

SUMMING UP

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There is a tendency among some western writers to regard the rural societies of east, particularly of India, as almost static and unchanging. According to their views, for over a century the timeless and changeless Indian villages have been the ideal of the romanticists.

A micro sociological study of a village like "Shamirpet" by Dube (1955) which was insulated in feudal surroundings and was thus kept almost unaffected by the currents of social, economical and political changes that were sweeping the countryside in British India, shows certain unmistakable trends in the direction of cultural and institutional variations.

Social change in modern times has become the symbol of continued movement towards modernization. The contemporary world is now more hazardous than it was ever in the past and its hazards now affect more people. Social change on the other hand, is not uniquely a phenomenon. Some kind and degrees of changes have been universal in all times of history. The speed of contemporary change is not much illusory.

To Morris Ginsberg social change is a change in social structure e.g, the size of society, the composition

or imbalance of its parts or the type of its organization. Though it is not always possible to ascribe specific attributes of social change some broad characteristics of contemporary changes have been argued for modern sociologists. Some of the basic generalizations are :-

1. For a given society or a culture rapid changes occur frequently or constantly.
2. Changes are neither temporary nor spatially . . . isolated, that is, changes may occur in sequential chains rather than through "temporary" crisis followed by quiet period of reconstructions, and the consequences tend to reverberate through entire region or virtually the entire world.
3. Since social changes are probable everywhere and their consequences may be wide spread and significant they provide basis for social engineering.
4. The proportion of contemporary change that is either planned or that occurs as secondary consequences of deliberate innovations is much higher than in former times.
5. The range of technology and social strategies is expanding rapidly and its net effect is additive or cumulative in spite of the relatively rapid obsolescence of some procedures.
6. The normal occurrence affects a wider range of individual experience and functional aspects of societies in the modern world, not because such societies are in all

respects more "integrated" but because virtually no future of life is exempt from the expectation or normality of change.

In the previous chapters we have dealt with changes in different spheres like family, religion, caste, education, habits and social status. A fairly consistent pattern emerges from the earlier description.

As Srinivas (1955) suggested, "the processes which have affected caste and village community have also affected the family system. This has happened at all levels and in every section of the society," He said that "though the traditional joint family assumed the existence of a sufficient quantity of land and lack of spatial mobility and diversity of occupation, it would be a gross over simplification to suggest that the Indian family system has changed or is changing from its joint to the nuclear type."

Subramanyam (1975) is also of the opinion that "nuclear type of family is popular today and it seems to be a direct consequence of a particular economic set up." After studying Devapuram village society where one-fifth of the households have land and the rest are landless, she is of the opinion that "each man has evolved a formula for existence which is in the tune with the available facilities. In such a set up where a man's initiative and drive have to be utilized considerably it is difficult to have pooled resources. Conflicting interests would be constantly at play undermining such structure as the joint family."

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In Naplakhedi and Lasudia similar trends have been observed. In the institution of family the changed conditions and the changing attitudes of the people have brought about some significant variations. It is difficult to present them statistically but it could generally be said that in the recent years the cohesion of the family has suffered on account of the growth of the spirit of individualism. Thereby people no longer have the same attachment for the soil of their settlement and consequently mobility has increased. Among the younger people, especially among those who have had some education or urban contacts, the desire to go to city is manifesting itself on an increasing scale.

In making records of biographies and general attitudes of the people, the contrast in the attitudes of the two generations of the people emerged clearly. This ultimately results in the break up of the joint family. The elderly and middle aged complained about the inconveniences of the village life, but they still regard it as the only way of life possible for them. On the other hand, the younger people seemed to idealize the city and its numerous attractions, and made no efforts to conceal their contempt for the rustic ways of the village folk. The change in the attitudes and preferences has on one hand encouraged migration to cities of young people who took up small jobs there. On the other hand it has also generated disharmony causing considerable

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dislocation in the established principles according to which priorities and concessions went with age and kinship. These views are supported by Dube also on the basis of his study of Shamirpet (1955).

Conflicts and change in interpersonal relations of family members may be due to non-cooperative attitude, dissatisfaction with the share in the parental property, employment outside the village or smallness of parental home, these are some of the important reasons for the break up of joint families. This break up generally alters interpersonal relations of the family members. Changes have been observed in the following spheres :-

1. Wives are consulted by their husbands in the household matter, in the settlement of marriages and in maintaining relations with other villagers to a greater extent. To some extent such consultation is done in the matters of farming and disposal of agricultural produce and conduction and organization of social and religious functions but not in the activities like shopping etc. which require them to go out of home.

2. Boys and girls are treated as equal by the parents but a boy is cared for more when he is alone among a number of girls in a family. As boys and girls grow up girls become closer to the mother and boys seek advice and guidance from their father.

3. Young people feel it their moral responsibility to maintain and take care of such elderly persons who are not in a position to undertake any activity which can support the family economically.

