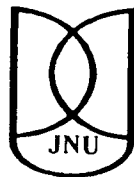# SOCIOLOGY AND POLITICAL PRACTICE:
## A CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO
## THE NATURE OF THE DISCIPLINE
## AND ITS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

*Dissertation submitted to the*
*Jawaharlal Nehru University*
*in partial fulfillment of the requirements*
*for the award of the degree of*

## MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

*Submitted by*
**AMRITA KHAZANCHI**

*Supervisor:*
**DR. AVIJIT PATHAK**

## CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
## NEW DELHI 110 067
## 1997

21st July 1997

# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "SOCIOLOGY AND POLITICAL PRACTICE: A CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF THE DISCIPLINE AND ITS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE", submitted by AMRITA KHAZANCHI in partial fulfilment of the award of the Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of Jawaharlal Nehru University has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


**Professor J.S. Gandhi**
(Chairperson)

**Dr. Avijit Pathak**
(Supervisor)

To My Parents,
Without Whom
**NOT**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I express my gratitude and appreciation for various people who have made this project a hard material reality. I would like, first and foremost, to thank Dr. Avijit Pathak, whose illuminating guidance and cooperation I owe the completion of this work. I would, also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Anand Kumar for his support, which enabled me to carry out my field work.

I am eternally grateful to my family members who unhesitatingly extended all their possible help, and constantly provided, the always-much-needed, moral support.

My sincere thanks to my dear friends for their timely, continuous and unquestioning help and who, more than generously, lent me their books and other reading material for consultation.

Finally, I am grateful to all those political personalities who constituted the sample data. I thank them for taking out some time from their busy schedule to answer the questionnaire.

I thank you all.

I alone take the responsibility for all errors (of omission and commission) in this project.

AMRITA

# CONTENTS

Section - 3

Alternative Sociology as an Emancipatory Consciousness.

Challenging the functionalist preoccupation with order - conflict and revolution in Marxism - challenging the positivistic social science - Frankfurt school of Marxism - sociology as a critical consciousness.

Section - 4

New Trends in Sociology.

Anti-positivism - entry of postmodernism / feminism.

Conclusion.

Introduction.

Section - 1

History of Indian Sociology : Stages of Growth.

Section - 2

Politico-Ideological Character of Contemporary Sociological knowledge : Some Examples.

Nehruvian agenda of modernity and nation making and sociology. ( Yogendra Singh's work on modernisation, Srinivas on caste, social transformation, secularization)

Counter Hegemonic movements and Sociology.

Nandy : debunking Modernity - Kancha Ilaiah / Gail Omvedt : critique of brahmanical social order.

Conclusion.

Need for Awareness / Knowledge.

Examples : Gandhi in Harijan / Young India. Gramsci in Prison Notebooks.

Social Scientists and Reflections on Politics : a Study of Rajni Kothari.

If not Politicians; it is our task as social scientists to perpetually reflect on politics, use our own knowledge and evolve a critique or way of relating to politics.

# INTRODUCTION

## A Personal Note.

The domain of sociological inquiry is nearer to our every day life. It is what constitutes our society: kinship, marriage, caste, religion,... or,in Andre Betielle's words, 'the fundamental preoccupations of sociology is ; its rigorous search for interconnections among the different domains of society and its systematic use of comparisions[1] The assumption is that the very fact of living in human society - one's stock of common sense - is sufficient to make sense of the social reality, one need not study sociology for that; everyone is a sociologist of some kind ! Not surprisingly, for many students, sociology is a 'soft' discipline[2], it is cognitively inferior to 'hard' sciences like physics and economics. In other words, sociology doesn't require sufficient hard work and intelligence ! Many students internalise this logic ( and this logic stems from the hierarchy of knowledge ). As a result one knows how difficult it is to discuss sociology with those who feel themselves wounded, who approach the discipline not with a sense of pride and enthusiasm but with chronic inferiority complex. How does one overcome this obstacle ?

-------------------------------------------------------------

[1] See, Andre Betielle `Sociology and Common Sense,' _Economic and Political Weekly,_ Special number,1996 ; pp 2363

[2] Ibid ; pp.2363.

There is yet another obstacle. For many students, sociological knowledge is not relevant ; it is not valued or appreciated in the practical world of work. They find no immediate / visible relationship between the domain of knowledge and the sphere of work. They give their reasons. As capitalism spreads and technology becomes most dominant intervention, more techno-managers are needed. And as they see, there is nothing in sociology that can equip them with the celebrated techno-managerial skill. With sociology, they fear, they would become marginalised. As the instrumental rationality of practical work dictates the tone of 'relevant' knowledge, sociology suffers. Because of this deeply felt incompatibility between sociological knowledge and practical work, it is not easy for a teacher to invite student to the world of sociology. Is there any way one can overcome this obstacle ?

To arouse sociological imagination the teacher must try to rescue his/her students from their wounded consciousness. And this wounded consciousness arises because, as we have already said, they think that sociology is not science and therefore, not worth studying. The implicit assumption is that science is the most legitimate form of knowledge and all that doesn't fit into the model of natural science is an 'inferior' brand of knowledge. To make sociology meaningful is to fight this hierarchy of knowledge. This can be done in the following ways.

Let the students get sensitized. Far from being seduced by the science, let them evolve a critique of it.

2

This means debunking the enlightenment optimism ; science is often seen as emancipation - emancipation of man from nature, release of man's rationality, celebration of technology and man's continual material well being. However it is possible to see how science is based on the principle of domination. This domination, for instance, manifests itself in its celebrated principle of 'objectivity'. Because 'objectivity' negates mutuality, reciprocity, symmetry and dialogue. Instead with 'objectification' begins a permanent division between man and nature, male and female, object and subject, knower and known, reason and emotion, thinking and feeling. It is therefore, possible to see that violence is the meaning of science because its way of arriving at truth is based on fragmentation and duality (What else is the Baconian ideal of power ?) Science, it is true, is often seen as a 'pure' search for truth. But it is important for a teacher to make his/her students see that this disinterested cognition or value neutrality is a myth. Because science is related to power- the power that, at certain juncture of history, the industrial bourgeoisie needed to tap natural resources and colonize the world., the power that modern nation-state needs to strengthen its military apparatus. In other words, science is not outside power, science is often an ideology of the Establishment.

To evolve a critique of science is not easy. Because the resistance comes not solely from 'successful' natural science; it comes from sociology itself. It comes from what is known as positivism in sociology, a tendency to

quantify / measure all quantitative experiences[3]. Positivism needless to add, has got an appeal. It seeks to give a "respectable" identity to the sociologist. Moreover, positivism brings sociology closer to the agenda of modernity : an agenda that equates knowledge with science and visualizes a social order based on objective rationality. Positivism dosen't challenge the hierarchy of knowledge, it accepts the cognitive superiority of science. And this emulation of 'scientific method' doesn't, in fact elevate the status of sociology. It is important to resist positivism because it is only with this resistance that sociology can fight the colonization of domain of knowledge by science, sociology can evolve new ways of seeing and establish its own identity.

The critique of positivism (or 'scientific sociology') dosen't, however, mean that sociology is mere common sense. This message has to be conveyed to students. Because, for many, sociology has got just two possibilities: it is either an 'inferior' science or one's common sense. No meaningful learning is possible unless one transcends these options and realizes new alternatives. To quote Avijit Pathak, 'sociological knowledge is qualitatively different

------------------------------------------------------------

[3] Any one who begins to study sociology is told that sociology is also a science, there is a close affinity between sociology and natural sciences; sociology is empirical and objective and can arrive at laws and predict. Positivism can be seen in Auguste Comte's positive philosophy, in Durkheim's Rules of sociological method, in the cult of statistics, in excessive Mathematicization of social sciences, in operationalism.

from common sense. Common sense promotes the status quo, sociological knowledge is emancipatory. Common sense does not problematize the 'taken-for-granted' world; sociological knowledge debunks the certainity of common sense. For example, common sense tells us that technology is necessarily liberating; but, for a sociologist like Herbert Marcuse, technology may prove to be a tool of domination leading to "one-dimensional"[4] existence.[5] The task of sociology is not to remain contended with what social actors think of the world; sociology reinterprets the intended meanings and agencies already interpreted by social actors, (Anthony Giddens would call it an exercise of "double hermeneutic[6]) Sociology goes further, sociology begins where common sense stops. It is this relevance of sociology that a teacher must inspire his/her students to see.

The emancipatory character of sociological knowledge doesn't mean that sociology is 'prescriptive'in nature. This also doesn't mean that a sociologist is necessarily superior to lay social actor. In fact, this polarity -'professional' sociologist vs 'lay' social actor

------------------------------------------------------------

[4] See, Herbert Marcuse, <u>One Dimensional Man : Studies in Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society</u>, Boston, Becon Press 1964.

[5] See, unpublished Seminar paper of Avijit Pathak, "Teaching Sociology : Reflections on Method, Truth and Knowledge", <u>Recasting Indian Sociology : The Changing Contours of the Discipline</u>, March 20-21, 1997.

[6] See, Anthony Giddens <u>New Rules of Sociological Method : A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies</u>, London, Hutchinson, 1976, pp.162.

is the creation of positivism (Gouldner calls it "methodological dualism"[7].) The sociology we are imagining challenges this polarity in a critical fashion. Unlike, the cold, detached, impersonal, positivistic research, here is an engagement, a relationship between the sociologist and his/her universe, in terms of respecting the social actor; with this respect begins the art of listening, a dialogic conversation with the social actor. Sociological knowledge develops, not out of acceptance or mere description of what social actors think of their world. In fact, sociological knowledge develops because of the critical/dialogic engagement between the sociologist and the social actor.

It is at this juncture that the teacher is required to convince his/her students that beyond science and common sense lies another possibility. And sociology is precisely that. That's a way, it is illuminating, emancipatory, challenging and worth-studying. Sociology is not 'hard' if hardness means the affirmation of positive sciences. Sociology is not 'soft' if softness means common sense. Sociology needs the development of humanistic temper, profound sensitivity, critically and, of course, rigorous practice. In fact, sociology becomes meaningful only when teacher and the taught begin to see the possibility of this alternative orientation to knowledge.

