Chanting the Vedic hymns was the exclusive privilege of the Brahmins. They have been regarded as the most important subject and it is the duty of the king to provide them with protection.

The Brahmins secured a host of privileges and perquisites for themselves on the strength of their importance to the effective running of the state or kingdom. They managed to pay less duties and taxes than others. They were given lenient punishments when found guilty of any crime. Their lands were assessed at lower rates than those of other castes and only they could enter the innermost precincts of the temples. The Brahmins were so conscious about their superiority that they did not even bow before the idols of Gods in a Shudra's house.

- **Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation:** In the caste-ridden society, there is a gradation of occupations also. Some occupations are considered to be superior and sacred, while certain others degrading and inferior. For a long time, occupations were very much associated with the caste system. Each caste had its own specific occupations and they were almost hereditary. Prof. Ghurye wrote that it was considered incorrect for a caste member to abandon his hereditary occupation in pursuit of another even though the latter might be a more lucrative option.

The restrictions placed on occupational mobility made it difficult for members of one caste to pursue the occupation of another caste. The effects of these restrictions were two fold. Firstly, prestigious professions like priesthood were monopolized by the Brahmins and no other caste was allowed entry into that occupation. Another respectable profession, teaching, was also almost the exclusive preserve of the upper castes. Secondly, degraded occupations like sweeping, scavenging, washing clothes, etc. were shunned by the higher castes and became the hereditary occupations of the lower castes.

Individual talents, aptitudes, interests, enterprise, abilities and achievements were neglected and every caste was forced to stick to its traditional occupations.

- **Restrictions on marriage:** The caste system imposed restrictions on marriage also. Caste is an endogamous group. Endogamy is a rule of marriage according to which an individual has to marry within his or her group. Each caste is sub-divided into several sub-castes, which are again endogamous. Inter-caste marriages were strictly forbidden. Prof. Ghurye wrote that endogamy is such a dominant aspect of caste society that an eminent sociologist regarded it as the essence of a caste system.

There are, however, a few exceptions to the general rule of marrying within one's own group, which are due to the practice of hypergamy. In some parts of Punjab, especially in the hills, a man of a higher caste can marry a girl from a lower caste while in Malabar, the younger sons of the Nambudiri and other Brahmins marry

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Kshatriya and Nayar women. Outside of this practice, the only other authentic case where inter-caste marriage is allowed is that of some of the artisan castes of Malabar. Any man trying to violate this law was put out of his own sub-caste and his chances of regaining entry were doubtful. For example, if the Konkanasth Brahmins or the Karhada Brahmins of Maharashtra marry outside their sub-castes, expulsion from the membership of those sub-castes is generally the penalty awarded to them.

Due to the strong presence of sub-caste endogamy in matters of marriage and other social interactions, Ghurye tried to highlight the differing views as to whether sub-castes should be treated as equal to castes. Gait believed that this should not be done as it would create a huge multiplicity of castes.

Sub-caste was important only for the members of the caste who framed rules for their different sub-castes. For example, a Brahmin considered the various low castes as Shudras and does not go into the further sub-divisions within the Shudras but the Shudras are conscious about the various sub-castes within themselves. On balance, Ghurye pointed out that no scientific student of caste, not even Gait himself, proposed to follow the Indian sentiment in this matter. Rather, to get a correct idea of the institution of caste, sub-castes should be recognized as the real castes.

3.3 LOUIS DUMONT

Professor Louis Dumont (1911-1998) was a French anthropologist, born in the Ottoman Empire of France. He taught at the Oxford University during the 1950s and was director at the EHESS (*École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*) in Paris, France.

During the Second World War, Dumont was imprisoned by the Nazis. Later, he developed his German skills and after a spell as a farm hand, he was employed in a factory on the outskirts of Hamburg. He was given a Sanskrit manual by his wife Jenny and ended up receiving a private weekly magazine. He took Sanskrit lessons from an Indologist, Walther Schubring, a specialist on the study of Jainism.

By the end of his life, Professor Louis Dumont had become a specialist on Indian cultures and societies. He also studied western social philosophy and ideologies. He selected south Indian universities for his study, partly due to the shift of his interest from Indo-European and Vedism to classical Hinduism. He studied with the martial caste of *Pramalai Kallar* for nearly eight months; they were selected mainly for their cultural diversity and distance from the Sanskritized Brahmins caste. Although the Aryan-Dravidian dichotomy was and still is, important for students of kinship and marriage, Dumont came to emphasize the oneness of Indian civilization.

Dumont's book *Homo Hierarchicus* discusses many new perspectives of the Indian social structure. The ideas of tradition and ideology were intrinsic parts of his writing. He also brought the method of 'structuralism' to his study of the Indian caste system. The major elements of his methodology are as follows:

- Cognitive historical approach
- Indological and structuralist approach
- Ideology and structure
- Dialectic transformational relationship and comparison

Check Your Progress

1. What is G.S. Ghurye's most enduring contribution to Indian sociology?
2. What did Ghurye mean by the segmental division of Indian society?
3. According to Ghurye, what made it difficult for members one caste to pursue the occupation of another caste?

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Dumont explains the theory of caste through his Indological approach and assumes the union of Indian civilization (unity). Dumont believes that Indian civilization is a specific ideology whose main components are its opposition to westernization and modern change with traditional, holism against individualism, hierarchy against equality, purity against pollution, status against power and so on. This basic opposite behaviour is mainly the base for comparing the global ideology within the specific ideology of the Indian caste system. The opposition is between the principles of pure and impure. The idea of hierarchy has a crucial place in Dumont's study of the Indian caste system. The system of hierarchy implies opposition between the pure and the polluted, that is, it also helps in determining its dialectics. It also gives a suggestion of the relationship of encompassing and being encompassed. In the Indian caste system, the principle of purity encompasses the impure. He studied south Indian sub-castes, their social organization and religion of the *Pramalai Kallar* caste, in particular.

In the book *Homo Hierarchicus*, Dumont makes an argument that is deductive in nature—a general theoretical hypothesis being confronted with empirical data that may lead to the basic assumption that the theory comes first, followed by empirical data. There is much in the writings of Dumont that supports this thought, for example, the manner in which he delegates empirical aspects to the residual level. However, this book was the final product of more than three years of research work and study in the southern and northern parts of India and a result of an intensive participation with the related literature of that time.

Dumont became a close associate of Evans-Pritchard and David Pocock during his Oxford days and closely worked with the British empirical tradition of sociology. Eventually, Dumont credited Evans-Pritchard with an achievement in 'ethnographic theory', for immediately discovering the conceptual principle of *Nuer Political Organization*, from his research data. Dumont's theories were based on hierarchy and his thoughts on Indian society and traditional culture provided the basics for a great debate in the 1970s.

In 1955, a study of a little community of an Indian village by McKim Marriott was a major landmark study of Indian society and culture. Marriott exemplifies a general drift in anthropology, away from the deserts, jungles and arctic wastes. This study carried out by the anthropologist has contributed significantly to the drift in the Indian traditional social system. Many western professional anthropologists opted for India, as their field of research and many of those who did, studied tribal and rural societies. M.N. Srinivas was also a representative of the structural functionalist camp in British social anthropology. You will learn about his views in the next unit.

Similarly, many other thinkers also studied the changes in Indian society. Yogendra Singh contributed in this matter, with special reference to advancement in Indian society. He suggested that social change is an ideology that must be studied with the help of scientific tools. He suggested the following seven approaches and concepts in this subject:

- Sanskritization
- Westernization
- Little and Great Traditions
- Multiple Traditions
- Theories of Structural Changes

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- Dialectical Approach
- Cognitive Historical Approach

These have shown that theoretical perspectives involved in the anthropology of India and study of traditional shift are diverse in nature, similar to the social and cultural phenomena under study and investigation. There may not be any single approach that may claim pre-eminence, neither can particular theories or methods, despite drifts in urgent issues and popular trends, claim superiority over others. That is why there exists a continuous debate on these approaches among the researchers.