4. No change has been observed in the relationship of the bride with other female members particularly mother-in-law of the family. In many cases the bride is ill-treated by the mother-in-law and other female members of the family but when the bride herself becomes the mother-in-law she also treats her daughter-in-law in the same way.

5. The relationship of the bride with her father-in-law and other male members of the family is distant and rarely turns into talking terms, but her relations with younger male and female members are quite thick and congenial.

6. Members of the same family origin generally cooperate in religious and social function, occasionally in village and family conflicts and rarely in the planning of violent action which may spoil the smooth life of the village community.

7. After the break up of joint families the relationship becomes formal after third generation. Members assemble only on ceremonial functions. The thickness in relationship just does not exist.

Majumdar and Madan (1960) have described religion "as a mental attitude regarding the supernatural, the most wide spread manifestation of this attitude is in the shape of belief and rituals." The role of rituals is important in observance according to a prescribed manner of certain actions designed to establish liaison between the performing individual and the supernatural power or powers. Beliefs are preconditions of the ritual and also a rationalization of the same. Change is also observable in this sphere. People in Naplakhedi and Lasudia believed in superhuman powers like "Peer," "Ghosts," "Devi," "Devta" etc. There has been an appreciable decline in this belief in the younger generation.

The importance of religious representatives like 'Sadhu' and 'Baiga' has also decreased among the younger people. The members of the older generation offered sacrifices either to please the spirits or to keep them in control. The members of the younger generation have discarded these practices also. Both Hindus and Muslims celebrate their religious festivals but the degree of their devotion is decreasing. According to Redcliffe Brown "religion is the recognition of the superiority moral and physical of the collective over the individual."

Thus religion brings members closer. Deviation from religious belief brings social change. New beliefs increase social cohesion as well as divide the society into many factions.

Beteille (1966) has dealt with the three principal dimensions of social stratification in the study of a changing Tanjore village in South India. He feels that though change is of a pervasive nature yet it has affected each of these sub-systems in different degrees. At Sripuram the village under study Beteille, finds a contracting of structural distance between the proximate segments of the caste system. He attributes this change to westernisation and secularisation.

Caste interactions at Devapuram, in a study conducted by Subrahmanyam (1975), "have also acquired a different complexion. This is mainly due to the change among the lower castes as an institution. Previously the lower castes were constantly made aware of their lowly position. Today at Devapuram with the Government of India having declared equal rights for all caste there is a resentment shown by the lower castes in discussing the caste hierarchy. This is because by implication in hierarchy there are higher and lower positions. The controversy of high and low arises on the ritual scale which they prefer to avoid.

The census of India has also abolished the column of castes, thereby implying that it need not be used as a discriminating agent and its importance should be underplayed.

At Naplakhedi and Lasudia also villagers feel it is

pointless to discuss differences among castes as interaction among different castes is increasing day by day. The Brahmins can no longer command the awe and respect which they did in earlier times. Today the children of Brahmins sit side by side with the boys of all other castes in the school. The adult Brahmins of the village are not accorded the same difference which their parents had from other castes. During the course of study it was found that the village institutions, village level sport meets, social functions and visits of political leaders are mainly breaking the caste ties as all have to walk hand in hand to make these programmes successful. Common public transport facility, village markets and entertainment programmes also provide occasions for everyone to come together.

Interdining among different castes is still prohibited socially and openly but the village people ignore all this when they dine at hotels and restaurants in the town. People from all castes can also be seen visiting the village tea shops though some distinction is maintained between lower and upper castes. Khaties are seen showing more closeness with Brahmins rather than with persons belonging to lower castes.

Wealth is another avenue for achieving caste mobility. A rich man is respected irrespective of his caste. With the inception of Panchayati Raj and parliamentary democracy, power can be acquired today if a caste has sufficient numerical strength to support a candidate. Hence we find that here

caste and kin ties are being used for consolidating political power. Here again we see that inter-caste affiliations are being used on inter-caste competition for power.

Thus we see that the caste system in the community presents only slight variations in some direction. As before, caste still retains its endogamous character and continues to be a part of the traditional religion. Among the castes on the lower level there has been some effort made at rising in social scale by adoption of surnames and caste affiliations traditionally belonging to the higher groups. Although it has been legally abolished by the constitution of the Republic of India, untouchability is still practised within the village. Thus we see that caste has always been and will remain the major determinant of the social character of an individual in the village society.

Massive efforts have been made by the Government to educate the rural folk. Since independence adult education classes are being run through different agencies to achieve the target of complete literacy. These classes are a regular feature in the villages under study also but 41 percent respondents informed that they are illiterate and 53 percent are not sending their children to schools. The reason for lack of interest in education among the adult folk may be that they can do without it. Education among women folk is still

uncommon in rural areas. If a girl can read and write a letter or can read some religious book, it is considered to be sufficient for her.