------------------------------------------------------------

[7] See, Alvin W. Gouldner, The Coming Crisis Of Western Sociology, London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1971, pp. 495-497.

But then, there is yet another obstacle. For many students, as we have already said, sociological knowledge doesn't have any market value; it is useless. No meaningful teaching is possible unless the teacher succeeds in fighting this orientation ; It is possible to see a relationship between sociology and work. For instance, sociology can help those who wish to engage themselves in creative ventures like, writing. One knows that their penetrating sociological analysis helps them to write much better than typical journalists. And, for this reason, they are being increasingly invited to write newspaper columns. Likewise, sociology students often find themselves in a better position in non-governmental organisations. Their ways of seeing and giving the individual a better sense of the alternatives available and of the likely costs and benefits available alternatives/options/possibilities, all this gives sociologists the skill they need to intervene in divergent social spheres related to community development, health and gender. This means that if we go beyond the sphere of techno-managerial work and see plurality of work situations, sociology can prove to be as relevant as any other branch of knowledge.

Sociology is relevant not simply because it has got a 'market value' or it can provide one a job. Sociology is relevant for altogether different reasons. Sociology is meaningful because it is potentially capable of fighting the colonization of the life world. The beauty of sociology is that, far from being instrumental, it is hermeneutic (guided

by interest in mutual understanding in the everyday conduct of life) and emancipatory (in terms of emancipation from ideologically frozen representations of all politically constituted order[8]). Sociology, for instance, may not provide the kind of job that, say, an Engineer can manage. But sociology can give one what a purely technical/instrumental knowledge cannot. Sociology can give one insights; it can enrich one's life, expand one's horizon, widen one's vision; it can enter into the realm of symbols and meanings; it can see the principle of domination and arouse our emancipatory zeal. It is this beauty/relevance of sociology that a teacher must assert and ask his/her students to see.

In fact, sociology can make its presence felt or retain its relevance only by raising its voice of dissent-dissent against the domination of instrumental knowledge, dissent against a technologized culture. Sociology intensifies human sensitivity. Is it possible to imagine sociology without, say, Karl Marx's Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. If students get inspired to undertake a journey towards this text, they begin to feel that sociology is the cultivation of moral/artistic imagination[9], the worth

-----------------------------------------------------------------------

[8] See, Michael Pussey, <u>Jurgen Habermas,</u>
New York, Tavistok Publications, 1987, pp.24-26.

[9] Robert Nisbert, for example, is particularly sensitive to the moral/artistic quality of sociology. For a more elaborate discussion, see his <u>The Sociological Tradition</u> London, Heinemann, 1967 ; pp. 18-20.

of, which cannot be measured in terms of its market value. Because here one finds a brilliant critique - moral/spiritual critique - of capitalism ; we become aware of the fragmented character of capitalism; we see the correlation between private property and alienation; we realize how alienation destroys all that is profound about the human species. And with Marx we also begin to imagine alternatives.

Likewise, reading Max Weber's "Science as a vocation", is like realizing how this extraordinarily sensitive mind was trying to cope with modernity and its all - pervasive rationalization, his awareness of growing disenchantment and the resultant pathos[10]. Advantages of sociology are well exemplified while reading these texts, the texts born out of rigorous contemplation, sharp analytical spirit, profound moral concern and intense artistic imagination. Sociology, should not loose its richness in order to cope with the'order' of the market. Hence all this makes it clear the rationale, the salient feature of sociology put in Avijit Pathak's words, 'Sociology is dialogic in nature[11]. It is not just a

--------------------------------------------------------------

[10] See, Max Weber, " Science as a Vocation " in Gerth and Mills (eds), <u>From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology</u> London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948, pp. 129-159.

[11] For a better understanding of dialogic sociology, see for example, Christopher G.A. Bryant, <u>Practical Sociology : Post Empiricism and the Reconstruction of theory and Application</u> Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995, pp. 142- 50.

"specialized" body of knowledge used merely for "professional" purposes : academic publications, seminars and workshops. Instead, my sociology is a creative engagement with the larger collective. It imagines a relationship between the researcher and his/her object of cognition, between the knower and the known, between theory and practice. This dialogic understanding, doesn't mean that sociology has to accept all that social actors think and feel. Dialogue is impossible without criticality and reflexivity. Dialogue means the possibility of transformation. As collective subjects all of us seek to transform the world, fight its principles of exploitation / domination. I want sociology to be seen as a catalyst to the process of social transformation'.

To continue with what Pathak says 'my sociology seeks to create a world in which technology is not the last word and there is a fair degree of communication between man and woman, nature and the human species. This is a world that doesn't allow the spontaneous flow of life to be killed by a technology-oriented / consumerist culture. This agenda of a counter-culture makes my sociology qualitatively different from its " modernist " variety.' With this Sociology in mind or, in other words, sociological imagination, learning doesn't remain just another routine affair; it refuses to become cold, detached and impersonal. Instead, we hear a call; we become angry and restless. Our reason invites our emotion, our thinking embraces our feeling, our professional duty calls our humane self. In

other words, sociology becomes 'Passionate Sociology'[12]. In words of C.Wright Mills,'it is the political task of the social scientist continually to translate personal troubles into public issues and public issues into the terms of their humane meaning for a variety of individuals. It is his task to display in his work - and, as an educator in his life as well - this kind of sociological imagination, an imagination that promises an understanding of the intimate realities of ourselves in connection with larger social realities,[13] Perhaps studying sociology means that one is learning an awareness, an imagination one needs to relate to the political world. More so, the purpose of social scientist is to cultivate this awareness,this consciousness among men and women who are publicly exposed to him. To secure these ends is to secure reason and freedom / individuality, and an awareness that we need to function in a democratic society.

**Division of Chapters.**

**Chapter One** tries to examine how sociology began as an alternative ideology of a social system which was being born in the process of Industrial and French revolution. At this moment, the past world view and structure of relationships were fast becoming obsolete and the ensuing vacuum needed

---------------------------------------------------------------------

[12] See, for example, Ann Game and Andrew Metcalfe, Passionate Sociology,London, Sage Publications, 1996.

[13] See, for example, C.Wright Mills The Sociological Imagination,New York, Oxford University press 1959, pp. 187.

replenishment. Sociology emerged, as a new world view at this moment of crisis. Its cognitive system and analytical skills were suited to offer a value system and an understanding of the processes of society which was in the throes of cataclysmic upheavals. Its contribution, as we shall see, was reinforced by its methodological orientation and the emphasis placed on the understanding of concrete social problems in historical setting. In this context, sociology distinguishes itself in two respects : firstly, in its utilitarian and problem solving orientation, preoccupation with order. Secondly, in its world view and normative structure which is consensual, yet, egalitarian in nature. These themes are reflected in the functionalist thought of Talcott Parsons and Emile Durkheim and which shall be dealt herewith. Challenging this functionalist preoccupation with order, is the Marxist thought. It seeks to examine sociology as a critical intervention as, reflected in Frankfurt School of Marxism. The chapter also intends to argue entry of Postmodernism, Postfeminism, as an anti-thesis of modernist sociology.

It is these dimensions that bear relevance for Indian sociology because it is through the understanding of these dimensions that we can establish our own orientation towards a sociology that would be relevant and meaningful to our scheme of values and realities. **Chapter Two**, therefore, seeks to analyse the dynamics of Indian sociology. A historical look at the discipline and its different stages of growth, and examining the worldly relevance of

sociological knowledge, in other words, political potency of sociological knowledge evident in counter hegemonic movements in India is the directing idea of this chapter.

Both Chapter one and Chapter two discuss the Political Possibilities of Sociology.

How politicians/political agents look at sociological knowledge is examined in **Chapter Three.** This shall be done by examining the literature of political parties and identifying the traces and use of sociological insights with respect to contemporary social issues like caste, social justice, religion, secularism, nationalism, class relations, liberalization and socialism. Interviews with politicians have been carried out to examine, their responses to social issues; and sociological perception of reality. Finally, whether there is compatibility between what is evident in the party literature and what political agents perceive about social issues and sociology as a body of knowledge.

The **Concluding Chapter** reflects on the nature of Indian politics, which is so much devoid of serious thinking and civilizational world view. In the wake of this development, the chapter seeks to create an awareness, and knowledge from the point of view of a social scientist, Rajni Kothari.

**Scope and limitations.**

The contemporary debate taken up in this project is certainly a relevent one ; and which needs exhaustive

field work. However time period for M.Phil is not sufficient to carry out this extensive study. It is more of a thought provoking field sensitization. Nevertheless, this study is for preparing the background / clarity for further studies, towards which, my present work, hopefully will prove valuable.

**CHAPTER - I**

**SOCIOLOGY AS AN INTELLECTUAL RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING WORLD.**

**Introduction.**

As we are trying to explore the relationship between sociology and political practice (or examining the worldly relevance of sociological knowledge), it is important to know how sociology as a formal academic discipline emerged. In fact, the way it evolved, the way it is perpetually changing and growing. Its divergent approaches and schools of thought suggest that sociology itself was and is deeply preoccupied with the world, its changing needs. In other words, there is a close relationship between sociology and the world, or sociology and politics. Sociology can, indeed, be contextualised.

What we are going to inquire here is :
- (i)     birth of modern sociology.
- (ii)     politics of mainstream/modernist
      / sociology(functionlism/positivism)
- (iii)     alternative sociology as an emancipatory consciousness.
- (iv)     new trends in sociology.

**Section - 1**

**Birth of modern sociology.**

An appreciation of evocative, sensitive and modern

sociological thought or, in other words, birth of modern sociology has to be understood in terms of its historical context.