3.3.1 Little and Great Traditions

The approach to analyse social change with the help of the concepts of 'Little and Great Traditions' was used by Robert Redfield in his studies of the Mexican communities. He also used the concept to analyse Indian society. Influenced by this model, Milton Singer and McKim Marriott conducted some studies on social changes in India. The basic ideas in this approach are:

- Civilization
- Social organization
- Tradition

Yogendra Singh described the 'Great Tradition' as 'those persisting and important arrangements of roles and statuses appearing in such corporate groups as castes and sects, or in teachers, reciters, ritual-leaders of one kind or another, that are concerned with the cultivation and inculcation of the great tradition'

Indian social structure is based on a two-step hierarchy, in which there exist two types of cultural processes. The cultural process that is followed by the elite, or members of upper class society are considered to be the 'Great Tradition'. On the other hand, cultural process being adopted and followed by people belonging to the lower section of the society is the 'Little Tradition'. There is a constant interaction and relation between these two traditions.

The analysis by sociologists reveals that approaches of 'Great Tradition' and 'Little Tradition' help in providing a comparative study in the area of cultural change in society. The same is not possible through the approaches of Sanskritization and Westernization. The reason lies in the reality of Westernization, which is not directly connected with the cultural process of social change.

This concept is based on the idea of evolutionary view of civilization and traditional structure. This states that there is always a kind of interaction among the traditions of the society. The little tradition social structure consists of its own role incumbents that include artists, poets and storytellers.

The sociologist Milton Singer framed some statements about the social change, based on cultural background:

- Indian society is a primary civilization, fashioned with 'Little Tradition'.
- This type of continuity in culture is due to the sharing nature of common cultural consciousness.
- A special class is the main agent of these certain cultural processes, with the help of religious books and texts.

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- It is primary characteristic of civilization that it does not accept modernization in a linear fashion. Indian society is the example of such a civilization.

Subsequently, it was argued that 'Little Tradition' and 'Great Tradition' distinctly interacted in culture. S.C. Dube explained the six folds of the tradition in India, they are as follows:

- Classical
- Local
- Regional
- Western
- Sub cultural
- Emergent

For Milton Singer and Robert Redfield the meaning of 'tradition' is the passing of thoughts, information, beliefs and customs by word of mouth, with the help of examples, to present and forthcoming generations. So to say, tradition is the inherited practices or opinion and conventions associated with a social group for a particular duration. It also incorporates the attitudes of people, durable interactional methods and social and cultural institutions. Similarly 'Great Tradition' is concerned with elites, literates and a reflective few who are capable of analyzing the facts, interpreting and reflecting knowledge based on culture. While 'Little Tradition' comprises the belief pattern, the institutions, knowledge that included proverbs, riddles, folkways, legends and myths that imbibe cultural knowledge from the 'Great Tradition'. The solidarity of Indian civilization is reflected in the perpetuation of the unity of worldview of the folk/peasant and the elites, or through cultural performances and their cultural outcomes. Cultural outcomes are institutionalized around the structure of great tradition and little traditions.

There are number of centres of little traditions throughout India and there exists a network of socio-cultural relationships in the society. Such relations are mainly based on cultural knowledge and ideology of the society. Meanwhile, there exists a difference in the cultural performances of 'Great Traditions' and 'Little Traditions'. The area of great tradition represents the text based on the *Shastras*, while the area of 'Little Traditions' is based on folk or peasant and local versions of text-based knowledge and cultural performance. Great Tradition means persisting for important arrangements of various roles and status appearing in institutions, like caste, sects, teachers, ritual leaders, priests, cultural performers, religions teachers, etc. They are all engaged in spreading and regular dissemination of cultural knowledge to the society. The basis of knowledge which they include is from various religious texts (mythologies and epics).

The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are two important mythological texts which formed the foundation of cultural performances of the society. Both these great epics have their local versions available for the society, written in simple local languages with local examples for easy comprehension of folk or peasant population. Since the main points of cultural performance are villages and the spectators are the peasants, the little tradition consists of its self-role incumbents as follows:

- Folk artists
- Folk musicians
- Story-tellers
- Tellers of riddles

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- Street singers
- Mendicant performers
- Interpreters of proverbs and puzzles
- Street dancers
- Astrologers
- Fortune-tellers
- Medicine men

In a village, the teacher of a primary school is a main person for little tradition knowledge. He himself performs multi-cultural activities and with the help of village leaders, organizes various folk performances, mythological plays, dramas, recitation of sacred language, saying of prayers, accompanied by folk music for the following purposes:

- Singing of devotional songs
- Providing entertainment

Singing of devotional songs is a sacred duty, while providing entertainment is a secular one, meant for relieving stress and strain with which peasants are sometimes concerned. This practice of little and great traditions helps in fostering the collaboration, mutual cooperation and unequal interaction. In general, 'customs' are what people follow in a society and do or adopt collectively and transmit the same from one generation to another. Through the regularity of interaction between these traditions, Indian civilization is moving forward, similar to the western world. The changes brought in 'Great Tradition' were started by individuals or groups of educated and literate people, or a selected few, keeping in view the requirements of time. As the 'Great Tradition' in India is connected with certain cultural bonds or any innovation or change, which is happening or taking place at any centre, it influences similar changes at other locations and centres, step by step. Once the centre of great tradition assimilates change, it also influences some sort of changes in the little tradition of its ground level. Hence, the process of change is flowing from top to down or from the higher to the ground in Indian society and civilization.

Indian tribal societies generally form a dimension of Indian civilization, but not necessarily the part, as do little traditions in the peasant societies. Indian tribal societies are governed autonomously by their own social framework. They have their own traditionally and mutually adjusted and internally dependent components. Indian tribal society is autonomous because it does not need any other system for its continued functioning. It may be seen that such traditional systems have evidences of elements of culture, communicated from others, but it may be understood that the system moves forward by itself and in describing its parts and its workings patterns, there is no need for going outside from the small group itself. There may be exceptions where one tribal society depends on another tribal society for a usable commodity or service. Such exceptions are small and do not seriously modify the fact that culture is maintained by the communication of heritage through generations of these people, who make up the local society.

The culture of the peasant community is not working autonomously. It is an aspect or a dimension of the civilization, of which it is a component. Since the peasant society is part-society, so it is considered to be the half culture. For the maintenance of peasant culture a continued communication needs to exist between the local community of ideas and thoughts originating externally. The mind power and intellectual and sometimes religious and moral life of the peasant village is perpetually not complete.

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The peasant culture has a history based on evidence. This history is not local, it is the history of the entire civilization of which the village culture is one local expression. These points are in recognition of both the generic aspects of the peasant culture of the village. Hence, the peasant culture is half culture or part culture, as stated earlier. The story of isolated tribal communities is different from others. For better understanding of tribal communities, new thoughts and new procedure of research and investigation need to be called upon. For the study of villages, one needs to focus on the relevance of research by the researchers of history, literature, religion and philosophy, all together. It makes anthropology very difficult and much more interesting for revealing the facts of traditions.

Now, we take a look at the recognition which has been connected with discussions of the civilization, which is the difference between the 'Great and Little Traditions'. It may be further stated, in a different way, for high culture and low culture, or folk and classical culture, or popular and learnt traditions. Milton Singer also used the terminology hierarchic and low culture. In a civilization or society, there exists a great tradition of the reflective few, and there is a little tradition, which is largely non-reflective.

Great tradition is formulated and taught in primary schools or temples. Little tradition keeps itself going in the daily way of living of village communities. The tradition of the philosopher and literate man is a tradition that is consciously formulated and handed down to generations and that of the little tradition is for the most part, taken for granted and not submitted to such selection and considered refinement and further improvement of ideas.

These two traditions are mutually dependent. 'Great and little tradition can be thought of as two currents of thought and action, distinguishable, yet ever flowing in and out of each other. The views of great and little tradition relationships may be like histograms. We sometimes see diagrams of the up and downfall changes through the time of religion and civilization. Teachings are invented and they are continually understood by peasants in ways not intended by teachers. Hence, great and little tradition may be thought of as two simultaneous streams of traditions of the civilization.

It is not possible to differentiate between the two traditions in all isolated tribal societies. If we see among Andaman islanders, we find nothing at all about any esoteric aspect of religion or thought. There are certain differences between laymen and experts in understanding of religious background. In any primitive tribal society, this type of dichotomy is similar to the difference between the great and little tradition with respect to civilization and peasantry in Indian society. The tribal societies constitute a proto dimension of peasantry society. Some tribal societies or sections thereof are under the influence of the process of Hinduisation, as stated by many researchers.