Primary and middle schools exist in these villages but a large number of boys are not attending regular classes. An effort has been made to discover the reasons for this adverse tendency. Poverty of the cultivators seems to be the main reason for this. The parents either need them at home for family business or send them to well-to-do cultivators for work and they thus become the bread-earners for the family.

Aspirations regarding children's education is also not high. Majority of the cultivators aspired to educate their boys upto high school and girls upto primary school only. The respondents are of the opinion that if their sons are educated beyond high school they do not come back to their family business as they think that villages are not the suitable places for them to stay. They become either disinterested in family business or find out some suitable employment in the nearby city. This indicate that the present form of formal education failed to motivate the rural folk. Some type of job oriented education or practical training may create interest among them and change the present state of affairs.

In the dress pattern of the villagers there has been very noticeable change. The old style peasant dress (dhoti, bandi, Pagri, and Degi Joota) is now giving way to new style

of clothes. The old style dress is common among the farmers who have crossed 50 years of their age. In the members of the younger generation "Bandi" has been replaced by "Kurta" and "Dhoti" by "Pyjama" in some cases. Members of the younger generation put on clothes like trousers, shirts, bush shirts etc. stitched in urban style. Practically no change has been observed in the dress of women. 'Lehnga' 'Lugra' and 'Polka' are still popular among them. 'Sari' is used by the young girls or women from outside the village who have settled there.

In the food habits of the people there has not been much change. Dal, Roti and Onion is the common food of this area. Now people have started taking tea at hotels as well as at home. Cheap brands of cigarettes are getting popular among boys who generally smoke when they are away from the elder members of the family.

Many other changes have been observed in the habits of rural folks. Some change has been noticed in the habits associated with personal hygiene like taking bath daily, cleaning mouth in the morning, cleaning hand and feet before going to bed. Change in environmental sanitation has also been observed. Kitchen, cattle sheds, places of water storage etc. are cleaned daily.

The habit of taking tobacco is very common among the members of the older generation. Addiction to tea is found more among the youngsters. Older people try to avoid it, but younger people seems to be more interested in it.

Radio sets are common among well to do as well as poor farmers. They are used more for entertainment than for hearing the news. These sets are generally kept on full volume so as to make the people aware of their presence in the house.

Modern transport facilities have made the people dependent on them. They even wait for two to three hours for a bus rather than walk a distance of three kilometre.

Total cropped area in both the villages has not increased since the last so many years as there is no more land which could be brought under cultivation. Modernization in agriculture needs a variety of agricultural inputs. This raised the yield per unit of land. Consequently the agriculturist obtains greater return. This wealth can change the social and economical life of the cultivators. This has been heppening to some extent in the villages under study.

an increase of 50 percent to 150 percent has been noticed in the bullock drawn machines while an increase of upto 350% has been noticed in the machines driven by diesel. Similarly the use of electricity operated machines has increased upto 130%. The use of agricultural inputs like improved seeds, fertilizers, insecticides etc. has also increased by 30% to

110%. This indicates change proneness of the villagers. Timely supply of seeds, fertilizers etc., proper marketing facility, correct dissemination of technological knowledge have contributed much towards raising the production. Following are some of the typical views of the respondents which might display their progressive attitude :-

1. Greater a cultivator is prepared to take risk in cultivation, more he will be benefitted.

2. Self confidence pays in agriculture.

3. Production increases by self efforts and not by the grace of God.

4. Few precautions make agriculture riskfree.

5. New technology increases production.

6. More the attachment with the land more will be the production.

Any type of side-business diverts attention from cultivation and decreased production.

To judge the social status of an individual or a family following parameters have been used.

1. Better diet
2. No manual work
3. Respect shown by others
4. Land and good house
5. Consultation and mediatorsnip
6. High education.

All these may be responsible for according a high social status in the village society. An individual or a family taking better diet than that of average individual or family is placed at a higher social status. A person who only directs or organises family work or supervises division of work in the family is generally supposed to occupy a good social status. Elderly and senior persons are generally respected by the younger members of their family and also by other villagers.

Persons in possession of large landed property and 'pucc' house with electricity are graded higher than the normal members of the village society. Consultation in family's internal and external affairs and mediatorsnip in village and caste disputes are considered matters of prestige. In the same way high education raises an individual in the eyes of the village society.

Value system is the nerve centre of any society. A dozen of value laden statements were presented to the respondents

They were asked to agree or disagree with them. These statements represented the social, religious and political spheres of rural life. In majority of cases traditional views and values have been supported by most of the members of villages under study. This, therefore, appears to be an area which has experienced minimum change and maximum continuity.

Aplakhedi and Lasudia are the villages in India undergoing change. However, they are characterised by their own distinctive features of social change. Each study throw light on some fresh and unexplored social process. It is with this idea in mind that this study was conducted.