Sociology and, more importantly, modern western society were given distinctive shape in a time of profound crises and upheaval. The fundamental ideas of modern sociology are best understood as responses to the problem of order, created during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and at first half of the nineteenth century, by the collapse of medieval order under the blows of industrialism and revolutionary democracy. This period, characterised as the age of revolution, age of democracy and the era of great transformation, was unmistakingly a period of drastic fundamental and often an abrupt change, that affected the way people perceived, experienced and acted upon the world.

The break up of the old order in Europe - an order that had rested on kinship ties, religion, local community and monarchy set free the elements of power, wealth and status that had been consolidated, ever since the middle ages. Formal, impersonal efficient organisations in the form of factory system and the bureaucratic state took place of community and kinship contract replaced trust, the market free, self-regulating rational. This rationale was insensitive to human suffering because the accepted decision maker in the economic sphere, and traditions and religion gave way to science, law and reason.

This decisive period came to be characterised by Enlightenment thought[1]. The ideas of enlightenment gave a definite shape to many of the ideas and procedures of modern western social sciences including sociology. These ideas of enlightenment, that constituted the project of modernity, were as follows :

Reason and Rationality, stressed as a way of rationalising Knowledge, that through the use of human mind, society could address itself insightfully to its own problems and, with efforts, could bring about a logical and reasonable way of life.

Empiricism, the idea that all thought and knowledge about the natural and social world is based upon empirical "facts", things that all human beings can apprehend through their sense organs - to understand and explain the complexities of reality. Without empiricism, science would be impossible.

Science, the notion that scientific knowledge based upon the experimental method or methodical application of human senses to the empirical world, was the key to expanding all human knowledge. Science also made possible objective statements that were beyond philosophical,

----------------------------------------------------------------

[1]     The term 'the Enlightenment' refers to a period in European intellectual history which spans the time from roughly the first quarter to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. But Enlightenment as a thought began manifesting itself only in the early eighteenth century.

theological or ideological dispute.

Universalism, meant that the concept of reason and science could be applied to any and every situation and, that, their principles were the same in every situation.

Freedom, the idea to make public use of one's reason in all matters. It stood as an opposition to feudal and traditional constraints on beliefs, social interaction, sexuality and ownership of property.

Progress, the idea that natural and social conditions of human beings could be improved and social institution could be created by the application of science, reason (and to what these values entail - liberty and equality).

Equality/toleration, the enlightenment project highlighted the notion that all human beings are treated equally and same, despite their moral or religious convictions.

Individualism, the concept that the individual is the starting point for all knowledge and action. Society is the sum and product of the thought and action of a large number of individuals.

Uniformity of human nature, the belief that the principal characteristics of human nature were always and everywhere the same.

Secularism, stressed the need for secular knowledge free of religious orthodoxies and opposed to traditional religious authority.

Thus, we see that enlightenment project challenged the conceptions rooted in a traditional world-view dominated by christianity characterised by Church's authority; as well as the feudal social system. In this way, Enlightenment refers to the lightness of intellectual understanding which is contrasted to the darkness of ignorance and emotional confusion, asssociated with the old order. The Enlightenment project sought to eliminate custom, superstitious backwardness and the social practices and institutions that nurture them. The aim was to emancipate people from the heavy restraints and deep seated prejudices of tradition and medieval christianity.

Hence forth, we see that enlightenment involved the move from traditional social order and a traditional set of beliefs about the world to new forms of social structure and ways of thinking about the world which were distinctly modern : the modernity of these mode of thought lay in an innovative way of demolishing and replacing with those forms of knowledge which depended upon experience, experiment and reason - quitessentially, Science.

These ideas depicted modernity which the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution were trying to achieve and which in turn, held spawn the new society of Industrial

Capitalism and Socialist state[2].

Both the Industrial and French Revolution brought about the separation of the individual from the traditional structures of community, guild and church and also, from the patriachal ties, in general. Together, these revolutions undermined the traditional authority and absolution of the old order and, thus, permitted the development of a political system based on equality before the law and an economic system based on private property. Values depended on ties of close and primary association and sense of sacredness, that had rested upon religion or enchanted view of the world, were becoming abstract; that is, removed from the particular and the concrete, through the processes of technology, science and political democracy.

The French Revolution in particular adopted for its aims, those of the Enlightenment project. It opposed the traditional priveleges of monarchy, aristocracy and the church in the name of liberty, equality and brotherhood ( in the form of popular sovereignty and the nation-state). Occupational guilds were abolished; patriachal power was weakened as women were given several grounds for divorce; responsibility of education was taken away from the family and church, and transferred to political bureaucracy. Also,

-----------------------------------------------------------

[2] The Industrial Revolution, beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing throughout most of the nineteenth century was an economic revolution. The French Revolution of 1789 was essentially a political revolution.

the French Revolution changed the very nature and definition of property and introduced a new system of weights and measures. The French revolution, in short, contributed substantially to the making of modern society.

The Industrial Revolution transformed the struggle for existence. The process of industrialization, that the revolution generated, mechanized the productive process, shifting the emphasis from animate (human or animal) labour to inanimate (machine) labor. With this development, the factory system came into prominence. By relying on machinery and material technology, reflected in the organisation of the factory system, it was better able to exploit and control man.

In the wake of French revolution, we find that traditional protections were quickly eliminated and industrialization dealt the final blow to the shackles of tradition and the oppressiveness of the old order and, thereby, created the social conditions for freedom and equality.

TH-6522

Once begun, the process of industrialization expanded without serious interruption. Progress, defined as continuous economic growth and industrial expansion, became the catchword of the nineteenth century. With complex machines and factories, new forms of transportation and communication were built. Industrial cities arose, as more and more people settled around the growing manufacturing

centres and, to coordinate the activities of and provide services to these people, bureaucratic organisations were created. If the French revolution produced the ideological and political conditions of modern society, the Industrial revolution generated the material and social conditions.

Nineteenth century western thought is, by and large, a celebration of modern society. Social relationships are rooted, not in the force of tradition and status, but in the voluntary and rational agreements made by individuals. Man is rational and thus, capable of creating a just and free society. Liberated from the constraints of a hostile nature of oppressive social institutions, reason would flourish and progress, towards a more perfect set of social arrangements, would begin. The French and the Industrial Revolutions, in these terms, were justified. Both had abolished the established constraints on reason and so, permitted the expression of freedom and human progress.

However, the stress on individual reason found in the enlightenment thought, terribly weakened the fabric of social order and produced not human betterment but chaos, misery and disorder. This was because, forgetting the divine origin of society, the enlightenment thinkers, wildly and irresponsibly, wielded the sword of individual reason and severly damaged the basis of social stability, that is, family, community, church and the status order. The fragile foundations of social harmony, the sacred supports of social

order - denigrated in enlightenment thought as unnecessary, backward and constraints (superstitious) were undermined. All these resulted in chaos, frustration, loneliness and general degradation of social life. In other words, social disorganization, cultural and psychological disorientation defined the new society.

**Section - 2**

**Politics Of Mainstream  / Modernist Sociology.**

So much was the damage and devastating impact of the revolutions, by the disorder created through forcible destruction of social groups, that the existence of social order became a very important question in sociology. The reconstruction of society was necessary, if society was to exist, because the old medieval order(society), characterised by, taken for granted attitude, was dying out and a new society being born. Sociology developed as an approach to the problem of social reconstruction.

This approach in  sociology, we are calling the consensus perspective. Sociologists who have developed consensus approach, have explicitly focussed on the 'problem of order' at a societal level, that is, they have tended to concentrate on the order of total societies. The conception of order referred to derives from the observation

that, by and large, both are expectations of our own behaviour and expectations of the activities of others are generally fulfilled in our experience. The theoretical and empirical analysis of the consensus approach is based on the assumption that societies can be seen as persistant, cohesive, stable, generally integrated wholes. It views society as an organism, in which all parts function in a way, that ensures the continued well being of the whole organisation like the various systems in the human body. Value consensus is essential for the maintainence of the social system as it provides order and stability. Cohesion, order, integration, are maintained in society by its parts. These parts are social institutions like the family and Church whose existence is 'useful' or functional in some way. The very presence of such institutions is an index of their 'usefulness'.If they aren't functional, they would disappear and be replaced by others.

For August Comte, the founder of sociology as a subject, societies should be studied using the same methods as in the natural sciences: an approach known as POSITIVISM. Society should be studied as a whole, as systems of interrelated parts. Also societies befits a science, the laws governing how society holds together (social statics) and how it changes (social dynamics) should be discovered. Task of sociology is to know scientifically the laws of progress inherent in the social order and to ensure consistency between them and programmes of reconstruction.

Herbert Spencer makes a strong analogy between society and an organisation, saying that society, being like an organism, is a system made up of parts. He identified that the 'institutions' of society needed to fulfill the vital functional or 'needs' necessary to keep the organisation 'alive' and 'well'. And finally, like Comte, albeit in different terms, he also classified societies in terms of their level of organisation, their complexity and hence their stage of developement. In this respect Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) developed further the mode of analysis in sociology which, today, is generally called Functionalism; and he outlined in more detail, than Comte or Spencer, a general research strategy to be used in the investigation of social phenomenon[3].

Durkheim's emphasis on functionalism appears in all his work. For example, in his book ' The Division of Labour in Society',which he subtitled 'The study of the organisation of Advanced Societies', Durkheim claims that division of labour is a moral phenomenon, rather than an economic one[4]. Simple/ primitive societies are characterised by what Durkheim calls 'Mechanical Solidarity'. Men, herein,

------------------------------------------------------------

[3] Two early sociologists who had a considerable influence on the development of the consensus perspective, August Comte and Herbert Spencer. The work of both Comte ( 1798 - 1857) and Spencer ( 1820-1857) provided stimulus for Emile Durkheim to carve out a general approach, which is still an influencial part of modern sociology.