Cognitive Historical Approach

Cognitive approach is considered to be the scientific investigation basis for human cognition, that is, all mental abilities of human beings like to accept, to learn, to remember, to think, to reason and to understand the human society.

The word 'cognition' came from the Latin word 'cognoscere' or 'to know'. Basically, a cognitive approach study describes how people get and apply knowledge of information for betterment and learning. It is very closely related to cognitive science and is influenced by artificial intelligence, modern science, philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, biology, physics and other sciences. The word 'cognitive psychology' came into sociology through the 1967 book *Cognitive Psychology* by Ulric Neisser.

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The cognitive approach focuses on the manner in which humans process information, looking at how we react on the available information that comes in to the person. In other words, the approach is interested in knowing the change in the tradition of the society in general. Specifically, it is interested in knowing how Indian society is divided into several forms since centuries. Moreover, it gives the idea as to how the traditional values and traditional patterns are changing and the variables that mediate between stimulus/input and response/output. Cognitive approach also aims at the study of internal processes including customs, folkways, religion, perception, attention, language, memory and thinking.

In the study of sociology and political science, the analyses of Dumont are generally discussed with fundamental reference to his great distinction between two types of societies, i.e., holistic and individualistic societies. Some critiques have suggested that merely emphasizing this contrast revealed a vague nostalgia for old hierarchical forms of social life of human beings.

The originality of Dumont's work lies in placing the emphasis on the changing of values that helps in changing a traditional type into a modern type of society. Researchers who protest against the idea of a holistic sociology are on the opposite side of Dumont. They disagree with the fundamental principles of his theoretical undertaking, that is:

- Sociology must grasp social life, on the basis of the ideas that the actors deploy
- A capacity which primarily incorporates the actors if they are citizens of a society with an individualistic ideology

All readings of Dumont started with what he himself (in the *Essais sur l'individualisme*) called the comparative principle.

In his work, he questions how western individualism counts as anthropology and not just as a history of ideas. Dumont dealt directly with changes in the ideas, which limited him to the hints when it came to institutions and social forms. Dumont explained this fact several times. As can be seen in his first publication, *La Tarasque* (1951), Dumont, a student of Marcel Mauss was hardly ignorant of the form and contents of field studies. As he said, his investigation of individualism made no claim to be complete. It is counted as anthropology because it needs in us a change of perspective that involves reform of our conceptual apparatus.

The work of Louis Dumont in the 'Great Tradition' was one of his major and principal contributions that remind us of what the 18th and the 19th century writers of French knew so well, namely how rare is our contemporary assumption of basic freedom, equality and a sort of brotherhood. He set a tough task for himself, namely an exploration of the origin of modern civilization of the humanity.

According to Dumont, for understanding anything, three basic things are required:

- The deployment of a sufficiently powerful and flexible methodology
- Scholarly knowledge that is both wide and deep
- Ability to ask the right questions

Here we are trying to look at the question that Dumont asks and the method he advocates for answering the question. Dumont wrote that 'In most of the human societies and in the first place, in traditional societies, the relations between human beings are very important and crucial, highly valued, than the relations between the human beings and material things'. Such primacy is reversed in modern type of societies, where relations among human beings are subordinate to relations between human and material things.

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This seems familiar to the readers of Karl Marx and the German sociologist Georg Simmel. Due to the impact of capitalistic society all relations are mediated through private property, the market and the capital.

The distinct contribution of Dumont is to investigate the opposition between individual and the group, as a hierarchy between two distinct elements of the society, each of which encompasses the other when considered from a certain perspective. The societal relation in individuals and the group of human beings is hierarchical in nature and a different relation means a different place in the hierarchal position.

The most basic formula of hierarchical opposition can be presented by the following fact:

Let us assume that human society and the society under investigation, both, show in their self-system of thoughts, the same two elements X and Y. It means one society should be subordinate X to Y and the other, Y to X is enough for considerable differences to occur in all their concepts under consideration.

When we are trying to analyse holistic societies, we must select a suitable methodology that helps in recognition and the submission of the individual to the entire unit. However, we must also oppose the *exclusivism* or *absolute socio-centrism* that accompanies every holistic ideology. Another important concept that is used for the study of human society is 'Cognitive Psychology'. It moves around the notion that 'if we want to know what makes people tick then we need to understand the internal processes of their self-mind'.

Dumont's work on the caste system

As stated earlier, Dumont has traced the history and distribution of the *Pramalai Kallars* of south India. He traced out their culture, agricultural practices, economic and political organizations of the society and the collective representations included in their social organization and religious framework. His work is particularly worthy as a structuralism ethnography and as the first step in the construction of a comprehensive structuralism theory of traditional Indian society. In his work, Dumont moves gracefully from texts, which are revealed as the governing conception of the contemporary caste structure of Indian society.

3.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Ghurye's most enduring contribution to Indian sociology is his fruitful synthesis of Indological and sociological perspective.
• The exploration of diverse aspects of Indian culture and society through the use of Indological sources is the most outstanding achievement of Ghurye.
• Ghurye examined the caste system from both the cultural and structural viewpoints. He highlighted the dynamism of the caste system in India.
• Ghurye's writings reveal a central theme, i.e., his conviction of the presence of an overall cultural unity of the Indian population or the Hindu population to be more precise.

Check Your Progress

- 4. What are the major elements of Dumont's methodology in his study of Indian society?
5. According to Robert Redfield, what is great tradition concerned with?
6. In Indian society, where does one learn the great tradition and little tradition?

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- According to Ghurye, a caste society is divided into several small groups called castes. Each of these castes is a well-developed social group; the membership of which is based on birth.
• According to Ghurye, one of the principal characteristics of caste society is the hierarchy of groups.
• Ghurye also states that in a caste society, there is an unequal distribution of privileges and disabilities among its members.
• Professor Louis Dumont was a French anthropologist, born in the Ottoman Empire of France. He taught at the Oxford University during the 1950s and was director at the EHESS in Paris, France.
• Dumont's book Homo Hierarchicus discusses many new perspectives of the Indian social structure.
• Dumont believes that Indian civilization is a specific ideology whose main components are its opposition to westernization and modern change with traditional, holism against individualism, hierarchy against equality, purity against pollution, status against power and so on.
• In the book Homo Hierarchicus Dumont makes an argument that is deductive in nature—a general theoretical hypothesis being confronted with empirical data that may lead to the basic assumption that the theory comes first, followed by empirical data.
• The approach to analyse social change with the help of the concepts of 'Little and Great Traditions' was used by Robert Redfield in his studies of the Mexican communities.
• 'Great Tradition' is concerned with elites, literates and a reflective few who are capable of analyzing the facts, interpreting and reflecting knowledge based on culture. While 'Little Tradition' comprises the belief pattern, the institutions, knowledge that included proverbs, riddles, folkways, legends and myths that imbibe cultural knowledge from the 'Great Tradition'.
• The Ramayana and Mahabharata are two important mythological texts which formed the foundation of cultural performances of the society.
• In the study of sociology and political science, the analyses of Dumont are generally discussed with fundamental reference to his great distinction between two types of societies, i.e., holistic and individualistic societies.
• The originality of Dumont's work lies in placing the emphasis on the changing of values that helps changing a traditional type into a modern type of society.

3.5 KEY TERMS

- Synthesis: It refers to the combination of components or elements to form a connected whole.
• Anthropology: The comparative study of human societies and cultures and their development is known as anthropology.
• Dogmatic: It as an adjective that describes someone who is inclined to lay down principles as undeniably true.

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- **Hierarchy:** It is a system in which members of an organization or society are ranked according to relative status or authority.
- **Deductive:** Something that is characterized by or based on the inference of particular instances from a general law.

3.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Ghurye's most enduring contribution to Indian sociology is his fruitful synthesis of Indological and sociological perspective.
2. G.S. Ghurye emphasized that in a caste-bound society community feeling must have been restricted. People owed greater allegiance to their caste.
3. The restrictions placed on occupational mobility made it difficult for members of one caste to pursue the occupation of another caste.
4. The major elements of his methodology are as follows:
 - Cognitive historical approach
 - Indological and structuralist approach
 - Ideology and structure
 - Dialectic transformational relationship and comparison
5. For Robert Redfield, great tradition is concerned with elites, literates and a reflective few who are capable of analyzing the facts, interpreting and reflecting knowledge based on culture.
6. In Indian society, great tradition is formulated and taught in primary schools or temples. Little tradition keeps itself going in the daily way of living of village communities.

3.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Ghurye's contribution to Indian sociology.
2. According to Ghurye, what is the role of hierarchy in the caste system?
3. Differentiate between little tradition and great tradition.
4. Write a short note on the cognitive historical approach.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Ghurye's writings reveal a central theme, i.e., his conviction of the presence of an overall cultural unity of the Indian population or the Hindu population to be more precise.
2. Discuss Ghurye's view of the characteristics of Indian caste system.
3. The idea of hierarchy has a crucial place in Dumont's study of the Indian caste system. Discuss.
4. What role does the little tradition and great tradition play in Indian society?

3.8 FURTHER READING

- Ahuja, Ram. 1993. *Indian Social System*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
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- Dube, S.C. 2005. *Indian Society*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.
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- Srinivas, M.N. 1995. *Social Change in Modern India*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

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UNIT 4 STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Structure

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- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 M.N. Srinivas
 - 4.2.1 Sanskritization
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4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you studied about indological or textual perspectives of Indian society, specifically the views of G.S. Ghurye and Louis Dumont. In this unit, we will move on to study structural-functional perspectives of Indian sociologists.

The basis of the system of structural functionalism was laid during the economic crisis of the 1930s. Alvin Gouldner, in *The Coming Crises of Western Sociology* (1970), argues that structural functionalism was developed as a response to the challenge posed by Marxism. Marxism was a general theory of society which condemned capitalism, whereas structural functionalism was to become a general theory of society which did not condemn capitalism or use it to offer an explanation to justify the various social phenomena taking place around the world.

Today, there has been a major revival of interest among younger American sociologists in the US, and there is now a flourishing 'neo-functional' school in existence. This unit will discuss the views of Indian structural-functionalists like M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dube.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Evaluate the process of sanskritization as enumerated by M.N. Srinivas
- Explain the concept of westernization
- Discuss the process of secularization
- Describe S.C. Dube's view of Indian villages

4.2 M.N. SRINIVAS

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Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas was born on 16 November 1916 in Mysore. He was a well-known sociologist and social anthropologist. His contribution to the discipline of sociology is immense having done pioneering works in the field of caste and study of social change in India. He completed his honours degree in social philosophy from Mysore University, followed by a post-graduation degree from Bombay University under G.S. Ghurye. He moved to Oxford University and did his D. Phil under A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and E.E. Evans-Pritchard.

According to T. N. Madan, Srinivas produced a fieldwork-based and richly documented Ph.D. dissertation on social organization among the Coorgs of Mysore in 1944, again at the University of Bombay (now Mumbai). In Oxford, he reworked on his dissertation, *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India*, that was published in 1952. The work has been considered a milestone in the world of social anthropology. The study was based on structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown. In this work, Srinivasan dissects the social and religious lives of the residents of Coorg and throws light on the interrelationships of the social actors and the basis of purity and pollution that become the foundation of social life. Religion has been sought to be understood by studying its contribution to maintenance of social order and has been reduced to seasonal rituals.

Srinivas was one of the first sociologists in India who took the actual village or a factory as a classroom for study and was not content with only a theoretical analysis. He wanted to study man in relation with his environment and wanted to study the various facets of cultural roles. T.N. Madan, a noted sociologist and Srinivas' friend for over three decades, states: 'He had the rare gift of conveying insightful observations in simple language. The term 'vote bank', the notion of the 'dominant caste', or the concept of 'Sanskritization' have become part of common speech. His scholarship was remarkable for its accessibility.' He was an institution builder, a creative researcher and a devoted teacher in a remarkable manner. He took up the challenge of building the department of Sociology at M.S. University, Baroda, in which he was involved starting from scratch in every respect. He joined the Institute of Social and Economic Change at Bangalore after leaving Delhi School of Economics.

M.N. Srinivas was one of the few who preferred to be a professor and remained one all his life rather than accepting the offer of a powerful and prestigious post in the government. Srinivas is best known for having coined the concept of 'Sanskritization'. According to him, caste is undoubtedly an all-India phenomenon in the sense that there are everywhere hereditary, endogamous groups which form a hierarchy, and that each of these groups has a traditional association with one or two occupations. Everywhere there are Brahmins, untouchables, and peasants artisan trading and service castes. Relations between castes are invariably expressed in terms of pollution and purity.

Srinivas wanted to explore and understand his countrymen not on the basis of European or American textbooks, not from the point of view of sacred texts, but from the field experience through observation. For this, he made extensive field work study of Coorg from 1940-42. In his study, he explained the concept of functional unity by analysing the interaction of ritual context of different castes, particularly, Brahmins (priests), Kaniyas (astrologers and magicians) and Bannas and Panikas (low castes). In the context of the study of Rampura, he describes that the various castes in a village are interdependent.

Srinivas also explained the basic concepts to understand our society, firstly *book view* and secondly *field view*.

According to him *book view* meant bookish perspective; he argued that religion, *varna*, caste, family, village, and geographical structure are the main elements that are known as the bases of Indian society. The knowledge about such elements is gained through sacred texts or from books. Srinivas calls it book view or bookish perspective. Book view is also known as Indology, which is not acceptable to Srinivas and he emphasized the field view.

According to Srinivas, *field view* meant fieldwork perspectives. He believed that knowledge about the different regions of Indian society can be attained through field work. This he called field view. Consequently, he prefers empirical study to understand our society. Srinivas took the path of small, regional studies rather than the construction of grand theories. In this context, field work plays an important role to understand the nativity of the rural Indian society. Srinivas also studies caste and religion (1952, 1959, 1962, and 1966) and highlighted not only their structural-functional aspects, but also the dynamics of the caste system in rural setting. He proposed concepts like 'dominant caste', 'Sanskritization', 'Westernization' and 'secularization' to understand the realities of inter-caste relations and also to explain their dynamics. The concept of 'dominant caste' has been used in the study of power relations at the village level. Srinivas presents the results of a number of studies on the structure and change in the village society. You will learn about Srinivas' concepts of *sanskritization*, *westernization* and *secularization* a little later in the unit.

Theory of social change

Change is the unchangeable law of nature. Society as a part of the vast universe is not an exception to this eternal law. The reality of social life is the reality of change. Change means alteration, modification, replacement, differentiation or integration within a phenomenon over a particular period of time, caused by a force. It refers to the amount of difference in condition of the object or phenomenon in any direction, between two points of time. Time factor is the measuring rod of the amount and direction of change. The primary concern of a sociologist is social change and not the physical, environmental or natural changes. Of course, physical and environmental changes are not exclusively out of the sociological purview. These are studied so far as they are causally related with social change. In the light of such discussion, social change may precisely be put as any alternation, modification or replacement in any aspect of society over a particular period of time, as a result of the operation of forces either endogenous or exogenous, or both. Society is commonly viewed from two different and yet co-related angles, i.e., *structural* and *functional*. According to this point of view, Kingsley Davis defines social change as 'any such alternations as occur in social organization, that is, structure and functions of society'. Structure refers to an orderly arrangement of parts or elements on the basis of certain principles. It consists of relatively stable interrelationships among its parts. For instance, the structure of an organization refers to the orderly and relatively stable arrangement of its various limbs like head, hand, leg, stomach, heart, etc. All structural elements are never permanently static. The interrelationships among individuals and group change; new types of relationships emerge; the old role-set gets transformed to a new role-set; the quality of role performance changes with personal succession; with the new types of relationships new regulative norms evolve; culture, value and ideologies keep on changing, with the growth of human knowledge and experience and

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skills. The whole social structure remains in a state of transition during the most part of its existence. This state of transition, which takes place because of any medication, alternation or replacement in these structural elements, is known as the process of social change.