[4] See Emile Durkheim, The Division of labour in society, translated by G.Simpson, New York, Macmillan, 1933.

are bound together by common values, based on shared and common experiences. As the division of labour increases, there's increasing differentiation of units or groupings. At the same time uniformity of beliefs and moral ideas decreases, but the society does not disintegrate; instead a new form of moral order develops to supplement the weakening influence of common values. This Durkheim calls 'Organic Solidarity'. It is characterised by differentiation which brings with it interdependence. In effect, Durkheim suggests that a new form of solidarity becomes necessary to prevent society from collapsing and disintegrating, in other words, to ensure the continuance of order. In this account of division of labour in society, Durkheim explicity uses equilibrium model of society. Society is seen as a stable, orderly system which experiences change and which adjusts or adopts to the changed situation in some way to re-create a new order, a new state of equilibrium, as discussed earlier.

Submission to a collective morality appropriate to complex society was seen by Durkheim, also as a remedy for anomie and the progressive eman cipation of the individual. Anomie or normlessness prevails in modern society, according to Durkheim, in so far as the collective conscience of moral individualisation remains under developed. This state of normlessness or anomie is a pathological social fact which impedes both the harmonious operation of society and

individual freedom[5]. Sociology, the science of morality has the responsibility of resolving the moral crisis, characterised by uncertainity, insecurity, chaotic meaninglessness. This resolution of anomie is possible through a genuinely collective nomos, one representative of society as a whole. Such a collective nomos would emerge from the interaction of everyone with everyone else. This was unlike the anomic condition, which is one of low group cohesion and low collective regulation of personnel needs and desires. Durkheim formulates the non rational solution to anomie in his last major work, The Elementary Forms of Religious life[6]. Briefly, Durkheim argues that during the periods of collective effervescence, marked by euphoric experience of intense social interaction among people, social attachment is strengthened and reaffirmed , social bond is renewed and new collective ideals are created. The all powerful 'being' experienced during these moments of collective ferment, Durkheim maintains, is not God, but society and, out of this celebration and submission emerges a remedy for anomie , characterised by 'state of incertitude and confused agitation'. And in doing so, order is maintained in society.

-------------------------------------------------------------------

[5] Pathological social facts are obstructive of the cohesive and progress tendencies of society and they should be eliminated. For more details, see, Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, translated by S.Solanay and J.Muller New York, Free press,1938 This study was advocated by Durkheim as a scientific study of society.

[6] See, Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, translated by J.W.Swain, New York , Free Press, 1965. This book concerns the functions rather than the causes of religion.

Durkheim's preoccupation with order from a consensus perspective was exemplified in the concept of equilibrium, through the maintenance of collective conscience in society. Another sociologist concerned with the question of order from a consensus point of view is Talcott Parsons, ( 1902-1979)[7]. Parsons begins with the assumption what value consensus is essential part for the survival of the social system. Those performing successfully in terms of society's values will be ranked highly and are likely to receive rewards at a minimum. They will be accorded high prestige, since they exemplify and personify common values. From shared values derive common goals. A common goal provides an incentive for cooperation. When values are institutionalised and behaviour structured in terms of them the result is a stable system. This emphasis upon socially shared agreement is the hallmark of Parsons 'consensus' approach. According to Parsons, the inequalities of power are functional for the society since these inequalities serve to further collective goals based on shared values. The amount of power in society is measured by the degree to which the collective goals are realised.

Parsons views society as a social system and argues that any society has four basic functional pre-

---

[7] See, Talcott Parson   The Social System, Illinois,
The Free Press, 1951 pp. 12.
It gives a detailed analysis of his functionalist interpretation of regulation of order.

requisites. They are :

- Adaptation - Any society must be able to mobilise resources for collective action from its environment.

- Goal attainment meant goals to be realised by the social units.

- Integration is the functional prerequisities which helps to maintain coherence, solidarity and coordination in the system, and helps to safeguard society against disruptions or'breakdown.'

- Pattern maintainence or latency, organises and maintains the motivational energy of the elements in the social system.

Parsons has called these functional pre-requisites together as AGIL scheme wherein Adaptation and goal attainment are external needs and Integration and latency are internal needs.

The importance Parsons places on norms and values is brought out by his concept of 'pattern variables'[8]. This scheme can serve to display a society's measure of equilibrium and integration. According to Parsons, these pattern variables help to analyse and understand the nature of possible relationships between various institutions and

---------------------------------------------------------------

[8] The pattern variables are characteristic of both modern and traditional society. They are - 1) Achievement vs ascription, 2) Specificity vs diffusiveness, 3) Universalism vs Particularism, 4) Affective neutrality vs Affectivity, 5) Self Orientation vs Collective Orientation.

highlights the interdependence operating between the variious elements of a social system. These pattern variables not only define the nature of role interaction and role expectations in social system but provide in addition, the overall direction in which most members of social system choose their roles. It is through this functionalist interpretation that Parsons thought maintainence of social order was possible. In the words of Parson, 'the problem of order, and thus, of the nature of the integration of stable systems of social interaction, that is, of social structure, thus focusses on the integration of the motivation of actors with the normative cultural standards which integrate the action system, in our context, interpersonally. These standards are patterns of value orientation and as such are a crucial part of the cultural tradition of the social system'[9]. Two major ways by which social equilibrium is maintained, and by which - should either or both fail - disequilibrium results. The first is,'socialization', all the ways by which the newborn individual is made into a social person. The problem of maintaining social equilibrium is to make people want to do what is required and expected of them. That failing, the second problem, that of 'social control', by which Parsons means, all the ways of keeping people in action that is typically expected and approved in the social system.

---------------------------------------------------------------

[9] For detailed analysis, see, Talcott Parsons, <u>The Social System.</u> Illinois, The free Press, 1951, pp.12, 36-37.

Inspired by the triumph of natural sciences and by the development of enlightenment optimism, emphasis came to be laid upon POSITIVISM ( or 'Scientific sociology'). Following are the features of Scientific Sociology :

1) There is a unity of methods in the natural and social sciences - there's a close affinity between sociology and natural sciences, in the sense, that the principles, procedures and methods used in natural sciences are to be applied in sociology as well.

2) Sociology is empirical and objective.

3) Sociology can arrive at laws and predict.

Positivism can be seen in Comte's Positive Philosophy in Durkheim's, The Rules of Sociological Method[10], in the cult of statistics, in excessive mathematicization of social sciences, in operationalism - a tendency to quantify/measure all qualitative experiences however positivism brings sociology closer to agenda of modernity: an agenda that equates knowledge with science and visualises a social order based on objective rationality. But it has to be realised that positivism is primarily self defeating, it doesen't challenge the hierarchy of knowledge,

------------------------------------------------------------

[10] Durkheim in 'The Rules of sociological method ' brings out the significance of the positivist method, this is done through the scientific study of social facts. social fact says Durkheim, are first and foremost 'things' which are social in nature. They are external to the individual, present throughout and endowed with cohesive power and hence act as a constraining force For Comte's positive philosophy, see foot note 3.

it accepts the cognitive superiority of science. It is possible to see how science is based on the principle of domination. This domination, for instance, manifests itself in its celebrated principle of 'objectivity'. Science is related to power, the power that at certain juncture of history the industrial bourgeoisie needed to tap resources and colonise the world, the power that the modern nation - state needs to strengthen its military apparatus, the power the professionals - doctors, teachers and psychiatrists - need to establish their control over larger population[11]. In other words, science is not outside power, science is often an ideology of the Establishment.

**Section - 3**


**Alternative Sociology As An Emancipatory Consciousness.**


Whereas functionalism emphasises consensus, shared norms, shared values and central concepts like order, harmony and equilibrium were essential for the functioning of the society, it ignored conflict and the dysfunctional aspects of the same, including constraints, disagreements and discontinuities in the society. All these themes were

---------------------------------------------------------------

[11] Paul Feyeraband, for example, seeks to sensitize us. He shows how science has often supressed alternate forms of knowledge, how it leads to violence. " The superiority of science", argues Feyerband, " is the result not of research, or argument, it is the result of political, institutional and even military pressures". Paul Feyerband, science in a Free Society, London, Verso, 1982, pp. 102.

central to the Conflict Perspective. It challenged the functionalist preoccupation with order, equilibrium and itself, put forward a view of society divided into two antagonistic groups and classes. Conflict theorists assume that society is not in the constant state of harmony.Every society is subjected to change and no society can remain in equilibrium over a long period of time. And that, conflicts are inherent in the very nature of social structure.

One of main attempts to explain the conflict perspective emerged from the theory of Marxism. For Karl Marx (1818-83), Capitolism is a historically specific system of production founded upon the division of society into two directly opposed / antagonistic classes : the Bourgeoisie, or the capitalists who own the means of production and the Proletariat or working class / wage labourers, who own nothing, except their own labour power. These two classes have diammetrically opposed interests. The capitalists accumulate profit through the exploitation of labour, whereas the proletariat is deprived of the means of production and subjected to capitalist exploitation. And, therefore, they are interested in abolishing the capitalist structure of society. Hence one can see conflict of interests of the ruling and the working class. The ruling class perpetuates its domination and economic exploitation of the workers/labourers through political power, with the state as its instrument.

Conflict with wage workers over pay and living conditions results in producing tensions in the capitalist

system. The wages paid to the workers for their labour are below the value of goods they produce. The value that remains extra with the owner after paying the worker is what Marx calls the surplus value, the basis of increasing exploitation of labour by the capitalists. And this economic exploitation and the inhuman conditions under which the labourers are working lead to increasing alienation of man, the worker. As a result of alienation, the worker becomes aware of his class position, is conscious about his political rights and therefore starts interacting with others. With the growth of class consciousness, classes tend to become internally homogeneous, united in common thought of resistance - combination. Owners are unified because of their common ideology of maximising profit and workers are united to fight against a common enemy. With inherent contradictions, class struggle becomes intensified. At this stage, says Marx, workers are transformed from a passive object of history, to its conscious and active subject, its makers; from being class "in itself" it becomes class " for itself".[12]

At the height of class conflict between two classes a revolution breaks out which destroys the structure of the capitalist society; terminates capitalist society and leads to dictatorship of the proletariat, that is Socialism. The political organisation in its content is highly democratic

---------------------------------------------------------------

[12] See, Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, Moscow, 1962, pp. 166.

and its form secure further development of socialist democracy and conscious discipline of the masses. Private ownership of property will give way to its socialization and thereby eliminate class and cause of social conflict . And most importantly, this stage represents the stage of emancipatory consciousness. This is because the working class, constituting the basic production of society, exploited and suppressed in the past, has now come to power for the first time. The awareness of the working class has led to its emancipation from the shackles of economic, political and ideological exploitation.