The functional view of society is closely related to the structural view. Each of the constituent parts of a social system contribute more or less towards the maintenance and continuity of the whole system. The whole social system exists because its parts perform their roles. The function of one part is inter-related and interdependent with the other part. Various constituent elements like economics, political, educational, familial, etc., in their functional part constitute economic sub-system, political sub-system, educational sub system and the family sub-system. The functions of these sub-systems are again interwoven to make the whole social system. The functional view of society emphasizes upon:

- Pattern maintenance
- Tension management
- Process of adaptation to its social and non-social environment
- The way and means of goal attainment
- The process of integration among various parts
- The process of value consensus
- Each of these processes is related with a functional sub system of the society

Social change is a process by itself. Though change brings about modification and alterations, it is never a barrier between the old and new. Change is not a separating wall between the old order and the new order. Rather, the process of change is the intermediate continuity between the old social order and new social order. Change does not break and destroy the old structure. Through change, the old structure only gets transformed to suit the new conditions of living. The process of change helps the existing social structure to maintain its identity. For in the face of new circumstances, a social system may need to adapt its structure to some extent in order to survive. Change in the structure of the system may enable it to maintain its integrity as a distinguishable system, whereas if it maintains the same structure too long it may lose its integrity as a system altogether.

4.2.1 Sanskritization

While analyzing the process of social change, and in particular in the context of Indian society, the process of Sanskritization, Westernization, modernization and secularization serve as important conceptual tools for M.S. Srinivas.

Srinivas made a sincere effort to analyse the process of social change in Indian society through his significant work, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952). This book was probably the first such attempt to study change in the Indian context in a systematic manner. The term Sanskritization was coined by Srinivas during his study on the Coorgs. It was primarily meant to analyse the process of cultural mobility. According to him, Sanskritization is a process which has been occurring throughout Indian history and will continue to occur in the future. Srinivas defined Sanskritization as 'the 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 and frequently "twice-born" caste'. As he stated, such changes are initiated by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that the particular caste traditionally conceded to the

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claimant caste by the local community. The claim is made over a generation or two. Srinivas (1966) said that occasionally a caste claims a position in the caste hierarchy which its neighbours are not willing to concede. To illustrate this, he gives an example of the *Harijan* castes in Mysore. According to Srinivas, Harijans in Mysore will not accept cooked food and water from the Smiths who are certainly one of the touchable castes and therefore superior to Harijans even if their claim to be Vishwakarma Brahmins is not accepted. Similarly, the peasants or the '*Okkaligas*' and others such as Shepherds or the '*Kurubas*' do not accept cooked food and water from *Marka Brahmins*, who are certainly included among the *Brahmins*.

Srinivas further maintained that Sanskritization is usually accompanied by and often results in upward mobility for the concerned caste. However, the mobility associated with Sanskritization is only *positional* change in the system of caste hierarchy and does not lead to any *structural* change, i.e., a particular caste moves up in the local caste hierarchy and the neighbour caste comes down, but this takes place in the broader caste hierarchy as a whole. There is no change to the caste structure as such.

Sanskritization, moreover, as a process is not confined to the Hindu system but also happens to the tribal groups as well such as the *Bhils* of western India, the *Gonds* and *Oraons* of central India, and the *Pahadis* of the Himalayas. This usually results in the tribe undergoing Sanskritization claiming to be a caste and, therefore, Hindu. In the traditional system, the only way to become a Hindu was to belong to a caste, and the unit of mobility was usually a group and not an individual or a family. Thus, the main argument that Srinivas wants to place is that contrary to the theoretical and book view of the caste system, there is scope for mobility inside the caste structure. As he stated, 'The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy. A caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by Sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites and beliefs of the Brahmins, and adoption of the Brahminic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called Sanskritization.'

Originally, Srinivas used the term 'Brahminization' to describe the process of mobility inside the Hindu caste system. However, looking at the broader nature of the process later, he used the term Sanskritization to denote inter-caste mobility. The term 'Sanskritization' is a much broader concept than 'Brahminization' because not only does it encompass non-Brahmin models like Kshatriyas model, Jat model, Vaishya model and models of other 'twice-born' castes but also denotes a wide spectrum of values and lifestyles (Hasnain 2006, 601). Srinivas said that Sanskritization was no doubt an awkward term, but it was preferred to Brahminization for several reasons: Brahminization is subsumed in the wider process of Sanskritization though at some points Brahminization and Sanskritization are at variance with each other. For instance, the Brahmins of the Vedic period drank '*Soma*', an alcoholic drink, ate beef and offered blood sacrifices. Both were given up in the post-Vedic times. It has been suggested that this was the result of Jain and Buddhist influence. Today, Brahmins are by and large vegetarians; only the *Saraswat*, *Kashmiri* and *Bengali* Brahmins eat non-vegetarian food. All these Brahmins are, however, traditionally teetotalers. In brief, the customs and habits of the Brahmins changed after they had settled in India. Had the term Brahminization been used, it would have been necessary to specify which particular Brahmin group was meant, and at which period of its recorded history. Again the agents of Sanskritization are not always Brahmins. It is not only the Brahmins, but also local 'dominant castes'

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who have been the models of imitation. Srinivas defines 'dominant caste' as one that 'yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy'. Traditionally, the castes having high ritual status were enjoying high political and economic power. However, later new factors began affecting dominance, i.e., Western education, jobs in the administration and urban source of income became significant in contributing to the power and position of a particular caste. The dominant castes thus enjoy high status in the local hierarchy. The people belonging to lower castes look at them as their reference groups and imitate their life-styles and rituals and, therefore, the dominant castes gradually became a source of socio-cultural change in the local caste system and a different model of Sanskritization.

Different castes have been found changing their traditional cultural practices while aspiring for higher positions in local hierarchy. The process of Sanskritization has many consequences. As Hasnain remarked, it may result in the erosion of cultural autonomy of the women folk which includes erosion in the freedom to choose life-partner and prevalence of a rigid sexual morality. Changes in the family structure include a movement towards the orthodox Hindu joint family and the concomitant stronger authority of father, monogamy and a stronger caste organization with increased tendency of ostracism. A rigid commensality also prevails along with changed food habits prohibiting beef and pork and consumption of liquor while giving importance to higher education and adopting dowry practice instead of token 'bride-price'. Besides, in the sphere of religion, it frequently results in the donning of sacred thread, giving up animal sacrifice at the time of wedding and increased emphasis on pilgrimages and other orthodox rituals.

However, Sanskritization means not only the adoption of new customs and habits, but also exposure to new ideas and values which have found frequent expression in the vast body of Sanskrit literature, both the sacred as well as secular. *Karma, Dharma, Papa, Maya, Samsara* and *Moksha* are some of the most common Sanskritic theological ideas, and when a group becomes Sanskritized, these words occur frequently in their talk. As Srinivas stated, the spread of Sanskritic theological ideas increased during the British period. The advancement in science and technology and especially communication technology carried Sanskritization to areas which were inaccessible earlier and also the spread of literacy in the country carried it to lower caste groups who were mostly illiterate before. Besides, the introduction of Western political institutions like the parliamentary democracy has also played a phenomenal role in increasing the instances of Sanskritization in the country.

It is pertinent to mention that there are several other processes which are technically different from Sanskritization but have often been confused with it. For example, S.L. Kalia discussed about the process of 'tribalization' that occurred in Jaunsar-Bawar of Uttar Pradesh and in Bastar region of Madhya Pradesh in which high-caste Hindus temporarily residing among tribal people take over the latter's mores, rituals and beliefs which are in many respects antithetical to their own. Besides, a study by D.N. Mazumdar gives evidences of an opposite process that shows the members of higher castes abandon their rituals, dressing patterns and traditional modes of life and even taking up the professions traditionally practiced by the lower castes. He called this process as 'De-Sanskritization'. According to Mazumdar, the shrinkage of distances between castes is not due to Sanskritization but its reverse. The lower castes are not moving towards the higher but the higher castes are abandoning their lifestyles.

Y. Singh (1977) observed that the process of Sanskritization though apparently cultural, reflects many complex motivational urges for social mobility. An important element

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in this process is the manifest rejection of the norms of institutionalized inequality fostered by the traditional caste-stratified system. It leads, however, to a paradox: Sanskritization reinforces the normative system which is represented by caste stratification, but it also, at least in principle, violates its basic tenet, i.e., the acceptance of the principle of hierarchy. For this reason, many sociologists have seen in the process of Sanskritization a latent form of class conflict which results from the peculiar structural constraints of Indian society. Srinivas made this point indirectly while analyzing his concept of 'dominant caste'.

4.2.2 Westernization

M.N. Srinivas also discussed another process of social change known as Westernization. Westernization means a process whereby societies increasingly adopt Western culture, lifestyles, technology, food patterns, language, alphabet, religion, ideas, philosophy and value systems. Srinivas used the term 'Westernization' particularly to indicate the change that took place in Indian society during British rule in the 19th and early 20th centuries. He stated that 'Westernization refers to the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, and the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels—technology, institutions, ideology, values.' Westernization as a process started having its impact substantially on the elites of the country since they had access to modern and British education, especially English. Brahmins and other higher castes who were enjoying power and position in society with the tradition of learning, eagerly took to secular education system that the British imparted with English as the medium.

Srinivas wrote that British rule produced radical and lasting changes in Indian society and culture. It was unlike any previous period in Indian history as the British brought with them new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values. New technology and the revolution in communication enabled the British to integrate the country as never before in its history. During the 19th century, the British slowly laid the foundations of a modern state by surveying land, settling the revenue, creating a modern bureaucracy, army, police, instituting law courts, codifying the law, developing the communications like railways, post and telegraph, roads, canals, establishing schools, colleges and so on. They also brought with them the printing press that made a significant impact on Indian society since publication of books and journals transmitted modern and traditional knowledge to a large number of people.

Srinivas went on to make distinctions between Westernization and two other related processes: industrialization and urbanization. According to him, although there were cities in the pre-industrial world, they differed from post-industrial revolution cities. For one thing, they needed large rural population for their support, so that ancient and medieval countries remained dominantly agricultural in spite of a few big cities. Again, while the Industrial Revolution resulted in an increase in the rate of urbanization, and highly urbanized areas are generally highly industrialized areas, urbanization is not a simple function of industrialization. For Srinivas, while most of the Westernized people are usually found in big cities, it will be wrong to equate Westernization with urbanization. Even in a country like India, there are people in rural areas who are as much and may be more westernized than many of their urban counterparts.

Westernization resulted not only in the introduction of new institutions like press newspapers, journals, elections, and so on, but also in fundamental changes in the old institutions. For example, although India had schools long before the British came to

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India, they were fundamentally different from the schools introduced by the British in that they were restricted to only upper-caste elites and transmitted mostly traditional knowledge. Besides, there were certain value preferences implicit to the process of Westernization as well. One of the important values is 'humanitarianism'. This meant an active concern for the welfare of humanity irrespective of caste, class, religion, age and sex. It encompassed both equalitarianism and secularization. Humanitarianism resulted in many administrative measures taken by the British to fight epidemics, famines, and building schools, hospitals, and so on and also brought in several civil and procedural laws that put an end to certain inequalities that existed in Hindu and Islamic personal laws. Moreover, Christian missionary activities were remarkable in making humanitarian efforts especially in the form of providing education and health facilities. According to Srinivas, the missionaries were the bitter critics of the Hindu social customs like caste, untouchability, low status of women and child marriage. This led to reinterpretation of Hinduism at both ideological and institutional levels and the conversion of the lower castes like 'Harijans' to Islam and Christianity. Such factors were instrumental in producing a changed attitude among the Hindu elites towards the traditional caste system and untouchability.

According to Srinivas, the increase in Westernization does not retard the process of Sanskritization; rather both go on hand in hand and to some extent, increase in Westernization accelerates the process of Sanskritization. For instance, the postal facilities, railways, busses, and media which are the fruits of Western impact on India rendered more organized religious pilgrimages, meetings, caste solidarities, and so on. As mentioned before, Sanskritization and Westernization are concepts that analyse the process of cultural change and have no scope for systematic explanation of changes in the social structure. Srinivas pointed out that to describe the social changes occurring in modern India in terms of Sanskritization and Westernization, we need to describe it primarily in cultural and not in structural terms.

According to Jena and Mohapatra, the process of Westernization had its impact on both the 'little' and 'great traditions'. Its influence on little traditions is termed as primary westernization and on great tradition as secondary westernization.

(i) **Primary Westernization:** Primary westernization means changes induced by the influence of the West on Indian traditions. Initially, Western culture made its impact on peripheral aspects of Indian culture. It created a sub-cultural pattern limited to a very specific group of people within a particular geographical area. Thus, during the early periods of British rule, the West's influence was localized and peripheral. For example, in British trade centres, like Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, there emerged a new commercial middle-class, the social composition of which differed from place to place. In Calcutta, they were 'Baniyas' (Merchants), in Madras, it was the Brahmins, whereas in Bombay they were mostly Parsis. These commercial middle-classes served as middle-men between native Indians and the British traders. This class was not westernized to any significant extent though they adopted Western dress, language and ways of living. In their basic psychological disposition, they were quite Indian. According to the Indian sociologist Prof Yogendra Singh, they can be termed as 'quasi-westernized middle men'. Towards the early part of the 19th century, another group emerged: a group of English-educated professionals who played a major role in the process of Westernization. These English-educated people took up the values and ideologies of western culture like humanism, equality, and so on. Different socio-cultural reform movements started in this period spearheaded by these English-educated

classes to campaign against the sati-system, untouchability, child marriage and other social evils. The role of movements like the *Brahmo Samaja*, the *Prarthana Samaja*, and so on, was very important in this context. Such reformist movements, though local in spread, influenced the British administration and many progressive laws were passed as a result, e.g., the prohibition of sati, child marriage, introduction of widow remarriage and so on. The expansion of modern education, transportation and communication served as a prelude to greater Westernization in the basic structural pattern of Indian society. Western cultural traits of humanism, rationality and equality started stimulating Indian minds which later on brought about changes in the 'great tradition' of Indian society.

(ii) **Secondary Westernization:** Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the process of Westernization started taking firm roots in the Indian social structure. Western culture emerged as the basic ideology. Many social reformers justified the adoption of the Western cultural spirit in order to make Indians feel the necessity of liberty, freedom and equality. The cumulative effects on the changes in 'little tradition' and many other economic, political as well as administrative policies also affected the 'great traditions' of the country. Gradually, a new structural pattern with many new institutions started replacing many of its old institutions. Some such changes in the 'great tradition' of the country included introduction of the universalistic legal system, the expansion of modern, scientific and universal education, urbanization and industrialization, development in transport and communication, and the growth of the sense of unity and nationalism.

4.2.3 Modernization

Modernization is one of the most important concepts in developmental sociology. During the 1850s and 1860s, modernization became one of the dominant themes of research. Modernization deals with the effects of economic development on traditional social structures and values. The process of modernization is related to industrialization, urbanization, high standard of living, development of civilization, and a broadness of viewpoint. According to Eisenstadt, 'From a historical point of view modernization is a process of change towards those type of social, economic and political systems which were developed in Western Europe and North America from the 17th to 19th century, and after that spread over to South America, Asia and Africa during the 19th and 20th century'. In social science disciplines, modernization refers to the transition from a 'pre-century' to a 'modern' society. Many sociologists associate modernization with the spread of education, urbanization and industrialization. According to the sociologist Diana Kendall, urbanization is a process which has accompanied modernization and the rapid process of industrialization. In sociology, modernization is also linked to the process of rationalization. In a modernized society, the individual becomes much more important, gradually replacing the family or community as the primary unit of society. As societies experience the process of modernization, the importance of religion and traditional values becomes less important and people start thinking more about reason and rationality. The term modernization is less value-loaded than its predecessor—Westernization. Most developing countries were proud of their cultural heritage and were deeply attached to it. While they were attracted to Western culture, they had no plans to abandon their own life-styles and value systems. The term Westernization thus elicited adverse reactions. Unlike Westernization, the concept of modernization recognized the strength of roots; it did not pose any overt threat to the cultural diversity of the people

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aspiring for rapid change. To the elite of the Third World, the ideal of Westernization was difficult to swallow; they accepted modernization readily because it did not appear to offend their own cultural dignity.