Science, it is true, is often seen as emancipation - emancipation of man from nature, release of man's rationality, celebration of technology and man's continual material well-being. But then, this enlightenment optimism can also be debunked, so it was. The Frankfurt School of Marxism, initiated 'critical theory', which put forward a rigorous critique of enlightenment positivism. To this school, belonged Max Horkeheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas.

Marcuse, believes technology is a tool of domination leading to one dimensional existence. Science controlled nature through scientific laws, while it was meant to be emancipatory in nature. And therefore, enlightenment is a big myth. For Lukacs, enlightenment is totalitarian because technology, and science as a principle of domination, destroy all spheres of life, by continual

growth of control of all spheres. This control leads to uniformity, standardisation, homogeneity/denial of differences, of criticality, of reflexivity and results in passivity. Culture has lost its aura owing to authoritarianism of culture industry, which is tool a domination, of standardisation. Consumers become passive and the mass is cut off from peoples's real experiences.

One can therefore find in the Frankfurt school, critique of positivism, of technocratic consciousness and, in short, critique of modernity. Principle of domination becomes all pervasive, resulting in homogeneity which destroys all differences, denial of qualitative differences. Herein, supreme importance is given to instrumental knowledge. This is dangerous because it prevents one from seeing other possible meanings of knowledge, other than science.

It is in this context that Jurgen Habermas becomes relevant. Habermas seeks to see relationship between knowledge and human interests. In fact, with his "theory of knowledge - constitutive interests". Habermas sees divergent possibilities[13]. Our technical interests (technical control of nature) lead to "empirical analytic sciences" Our practical intersts (mutual understanding in the everyday conduct of life) lead to "historical - hermenueutic sciences." And our emancipatory interests (emancipation from

--------------------------------------------------------

[13] See, Michael Pusey, <u>Jurgen Habermas</u>   New York, Tavistock Publications, 1987   pp. 24-26.

ideologically frozen representations of all politically constituted order) lead to crital sciences". In other words, for Habermas, our technical/instrumental interests alone aren't sufficient. If these technical interests are allowed to kill other spheres of knowledge (hermeneutic and emancipatory), it would be a case of colonisation - 'colonization of the life world'. To resist this colonization, what is important is to keep these alternate sphere of knowledge alive. This is to think beyond technology and its define spheres of work, market and production.

Sociology can make its presence felt or retain its relev nce only by raising its voice of dissent - dissent against the domination of instrumental knowledge, dissent against technological culture. Sociology intensifies human sensitivity, it seeks to create a world in which technology is not the last word and there is a fair degree of communication between man and woman, nature and human species. This is a world that does not allow the spontaneous flow of life to be killed by a technology oriented / consumerist culture. This agenda is qualitatively different from its 'modernist' variety. This is the agenda of post-modernity, which marks a new trend in sociology.

**Section - 4**

**New Trends In Sociology.**

'Modernist' sociology aims at retaining the 'order'

that industrial capitalism needs to sustain itself. This suggests pleading for post modernity[14]. Post modernity is a protest against the monologue of science; post-modernity deprives modernity of its right to homogenise the world; post modernity as, we shall see, creates the space needed for the survival of plurality of cultures and traditions. Post-modernity seriously questions the following typical enlightenment tenets [15]:-

i.   the view, that our knowledge of society, like society itself, is holistic, cumulative and broadly progressive in society.

ii.  that we can attain rational knowledge of society.

iii. that such knowledge is universal and, thus, objective.

iv.  that sociological knowledge is both different from and superior to 'distorted' forms of such as ideology, religion, common sense and superstition.

v.   that social scientific knowledge, once validated and acted upon, can lead to mental liberation and social betterment amongst humanity, generally.

---------------------------------------------------------------------

[14]   Zugmunt Bauman is known for his simple / lucid clear writing on postmodernism. He has shown how postmodernism has led to a new debate on the role of sociologists and Anthropologists. For an understanding of his debate, See his Legislators and Interpreters : On Modernity, Post-modernity and Intellectuals, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987.

[15]   See, Stuart Hall, 'Enlightenment Project Revisited, 'Modernity and its Futures, Cambridge Polity Press, 1992, pp. 331.

To make the concept clear, comparision between modernity and post-modernity is depicted diagrammatically.

| Modernity | Post - Modernity |
|---|---|
| i. Obessed with form, – a form dictated by function. For example, for Marx, it was Labour, for Freud, it was Sexuality, for Weber, it was Rationality. | Anti-form or anti-founda-tionalism viewed the relation of function to form as a 'tragic' or false 'necessity' which limits, confines and distorts the fullness of human experience. |
| ii. Fixed Product. | No fixed product, always in the process of discovering. |
| iii. Rational design. | No design but chance in favour of cultural images ( Any thing goes.) |
| iv. Grand universal issues, metanarratives through which all other things can be represented and explained. | Emphasis on local issues authenticity of 'other voices'. |
| v. Modernity is the product of Western culture (Homogeneity) | Post-modernism herald's the recognition of plurality of cultures (Heterogenity) |
| vi. Hierarchy of West. | Anarchy, chaos |
| vii. Distance between knower and knowledge. | Entails engaging & partici-pation in multiple struggles for liberation. |

| viii. Creation | . | Deconstruction, the examining |
| | . | & discarding the dominant |
| | . | discourse of modernity. |
| ix. Determinacy | . | Radical indeterminacy. |
| x. High brow authority over cultural taste. | . | Consumerism & popular culture. |

In brief, the contemporary state reflecting the logic of modernity, is characterised by extreme centralising tendencies : it is colonalising, totalising, bureaucratic. In contrast, the major theme in Postmodernism is subversion i.e. the committment to undermine the dominant discourse. This theme is described as deconstruction, radical indeterminacy, anti-essentialism or anti-foundationalism. Whether in art, literature or philosophy, postmodernism seeks to demonstrate the inherent instability of seemingly hegemonic structures, that power is different through society and that there are multiple possibilities for resistance by oppressed people. The post-modern subject isn't defined, either by particular values such as possessive individualism or by class or by race, There is no unified essence. Rather the post-modern is a plurality of contingent social, political and epistemic relations. Moreover these relations are constantly subject to rearticulation because there are no apriori relations based on hegemonic structures (practices), agents are only contingenlly allied in a more or less stable arrangements. The post-modern goals are extensive citizen participation in free democratic

egalitarian societies. A democratic plurality follows from the concept of radical contingency. Rather than priveleged positions, there's only discontinuation series of social formation  struggle can arise out of a variety of practices from a variety of political spaces. This is radical pluralism because there is no necessary connections between various interests; there is no unitary subject and therefore, no common or totalising discourse. Rather the links between the various interests have to be articulated from moment to moment for example, class. The articulation of different demands means not merely establishing alliances but actually modifying the very identity of these forces. The ethical principle of defending of individual liberty becomes more important than ever. But liberty is not bourgeoisie, possessive individualism for postmodernists.  Rather they see individual liberty and rights as relational, as collectively exercised, which means recognising the rights of others as well.

The postmodernism deprives modernity of its  right to  homogenize the world ;  postmodernism creates the  space needed  for  the  survival  of  purity  of  cultures  and traditions. But then, the danger with  postmodernism is that it tends to become nihilistic ; its  relativism denies all sorts  of  moral  conviction.  It  is  about  chaos  and uncertainity. Postmodernism  dosen't have  any agenda for itself.

To sharpen our argument in the context of the critique of project of modernity,'Feminist Epistemology'

bears relevance. And so it is important to see, the way Hillary Rose[16], problematizes the "masculinist Knowledge," its arrogant positivism, the way it causes duality and hierarchizes the world, and negates the faculties like intuition, compassion and feeling in the process of knowing the world. But then, Rose says," a feminist epistemology which derives from women's lived experience is centered on the domains of interconnectedness and caring rationality and emphasizes holism and harmonious relationships with nature..."[17] In other words, Rose has got a different agenda: 'thinking from a caring'! It is, in fact, "the admission of love, a recognition that the process of care shapes the product, which opens up the prospect of a feminist reconstruction of rationality itself as a responsible rationality - responsible to the people and nature alike."[18]

Feminist critics (Sociologists) have pointed out that current paradigms do not adequately capture enough of social reality in that they do not include women. One promise of feminists critiques, then, lies in their potential for restructuring the field of socilogy or rethinking sociology through a feminist perspective. In

------------------------------------------------------------

[16] See, Hillary Rose, <u>Love, Power and Knowledge : Towards a Feminist Transformation of Sciences,</u> Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994.

[17] Ibid, pp.33.

[18] Ibid ; pp 50. We realise that knowledge gifted with love and caring can alter the world and create a counter-culture - a culture that challenges the all pervasive voilence rooted in the male / Baconian science. This means that sociological knowledge becomes potent, it leads to action.

doing so, it will become clear with how feminist critiques
"can make sociology a better instrument for understanding,
explaining and interpreting the way modern societies
operate".

Current feminist critiques of sociology fall roughly
into two categories[19]. In one are arguments that
sociological analysis is, for the most part, non-inclusive
of women. Within this category, there are three major
objections to the way sociology has been practised. First,
the issues that have been addressed are ones deemed by men
to be important and interesting[20]. A second issue is
methodological, that is, that most past and current research
uses methods that cannot capture women's social worlds[21]. A
third critique is that, although, past research has
illuminated only the male world, it generally has been
assumed that theoretical perspectives and findings also are
applicable to females.