According to Daniel Lerner in his book *The Passing of Tradition Society* (1958), there are three features of modernization which are core to a modernized personality—empathy, mobility and high participation. Empathy is the capacity to see things as others see them. All societies possess this capacity in some measure, but to sharpen and strengthen, it can make a qualitative change in human interaction. The second attribute, mobility, does not only imply geographical mobility; rather it is used in a more comprehensive sense. Unlike traditional societies which had ascribed status, modernized societies have open status system and largely give emphasis to achievement rather than birth. The third attribute—high participation—refers to the increased role of individuals in realizing social goals and objectives in more active ways. The character of modern society is rational in cognitive aspects, universalistic in membership aspects, functionally specific in substantive definitional aspects, neutral in affective aspects, individualistic in goal orientation aspect and hierarchical in stratification aspects. According to Jena and Mohapatra, units of society tend to be more specialized and self-sufficient in a modern society and there is increasing evidence of role differentiation, solidarity and integration.

Singh remarked that modernization symbolizes a rational attitude towards issues, and their evaluation from a universalistic and not a particularistic view point, (when it involves an emotional response to problems), orientation is empathic and not constrictive. Modernization is rooted in a scientific worldview. It has deeper and positive association with levels of diffusion of scientific knowledge, technological skill and technological resources in a particular society. However, what may be essential to modernization is the commitment to scientific worldview, the internalization of humanistic and philosophical viewpoint of science or contemporary problems and not merely the volume of technological advancement. It is possible that a society, like an individual, might command a maximum of scientific skills and resources but a minimum of its necessary psychic and emotional requisites. It is otherwise possible that a successful scientist may be a failure as a 'modern' human, and a most affluent or technologically advanced society may also be the one which is most tyrannical. He further mentioned that the distinction between modern values and traditional values may be maintained on the grounds, that modern values, like science, being evolutionary and universal, might not be typical to any one particular cultural tradition, whereas traditional cultural values may be particularistic and typical. Modernization in its essential attributes or in ideal-typical forms is a universal-cultural phenomenon. Like science, modernity is not an exclusive possession of any one ethnic or cultural group, but it belongs to the humanity as a whole.

Yogendra Singh analysed modernization in Indian context of change in a very systematic manner. According to him, the sources of change can be endogenous or exogenous. Endogenous sources of change are the sources within the social system and exogenous sources are those coming from outside. Besides, change takes place in 'tradition' and 'social structure'. Tradition, according to Singh, is characterized by hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence and is divided into great tradition and little tradition. As has been stated previously, the former is the cultural belief and value systems that are practiced throughout the country, while the latter comprises the folk cultural beliefs and oral traditions and localized adoption of the great tradition. Both Hinduism and Islam in India featured holism, hierarchy, continuity and transcendence. Modernization of great tradition in both these cases referred to a pattern of change from hierarchy to equality,

from holism to individualism, from continuity to historicity and from transcendence to rationalism and secularism. In India, following the process of Westernization, there was educational modernization, emergence of universal legal system, advancement in communication systems and transportation, expansion of urban centres and modern political institutions. Similarly, in the sphere of little tradition, two forces of change, Sanskritization and Islamization (conversion to Islam) came through.

Further, Singh analysed change in social structure which he divided into macro and micro-structure. The change in macro-structure refers to the change in the political, industrial and urban structures. For example, the elites in India came from homogenous backgrounds before independence. However, the post-independence era saw changes in the macro-structure, so much so that elites started coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The change in the micro-structure refers to the change in caste, family, communities, and so on. The modernization of caste for example was seen in its association with politics without losing its social functions. Voting behaviour is largely influenced by the caste of the candidate contesting the election. Hence, Singh claimed that India's modernization process is very unique and it is being instituted through the adaptive changes in the traditional structures rather than structural breakdown.

For a clear understanding, Jena and Mohapatra give the following indicators of modernity:

- A degree of self-sustaining growth in the economy or at least growth sufficient to increase both production and consumption regularly;
- Increasing use of inanimate sources of power to meet human requirement and to solve human problems;
- A noticeable degree of both individual and collective effort to achieve the technological advancement;
- A measure to mass participation in the political affairs or at least a sort of democratic representation in defining and choosing policy alternatives;
- A diffusion of secular-rational norms in the culture;
- An increment of mobility in the society—understood as personal freedom of physical, social and psychic movement;
- The emergence and growth of specific functional organizations and attendant changes in social structures and values;
- A corresponding transformation in the model personality that equips the individuals to function effectively in a social order.

Ram Ahuja cites the following problems of modernization.

- The first paradox of modernization is that a modern society must change in all ways at once but such a regular, coordinated pattern of growth cannot be conceivably planned. A certain amount of social unrest is, therefore, inevitably created. For example, mass educational system demands that trained individuals must be absorbed in occupational roles commensurate with their training and knowledge. However, it is not always possible to provide jobs to all educated people. This leads to unrest among the educated unemployed people.
- Structural change is uneven during periods of modernization. For example, industries may be modernized but family system, religious system, and so on remain conservative. These discontinuities and patterns of change affect the established social and other structures and produce lags and bottlenecks.

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Regulating or restricting any economic financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice; (b) Providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.' Thus, this Article in the Constitution of India guarantees that every person in India shall have the freedom of conscience and shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate religion, subject to the restrictions that may be imposed by the state on some grounds.

4.3 S.C. DUBE

Shyama Charan Dube (1922-1996) is a renowned sociologist and anthropologist of India. Dube has been a member of the teaching faculty of social anthropology and sociology at universities of India and also abroad. He began his professional career as a lecturer at Bishop College, Nagpur and Maharashtra. Later, he joined the Department of Political Science in Lucknow University.

While teaching in Lucknow, Dube got his book *The Kamar* published. He was influenced by D. N. Majumdar whom he aided in the initial stages of the publication of the journal *Eastern Anthropologist*. While in contact with Majumdar, Dube enhanced his anthropological readings. He then moved to Osmania University, Hyderabad and replaced Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf as a reader in the Department of Sociology. He also later visited the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and the London School of Economics. There, he interacted with many academicians, one of them being Raymond Firth who assisted him in writing the book on the Indian village. Dube was a brilliant speaker in both, English and Hindi.

Dube became famous for his study of the Indian village community to which he applied the structural-functional approach. Dube identified the semi-independent nature of the Indian village, but did not regard it as 'static, timeless and changeless'. He was of the idea that a particular village cannot act as a representative of rural India as a whole since it cannot represent rural India in its cultural arena. He conducted a study of the Shamirpet suburban mandal in Rangareddi district of Telangana, which gives us an analysis of the social, economic, family and ritual structure of the village.

Dube's contribution to the study on Indian villages and the changes in the villages is extremely significant in the field of sociology. Dube's later works also contained the same insight of the Indian society where he also demanded accuracy in theoretical formulations and practical certification of these ideas. His later works include: *The Study of Complex Cultures* (1965), *Explanation and Management of Changes* (1971), *Contemporary India and its Modernization* (1974).

Dube has always been a supporter of interdisciplinary orientation and was always interested in research work. Hence, his multidimensional personality is observed in the way he looked at things from different perspectives. Yogesh Atal, an Indian sociologist, commenting on Dube's personality writes:

Dube has constantly been on the move both geographically and intellectually. Rather than harping on the same theme and concentrating on a narrow specialty, he chose the challenging task of exploring new territory and extending the frontier of knowledge.

Dube (1965) suggested an all-inclusive frame of reference for the study of 'complex cultures' in order to interpret the Indian society better. Dube made use of

deductive-positivistic approach rather than inductive-inferential approach, based on null situation, like 'no change in modern India' or 'India's unchanging villages'.

Dube's *Indian Village* (1955) is an important work of the post-1950 period since it is considered to be the very first work providing a full-length account of the village social structure. His depiction of the rural social structure and institutions is very lucid and this work came to be regarded as a source for many other accounts of the rural society which were studied later. But there were some loopholes in his study as he did not offer any analytical insights nor did he give any other alternative framework to study and examine the Indian rural society (Dhanagare, 1993: 53-54).

It was the recognition of the Community Development Programme (CDP) by the Government of India that enhanced Dube's interest in rural studies. This demanded a shift from 'structure' to 'change' in the Indian villages, which is covered in his other pioneering work *India's Changing Villages* (1958).

S.C. Dube's chief theoretical interest is in social structure and change as well as sociology of economic development. His doctoral dissertation was on *The Kamar* (1951) which was a total study of the tribe of Madhya Pradesh. It is a full length monograph on this tribe of middle India.