------------------------------------------------------------

[19]  See, Sarah H. Mathews,'Rethinking Sociology Through a
Feminist Perspective,' Revision of a paper presented at  the
North Central Sociological Association Meetings, April 1979,
Panel Session,"Feminism and Sociology", Andrea Baker, chair.
The American Sociologist, Vol.17, February 1982, pp. 29-30.

[20]  For example, two objections raised by the  committees  on
the  Status of Woman in Sociology, are that, "Aspects  of  a
topic  of special salience for men are defined  as  covering
the entire topic while aspects of special salience for women
are    underresearched,"   and   "topics   of   a   particular
significance to women are ignored." Ibid ;pp. 29.

[21]  Bernard writes,"not only do men and woman view a common
world from different perspective, they view different worlds
as well. Ibid ; pp. 29.

The second category into which current feminist critiques of sociology fall takes as its central thesis that women as a group are oppressed by, or at the very least, subordinate to men. Within this category research can be divided broadly into micro-level and macro-level arguments. The former focusses on gender role socializations which begins at birth and functions to keep women in "their place." The latter statement is about the oppression of women come largely from a Marxist perspective, most arguments focussing on the relationship between class and partriachy.

All these critiques have in common as their beginning point the assumption that distinguishing between two genders is the appropriate foundation from which to build research questions and theory. To say that women have been excluded from sociological research; that research on women must be done to parallel research on men; that different methodologies must be utilised to understand women in society; that boys and girls are socialised differently; and that women as a group are oppressed, is to accept and to reinforce the taken-for-granted assumption that these are in fact two gender categories into which it is important to sort all human beings. For feminist sociologists to continue to contribute to this process of reification is ideological rather than sociological.

Within the sociological literature, it is common (although by no means universal) to make a distinction between sex and gender. Sex is defined as the "bioloigical

dichotomy between male and female, chromosomally determined and for the most part unalterable". While gender is that which is "recognised as masculine and feminine by a social world." This distinction is proposed as recognition that, while sex may be a biological fact, gender is socially constructed. In modernist sociology, men and women in contemporary western societies are differently constituted as modern human subjects; that they inhabit, experience and construct the socio-political world in different often incommensurable ways; that we are just beginning to perceive and to understand the hitherto suppressed feminine dimensions of public and private life; and that what has passed as a gender neutral vocabulary of reason morality, cognitive development autonomy, history, justice, progress and enlightenment is imbued with masculine meaning. Those who believe that gender differences are significantly basic ( in the modernist sense that they are strong conventions which help to constitute men and women as incommensurably different subjects) are more likely to pursue a politics of difference which can speak to women's alienated ( with respect of dominant, male-stream ) culture but also potentially critical identity and be employed on behalf of a reconstituted non-masculinist social order. Those who do not see gender as basic in this deep and constitutive sense are more likely to argue for a politics of equality based on some presumption of eventual attainable, and desirable androgyny; i.e on the basis of identity which transcends gender difference. The notion of gender as basic merely

serves to reify, rather than to critically contest, transform and escape the imposed myth of difference while it ignores other crucial and as yet subjugated areas of difference.

According to Sandara Harding, the feminist challenge to western culture's intellectual and social frameworks inevitably reaches to the very foundation of our cultural epistemological systems[22]. She argues that feminist critiques of modern science have taken three forms:

i. 'Feminist Empiricism'. corresponds quite neatly with rationalism. It identifies sexism and androcentrism as social biases which are correctable by stricter adherence to the existing norms of scientific inquiry. Hence, sexist science is potrayed as bad science rather than as science as usual. But feminist empiricism deconstructs its terms of endearment to rationalism by revealing that sexist bias is an internal rather than accidental or secondary feature of scientific proce dures, The epistemological paradoxes of Feminist empiricism are addressed by Feminist Stand point approach, which acknowledges the intimate gendered dimensions of rational enquiry.

ii.     While the'Feminist Stand Point'Approach is willing to embrace an open relationship between knowledge and

---------------------------------------------------------------

[22] See, Sandara Harding 'Feminism, Science and the Anti-Enlightment Critiques" in Linda Nicholson (ed), _Feminism and Post-Modernism,_ New York, Routledge, 1990, pp.91-101.

gendered interests it still shares - with feminist empiricism - an urge for generalizable universal knowledge. As a result, Harding points out, that, feminist standpoint theories are vulnerable to the suspicion that "women" do not exist as a sufficiently coherent social subject. If differences between woman - differences secured on the basis of race, class, sexuality, culture & ethnicity - are sufficient to over-ride feminine commonalities of experience and interest, than a feminist standpoint, as in terms of feminist movement, is a potentially oppressive and totalising fiction.

iii. For Harding, 'The Feminist Postmodernism' goes even further to challenge the assumptions of feminist empiricism and feminist stand point theories. While post modernism opposes " the dangerous fiction of the naturalized, essentialised, uniquely 'human' (read 'manly') and therefore the distortion and exploitation perpetrated on behalf of this fiction," it embraces a skepticism regarding generalizable and universal claims of any sort, including those of feminism. Furthermore, it cultivates a suspicion toward any overly coherent theory. Feminist postmodernism, then, "is an epistemology that justifies knowledge claim in so far as they arise from enthusiastic violation of the founding taboos of Western humanism"[23]. The postmodern call to give up the privileging of gender, along with subject - centered forays into women's way of thinking, acting and

---

23    Ibid ; pp.99.

reconceiving theory and politics, is met with suspicion and hostility. These consist of several related claims :

a. Postmodernism expresses the claims and the needs of a constituency ( white, previledged men of industralised West), that had already had an enlightenment for itself and that is now ready and willing to subject that legacy to critical scrutiny.

b. Objects of Postmodernism's various critical and deconstructive efforts have been the creations of a similarily specific and partial constituency.

c. The Postmodernism project, if seriously adopted by feminists would make any semblence of a feminist politics impossible to the extent that feminist politics is bound up with a specific constituency or subject, namely woman. The postmodernist prohibtion against subject centered inquiry and theory undermines the legitimacy of broad based organised movement dedicating to articulating and implementing the goals of such a constituency.

Harding herself is ambivalent and cautions about feasibility of a feminist postmodern politics. In recognising " the permanent partiality of the feminist point of view", she admits that we may become dangerously vulnerable to the hegemonic power of science and its epistemological strategies. Politically, we might add, this weakness translates into a vulnerability to modern state and disciplinary power. Another problem is that"robust" solidarites of opposition (rather than of shared identity.)

may be psychologically and politically unreliable, unable to generate sufficient attachment and motivation on the part of potential activities. The epistemological attractiveness of decentralised knowledge seeking lies, precisely, in the fact that it bears little resemblance to current conception of knowledge and rationality which have been intimately bound up with the modes of domination and illicit power. But this attractiveness carries a political liability and question of significant proportions: Is a postmodern politics - a political opposition capable of sustaining itself through time - seriously conceivable ?

Within each frame work, that is Modernist, Anti-modernist and Postmodernist alternatives, the fate of the female subject is instructive. In the rationalist framework, we find, 'she' dissolves into 'he' as gender differences are collapsed into the (masculine) figure of everyman. Anti-rationalism preserves the figure of the differentiated female subject, but 'she' is preserved at the expense of her transformation and liberation from the conventions of feminity. With post-rationalism 'she' dissolves into a perplexing plurality of differences, none of which can be theoretically or politically previleged over others.

## Conclusion.

This brief look at the historical context of the discipline suggests that sociology is not a homogenized body of thought. There are different sociologies because

sociology is context-specific. But one thing is certain, sociology is always related to wider socio-political issues/ concerns/ interests/ struggles. Perhaps there is no 'value-free' sociology. One has to choose one's sociology and with that sociological knowledge one has to relate to the larger political world. Perhaps, studying sociology means that one is learning an awareness, an imagination, a skill one needs to relate to the political world, change it and simultaneously redefine one's sociology.

CHAPTER - 2

SOCIOLOGY OF INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

**Introduction.**

After examining the nature of academic sociology, ie Western sociology, it is important to look at the state of Indian Sociology. It goes without saying that, like all other branches of modern knowledge system, sociology is too closely related to western ideas. The books we read, the courses taught in colleges/universities, our reference points and moreover the entire publishing industry ( as it is dominated by western books , journals etc.) do have deep rooted impact on our knowledge system. But at the same time it should not be forgotten that some of the culture-specific problems that confront Indian social reality also give a new meaning to our sociology in terms of our priorities, research ideas or the questions we raise. It is, therefore, important to know the dynamics of Indian Sociology. In this chapter we intend to do the following :

i)  a descriptive/historical look at the discipline and its different stages of growth.

ii) to take up a few important themes like (modernity and nation building/counter hegemonic movements) and examine the politico - ideological character of sociological Knowledge.

**Section 1**

**History  Of Indian Sociology : Stages Of Growth.**

Broadly viewed, the growth of sociology in India falls into three phases :

the first, covering the period between 1773-1900 the Pre-Independence era, when their foundations were laid;

the second, 1901 - early 1950's (1952's), when sociology became professionalised;

and finally, the post-Independence years from 1952 onwards.

Ist Stage (1773 - 1900)

Prior to Independence, Sociology had a very limited spread and scope. As an academic subject sociology has been tagged on either to philosophy or to economics. In so far as it was tagged on to former, the emphasis was laid on the social and moral basis underlying Indian social organisation and to inquire , into the value structure which supported social organisation. Where sociology was adjunct to economy, it naturally gave rise to individous comparisons between the two disciplines. Invariably sociology was regarded as a kind of subsidiary subject which didn't entail much academic discipline or theoretical rigour since the content of courses and syllabi tended to be of a purely descriptive nature and lacked distinctive point of view.

During the colonial period, subtantive contributions were made by the British administrators-cum-social anthropologists who wrote extensively on Indian society (aspects of social structure), customs and traditions, languages and styles of life and social economy of the people. As paradigms of analysis, these contributions were deeply influenced by utilitarian positivistic

orientations. These orientations used conceptual categories which were Eurocentric in congnitive and value terms;tending to distort history and impute meanings to Indian reality in the abstract ( a-historically) as if to perpetuate colonalism. Concepts such as 'caste', 'tribe', 'village','community','family' and 'kinship' reflected in their observations, served consciously or unconsciously to exaggerate the principal elements of segmentary cleavages in Indian society to the exclusion of the principle of organic linkages and societal unity. British rulers sought to convey the point that Indian society was never a coherent nation. This bias was rooted in various ideological positions that western sociologists and scholars held while analysing India social reality, during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In this context, several orientations in the interpretation of social reality of Indian emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth century [1], most of which sought to view the Indian reality from the perspective of a universal evolutionary scheme, where the tendency was to downplay the historicity of Indian institutions and civizations.

In doing so, the soil was being made ready for the planting of sociology.

---------------------------------------------------------------

[1] Three such important orientations are Missionary, Orientalists and Administrators. For a detailed analysis see, Bernard S. Cohn, An Anthropologist Among Historians and other essays, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 141-148.

IInd Stage    ( 1901 - 1952's)

With the beginning of the twentieth century, sociology entered the early phase of professionlisation, and it also marked the entry of sociology in India into the second phase of its growth. It gradually became a discipline taught in the universities and its professional character began to emerge.

Sociology was introduced in 1917, in Calcutta University in the Post Graduate Council of Arts and Sciences and the subject was taught by Radhakamal Mukherjee and Benoy Kumar Sarkar, later in the same year, it was introduced in Mysore University by R. Mukherjee and A.R. Wadia. In 1919, a department of sociology was founded in Bombay under the leadership of Patric Geddes. Subsequently, Bombay became the leading centre for sociology under G.S. Ghurye's leadership. While Wadia looked upon sociology as "applied philosophy", and, while, Bombay was the first University to start a post-graduate department, Mysore had the distinction of being the first to introduce the subject at the B.A. level.

Another centre for sociology was Lucknow where a combined department of economics and sociology was started in 1921, by the university, with Radhakamal Mukherjee as Professor and Head. He was later joined by D.P. Mukherjee, and in 1928 by D.N. Majumdar, B.N. Seal, B.N. Sarkar and Patrick Geddes.

In 1928-29, sociology was accorded the status of a

"group" subject in the B.A. pass course. In the same year, it introduced B.A. Honours course in Social Philosophy which included such subjects as Sociology, Social Anthropology, Social Pschyology, Indian Ethics, Indian Political theory, Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion. A Masters course in social philosophy was added in 1937, however, the department started Ph.d. research programme only in 1960.

In Osmania University, sociology was first introduced at the graduation level as one of the options, in 1928. However, it was only in 1946 that a full fledged department of sociology was created.

Some journals were also introduced during this time. They were the,'The Indian Journal of Sociology' in Baroda in 1920 'Indian Sociological Review' in 1934 with Radhakamal Mukherjee as its editor and S.C. Roy's 'Man in India'.

The first two decades of the twentieth century, which mark the beginning of sociology in India set out several of its orientations such as descriptive and evolutionary studies of caste, social customs, folklore, land systems and the village community, and their comparison with similar institutions in the west. [2] Its most important meta-theoretic contribution was in engendering an ethno-sociological awareness of Indian sociology which

-----------------------------------------------------------------

[2] See, Yogendra Singh, 'Sociology for India : The Emerging Perspective,' T.K.N.Unnithan (ed) Sociology for India, Delhi, Prentice Hall of India, 1967, pp. 29-53.

continues to persist. This needs to be highlighted, as the quest for the "universalization" of sociological categories in Indian sociology has been significantly refracted by this cognitive orientation. As a corollary to this, whether sociology is a science with an accompanying universalistic package of categories and techniques of research or whether it is a specific cognitive style marked by a mode of apperception or reflexivity in observation and comparison of structures, social relationships and ideas, are questions which have debated right from the inception of sociology in India.

As has been said earlier, sociology was in the beginning less professionlised. Most of its patrons came from outside this discipline and were not initated into its logic or methodology. Sociology emerged not as a formal discipline, but as a style of cultural critique or reformative ratiocination. Its character was thus defined by its responsive yet critical note on the western interpretations of Indian Society, its institutions and cultural patterns.[3] At the same time, sociology was focussing on possibility of having dialogue with the west; on an interaction between East and West as between two dynamic or active systems. Sociology, in this way, treated

---

[3] Amongst the critics were Radhakamal Mukherjee, B.N.Seal and B.N.Sarkar constantly refuted the efforts of western Indologists and the social anthropologists to try to interpret Indian reality through evolutionary reductionist matrix. For Seal, institutions could be compared only when they were historically coexistent and parallel, and Radhakamal Mukherjee thought Indian social institutions to be unique. He founded the sociological categories of the west inadequate for the interpretation of Indian reality.

the processes in Indian Society in a dynamic historical perspective. This was unlike the paradigm postulated by the colonial scholars, who emphasised on the relationship between India and the west, in terms of interaction between the inert or passive east, and the active west.

From 1920's onwards, sociology gradually became a discipline taught in the universities, and its professional character began to emerge, as has been mentioned earlier. The impact of British and Continental sociology and Social Anthropology was very significant in shaping the sociological orientations of researchers and teachers of this time. The teaching of methodology as a separate discipline was still not prevalent; anthropological fieldwork traditions on the British pattern of historical research methods were the two research skills which sociologists were generally expected to acquire. If they used other emipirical devices, these were to be individually fabricated, based on the nature of the research problem. British and European influence on the Indian sociology declined. And there was an ascendance of American influence both in the academic and political domains. Sociology in America evolved a strong empirical-postivistic orientation and led to phenomenal innovations in the methods and techniques of "scientific sociology". At the begining of the fifties in India it was this dominant tradition of sociology, with its theoretic package and empirical style, which made headway in the tradition of Indian sociology.

IIIrd Stage    (1952 onwards)

In the Post-Independence period, especially in the late 1950's and 1960's, there was a sharp increase in the popularity of sociology as a discipline. This was because of more teaching posts in sociology and also because the discipline was a soft option, which didn't require any knowledge of mathematics and statistics.

The growing popularity of sociology has been accompanied by increasing professionalisation. The Indian Sociological Society, established in 1951, has contributed to such professionalisation by publishing its bi-annual journal, the 'Sociological Bulletin.'By holding ocassional seminars and symposia, the India Sociological Society provided a forum for sociologists in the country.

The All-India Sociological Conference was another national forum for Indian sociologists. In 1967, the Indian Sociological Society and the Conference came together. With this merger and with the support extended by the I.C.S.S.R. and the Ford Foundation to the Society, the Conference became an important professional event in the country.

According to Yogendra Singh, it would be useful to review development of sociology in four periods in the post-Independence era.[4]

---------------------------------------------------------------

[4]  See,  Yogendra Singh, 'Ideology, Theory  and  Methods  in Indian Sociology' in Stein Rokkan (ed) A Quarter Century of International  Social  Science  :  Papers  and  Reports  on Development., 1952-1977. New Delhi, Concept Publishing  Co, 1979, pp. 293-307.

The four periods are :

i) 1952-60, was primarily a period of adaptive changes and innovations,

ii) 1960-1965, was a period of significant shifts in theoretic priorities and the beginning of some critical tensions in the theory and ideology of Indian Sociology,

iii) 1965-1970, was a period of marked sociological self-awareness and the growth of new directions in theoretical and substantive contribution, and finally,

iv) 1970-1985, a period where Indian Sociology moved towards new maturity, exploring, both theoretically and substantively, new horizons of knowledge.

The four-fold periodisation of Indian sociology could be identified with certain predominant theoretic and ideological systems for each period. However Indian sociology during this period, like sociology in general, does not show a succession of paradigms as we move from one period to another. What obtains is the co-existence of competing paradigms and theoretic orientations, as we shall see Indian sociologists throughout this period were less concerned with constructing "master theory" or general theories, and more prone to using conceptual schema for the analysis of social problems. With the exception of Radhakamal Mukherjee who in his 'The Philosophy of Social Science (1960)' proposes a general integrated scoial science model for the explanation and understanding of social realities, [5] no other systematic theoretical formulations

---

[5] See, Yogendra Singh,' Sociology For India : The Emerging Perspective,' Ibid., pp. 22-3.

have been made. Most sociologists, as will be evident, as we move further on, have used conceptual schemes and when general theoretic systems, such as those of dialectical or Marxist sociology, have been used, the emphasis throughout remains on the comprehensiveness of substantive analysis from an ideological position rather than on the relative power of theoretical systems.

i) 1952 - 60.

During this period, the ascendance of American influence can be seen on the paradigms of social and economic development for Indian society. During this period, the focus was on the issue of social relevance, how sociology was supposed to have a bearing on practical life and how it was future oriented, that is, change oriented. This was unlike, in the period, before Independence were the issues of relevance were postulated, in terms of continuity and static socio-graphy. In this paradigm, the focus was more on the motivational reinforcement of people for development rather than on structural changes in their social and economic relationships. It coincided with holistic village studies, analysis of community development projects in rural and urban centres, studies of political institutions, process of the institutionalization, voting behaviour, leadership and a host of other substantive studies, all related to the processes of social and economic development through nation-building. The need for development planning in the villages, cities and tribal areas initiated series of these empirical studies. The quest

for relevance assumed a new urgency mainly in terms of models and strategies of development of Indian society. Theoretically, the Structural-Functional Paradigm of analysis of social reality reigned supreme. The focus here is mainly on the continuity and integrated modality of social change rather than on inherent contradictions germinating in the social and cultural structures. The studies reflected social construction of structures and their intensive potrayal rather than towards a critical appraisal of policy or process of development as such. In doing so, emphasis came to be laid on pre-existing orientations of Indian sociology which are as follows:

- emphasis on tradition and its social organisation,
- emphasis on linkages between the folk and elite tradition in the understanding of both the culture and social structure of tradition,
- unity between rural and urban social structure and tradition,
- The emphasis on tradition, on holistic potrayal of social systems from a structural-functional perspective, was later construed as approval of the state ideology of social change, by the sociologists. The structuralist departure in the paradigm ofsociology introduced by Louis Dumont further reinforced this belief as it reiterated the ideology of status-quo-ism in the structure of society as well as the value premises of sociology.