Dube's *Indian Village* (1955) deals with total study of village Shamirpet in the region of Telengana of Andhra Pradesh. His work provides a reasonably adequate introduction to the historical, geographical and political setting as well as to the social, economic and religious practices of a village in India.

According to him, no village in India is completely autonomous and independent, for it is always one unit in a wider social system and is a part of an organized political society. An individual is not the member of a village community alone; he also belongs to a caste, religious group or tribe which has a wider territorial spread and comprises several villages.

Based on his research, S. C. Dube gave certain indicators of the concept of social development. They are discussed as follows:

- Social development is a shift in emphasis from the individual to larger collectivities, including the poor who constitute the majority.
- It is a modification in the strategies of planning and implementation to take account of the interface between economic and cultural objectives.
- The concept is a redefinition of social goals in terms of the satisfaction of human needs and improvements in the quality of life.
- The formation of indicators to evaluate social progress and to assess emerging social trends.
- The setting up of monitoring mechanisms to ensure that growth level is sustainable and at no point exceeds the outer limits.
- The anticipation of growth-related and other problems and preparedness to handle them quickly and also effectively.
- The idea of social development is understood as a creation of ethos in which it is possible to question and rethink the appropriateness and adequacy of existing social formations and to work towards their restructuring.

The main works of Dube are as follows:

- The Kamar; Indian Village* (1955)
- India's Changing Villages* (1958)

Check Your Progress

- According to Srinivas, what is the meaning of field view?
- What is the main argument that Srinivas wants to place in his analysis of caste?
- How does M.N. Srinivas define dominant caste?
- What is the meaning of primary westernization?
- What is the process of modernization related to?

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- *Institution Building for Community Development* (1968)
- *Contemporary India and Its Modernization* (1974)
- *Tribal Heritage of India* (1977)
- *Understanding Society* (1977)
- *Modernization and Development* (1988)
- *Tradition and Development* (1990)
- *Understanding Change* (1990)
- *Indian Society* (1990)

Along with these, Dube also wrote some books in Hindi, such as *Manav evam Sanskrati*, *Bhartiya Gram*, *Vikas ka Samajshasta*, and *Sankraman ki Peera*.

Dube on Indian society

Dube wrote about contemporary Indian society in his book *Indian Society*, which was published in 1990. In the book, Dube drew upon different sources to write about Indian society of the past and present. According to Dube, present Indian society has different contradictions that seem to be mystifying. It is a society of enormous depravations, but it also has some islands of prosperity. It is a culture embedded in spirituality, yet, at the same time, the ruling classes, have set standards of brazen consumption that seem almost unethical.

Indian society, for Dube, is both continuous, and changing. Dube believes that the reason for change must be sought in an array of factors. So far state compulsion has been instrumental in bringing about little social and cultural change in the village community. The factors of utility, convenience and availability have played a more critical role in bringing several new elements into the life of the community. In the family milieu, changed conditions and changing attitudes of the people have brought about some important variations. With the changing economy, in place of their traditional occupations, people have started accepting other vocations. Family bonds have been under stress and are not as strong or cohesive as they used to be. There are several reasons for the erosion of kinship: modern education, new occupations, geographical mobility, impact of mass media, and so on. Another important change has been greater freedom of choice in about adjustment and modification in several spheres, but the need of balancing different extremes in the organization of the community has so far prevented any drastic structural change in Indian village communities.

Looking at the country broadly, Dube suggests three trends in Indian society. These are:

- (a) The regional culture, founded on the traditions, customs and life-ways of the culture area;
- (b) The national culture, consisting of some pan-Indian characteristics inspired by the national renaissance, cemented by the struggle against British colonialism as well as by social and economic reform and sustained by the will to find a rightful place in the community of countries; the components in this group being partly revivalists and partly conscious innovations; and
- (c) Taking on characteristics and components from western technology and culture. Traditional social institutions and culture, traditions and life-ways continue to be idealized. The belief is that these began long ago and people salvation lies in following these traditions, which are divinely ordained.

Check Your Progress

6. Name one person who influenced Dube.
7. What were the loopholes in Dube's writing?
8. Name two books Dube wrote in Hindi.

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4.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- M.N. Srinivas was a well-known sociologist and social anthropologist. His contribution to the discipline of sociology is immense having done pioneering works in the field of caste and study of social change in India.
- Srinivas wanted to explore and understand his countrymen not on the basis of European or American textbooks, not from the point of view of sacred texts, but from the field experience through observation. For this, he made extensive field work study of Coorg from 1940–42.
- Srinivas proposed concepts like 'dominant caste', 'Sanskritization', 'Westernization' and 'secularization' to understand the realities of inter-caste relations and also to explain their dynamics.
- Sanskritization is a process of cultural mobility, where the low Hindu caste or tribe or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born' caste.
- Westernization is a process whereby societies increasingly adopt Western cultures, life-styles, technology, food pattern, language, alphabet, religion, ideas, philosophy, value systems, etc.
- Primary westernization means changes induced by the influence of the West on Indian traditions.
- Initially, Western culture made its impact on peripheral aspects of Indian culture. It created a sub-cultural pattern limited to a very specific group of people within a particular geographical area. Thus, during the early periods of British rule, the West's influence was localized and peripheral.
- Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the process of Westernization started taking firm roots in the Indian social structure.
- Modernization refers to the transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' type of society to a 'modern' society; especially, it is associated with the spread of education, urbanization and industrialization.
- According to Daniel Lerner in his book *The Passing of Tradition Society* (1958), there are three features of modernization which are core to a modernized personality—empathy, mobility and high participation.
- Secularization refers to the transformation of a society identified with religious values, ideas and institutions towards non-religious ideas, values and institutions.
- The term 'secularization' was first used in Europe in 1648. It was then understood as the process of transferring the Church's properties to the control of rulers.
- The British sociologist Bryan Wilson defined secularization as 'a process where religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance'.
- Shyama Charan Dube is a renowned sociologist and anthropologist of India. Dube became famous for his study of the Indian village community to which he applied the structural-functional approach.
- Dube identified the semi-independent nature of the Indian village, but did not regard it as 'static, timeless and changeless'. He was of the idea that a particular

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village cannot act as a representative of rural India as a whole since it cannot represent rural India in its cultural arena.

- Dube's *Indian Village* (1955) is an important work of the post-1950 period since it is considered to be the very first work providing a full-length account of the village social structure.
- Dube's depiction of the rural social structure and institutions is very lucid and this work came to be regarded as a source for many other accounts of the rural society which were studied later.

4.5 KEY TERMS

- **Sanskritization:** The process by which a 'Low' Hindu caste changes its customs in the direction of a high caste.
- **Westernization:** The transformations that have taken place in technology, ideologies, values and institutions due to British rule in India
- **Norms:** Norms are socially accepted rules which people employ in deciding on their actions.
- **Values:** People's beliefs about what the world should be like, as they have to determine the effect on their actions is called values.
- **Secularization:** A process of decline in the social influence of religion.

4.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. According to Srinivas, field view meant fieldwork perspectives. He believed that knowledge about the different regions of Indian society can be attained through field work. This he called field view.
2. The main argument that Srinivas wants to place is that contrary to the theoretical and book view of the caste system, there is scope for mobility inside the caste structure.
3. Srinivas defines 'dominant caste' as one that 'yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy'.
4. Primary westernization means changes induced by the influence of the West on Indian traditions.
5. The process of modernization is related to industrialization, urbanization, high standard of living, development of civilization, and a broadness of viewpoint.
6. Dube was influenced by D. N. Majumdar whom he aided in the initial stages of the publication of the journal *Eastern Anthropologist*.
7. There were some loopholes in Dube's study as he did not offer any analytical insights nor did he give any other alternative framework to study and examine the Indian rural society.
8. Two of the books that S.C. Dube wrote in Hindi are *Manav evam Sanskrati* and *Bhartiya Gram*.

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4.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is Westernization? Examine it briefly in the Indian context.
2. What are the main ingredients of secularization?
3. Write a short-note on S.C. Dube's analysis of Indian villages.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyse in detail the process of Sanskritization propounded by Srinivas.
2. Discuss the process of modernization and its features.
3. What is secularization? Comparatively analyse the Western and Indian models of secularization.

4.8 FURTHER READING

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+91-98638 68890



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helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in



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Institute of Distance Education Rajiv Gandhi University

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Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:

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