The social conditioning of the paradigms of Indian

sociology during the 1950s is reflected in its ideological character. It is marked by a shift from the cultural renaissance ideology pervading sociological studies of the 1930s and 1940s, to distinctly professional and fieldwork-oriented studies popular during the 1950s and 1960s. Ideologically, a subtle shift in the value premises of sociology had taken place as the overt reformist and contentious (vis-a-vis the external colonial situation) orientation of 'pioneers'of Indian soc iology, to borrow the term from Ramakrishna Mukherjee, was replaced by a constructive and consensual value premise in the contribution of sociologists.

ii)   1960 - 65.

The mid 1960s marked a decline of structural-functionalism, in Indian sociology. The developmental models with primary focus on motivational reinforcement began to show major cracks without suitable support from structural changes in society. The fruits of development were upsurged mainly by the classes which had resources for absorbing technology and inputs. The relative deprivation of weaker sections increased in substantial measure.The ensuing contradictions in society tended increasingly to render functional paradigm of social analysis, based on consensus ideology, anachronistic in this emerging milieu. As a result emphasis shifted from the study of categories to that of structures and process. Village studies were replaced by peasant studies. Study of change, through comparison at two points of time through diachronic model, was replaced by

social movements (rarely were studies on social movements during 1960s taken up.) Functionalism had by now also come under pressure in the west. All these developments contributed to the quest for alternative paradigms for understanding Indian social reality as well as for formulating a programme or strategy for India's social and economic development. This emerging identity consciousness is symbolised in sociology in the debate on a 'Sociology for India' The indigenization of sociological concepts and paradigms, commensurate with the historicity of Indian reality, were its major themes. The process of indigenizations came to be reflected in the processes of institution building in social sciences, in the evolution of curricula for teaching of sociology and the opera tionalization of research problems and programmes.

iii) 1965-70 and iv) 1970-85.

Indian sociology in the 1970s and 1980s displays both continuities and changes in its paradigms, social research concerns and issues of identity. These changes can be linked with changes in the social milieux of sociology, both in India and the west.[6] The changing social conditions and intellectual orientations at the global level of sociology, had their impact on Indian sociology as well. The

--------------------------------------------------------------

[6] In the west, the rising social disenchantment of youth from techno-industrial sructure of society, its militarist ethos, and consumerist - capitalist culture during the late 1960s was both a result of new thinking about sociological paradigms and sociology's social concerns. It has continued well into the 1970s and beyond. It was variously postulated as C.Wright Mills 'sociological i magination', Alvin Gouldner's, 'the coming crisis of western sociology', Anthony Giddens, 'the new rules of sociology,' etc.

impact could be seen in the decline of structural functionalism as well as the emergence of a new awareness of history reflexivity and social criticism in sociological paradigms.[7] By the mid 1960s, this gathered rapid momentum. In India, the continuities in sociological concerns relate mainly to quests for 'relevance' and 'indigenization' of paradigms for the study of social structure. The quest for relevance during the 1970s and 1980s in India has, a dual character : first, it seeks demystification of sociology from its western conceptual and ideological packages, which often fail to help in understanding Indian reality. Secondly, there is, now, a conscious focus in sociological research and experiments upon the developmental priorities of the nation.[8]

During the 1970s and 1980s there was a large measure of the institutional support for social sciences. Several organisations like ICSSR, ICHR, Indian Council of Philosophical Research and several Social Science Research centres were established, to make funds and research facilities available, so that academics could participate professionally. The UGC further reinforced this process . All this continued to the growth in sociological research and in the process, offered more freedom for conceptual and

------------------------------------------------------------

[7] See, Yogendra Singh, 'Relevant Sociology (I) and (II) Indian Situation,' Relevant Sociology Vol. I, No 2, 1984, pp. 5-17.

[8] Both these tendencies, however, show continuities with older sociological tradition, although the superstructure of arguments and style has now changed considerably.

methodological explorations. It also brought several discipline, particularly economics, history, political science, psychology and anthropology, closer to sociology in respect of the interdisciplinary formulation of research and thinking on social problems.

The study of social structure from the perspective of 'tradition' frame of reference,(as mentioned earlier) this orientation is reflected strongly in the major contributions to the study of social structure in Indian sociology during the 1970s and 1980s, which could be categorized as theoretical paradigms into a five-fold typology :

i      Structuralism

ii     Ethnosociology

iii    Structural Historicism

iv    Marxism

v      Dimensional or Systemic typological approaches;

Both structuralism and ethnosociology view tradition as ideology or normative structure which constitutes the basis of social structure of a society ; nevertheless, unlike structuralism which admits to the possibility of comparison between social structures in terms of their dialectic and processes of transformation, ethnosociology offers a postulate of social structure which is historically specific. Structuralism seeks a universalistic theoretical explanation of specific structures of societies in the dialectic or the binary opposition of traditions, whereas

65

ethnosociology seeks to construct social structure from the specific cultural and historical contexts of each society. The structural-historical approᵃch to the study of social structures is centered on the analysis of social structure in the process of change and transformation in a historical setting often under the ideological canopy of modernization. It generally defines structures as observable sets of roles, relations and processes of social interaᶜtion in changing historical settings. It treats tradition only as a cultural-historical legacy of values, beliefs and customs which are adaptive. This notion of tradition is drawn from the empirical contexts rather than the texts which serve as source material, both for structuralism and eth nosociology.

The notions of history and tradition find a different form of expression in Marxist Studies of social structure.[9] Its important contribution to sociology rests on viewing, enlarging and shifting the focus of sociological research from caste, kinship, symbols and traditions to a marco-historical treatment of political economy, modes of production and the dialectics of change in the social structure. In Marxist paradigm, the categories of caste, kinship, culture or symbols of society as subjects of enquiry are viewed from the analytical perspectives of class structure, modes of production relationships and their social

-------------------------------------------------------------

9    Marxist paradigm of social structure treats social structure as systemic; it is dialectical ; it treats structures (stratification) as historical product, it locates historical forces in the mode of production and also in the reflection of the species nature of man, which, under certain historical conditions, creates contradictions of classes.

transformation. Such studies are fewer in number. The dominant themes in most studies, using a Marxist paradigm, are economic transformations, and their relation to class structure. Studies of peasant movements (revolutionary social movements), agrarian structure and political economy of the state are some of its major concerns. The dialectical-historical method of social analysis links Marxism more closely to the study of social processes. However its operationalization through modes of production has often led Marxist sociologists to postulate social system-states such as feudalism semi-feudalism, pre-capitalism etc. all of which tend to become formal, abstract and a-historical and cease to reflect the realities of the social and cultural systems of India in their concrete historical setting in terms of existential processes. Rethinking in Marxist sociology is now going on in India to overcome these limitations and a conscious attempt is being made to attune Marxist categories to take into account the specificities of Indian social historicity.

The dimensional paradigm for the study of social structure incorporates a variety of orientations, ranging from user of systemic-typologies of social categories to application of statistical models for understanding social structure and processes as sets of social variables. The major contribution of these studies belongs in the area of the operationalization of concepts and empirical methods of enquiry.

The two factors which were dominant during the early 1970s, in Indian sociology and gained strength during the 1980s were, first, the focus on social structure in terms of its concrete processes and formations rather than structure and second , the emphasis on tradition and history. These orientations gained momentum during 1980s as studies increasingly began to cover the areas of social movements, processes of mobilization, re-structuration of social roles, statues and institutions in the process of modernization and development in society, resulting from social and cultural mobility in society.

The other tendency of the 1980s was to focus increasingly on the processes of restructuration in society resulting from the operation of the technological, educational and economic forces of modernization. Studies of modernization of professionalization, restructuration in the status and power relations in society, modernization of role structures, belong to this tendency. This has increasingly led Indian sociology towards the exploration of more relevant areas of social concern and its deeper anchorage into the historicity of social and cultural traditions.

**Section - 2**

**Politico - Ideological Character Of Contemporary Sociological Knowledge : Some Examples.**

The politico - ideological character of sociological knowledge reflects relationship between

knowledge and human interests ; between thought and action. Seen in these terms, it may be argued that there is one kind of sociology, the modernist sociology, which is reflected in the Nehruvian agenda of modernity in the views of Yogendra Singh on modernization and M.N.Srinivas on caste, social transformation and secularization, as we shall examine here. But there is also, as we shall see, emerging trend in sociology, which seeks to debunk modernity as Nandy does ; Critique of the hegemony of the Brahmanical social order in terms of anti-caste struggle initiated by dalits, is reflected in the works of Kancha Ilaiah and Gail Omvedt. Through these anti brahmanical struggles, the backward sections of the society are not only challenging the dominance of Bramanical social order but, in the process, they are also raising their opinions in the matters relating to their social, economic and political life.

**Nehruvian agenda of modernity and nation making and sociology.**

Modernization in India started, mainly with the western contact, especially through establishment of the British rule. However, like most nationalist leaders Jawaharlal Nehru was convinced that India under foreign rule had become deeply degenerate and required radical restructuring. For him, every state needed a 'national philosophy' or 'national ideology' to hold it together and give it coherence and a sense of direction and purpose. The need for such a philosophy was particularly great in a new country like India whose people were divided on religious,

ethnic, linguistic and other grounds, economically undeveloped, socially static and politically inexperienced. And for this purpose Nehru thought India needed a shared public philosophy to unite them and provide with a set of clearly defined ' goals' or 'objectives'. For Nehru, 'Modernization' or the 'Project of Modernity' was India's National Philosophy and it had seven national goals.[10]

These are :-

i. National unity

ii. Parliamentary Democracy,

iii. Industrialisation

iv. Socialism

v. Development of the Scientific temper

vi. Secularism

vii. Non-alignment.

National Unity, also called National Integration, meant a strong state that was to be rational and secular institution based on shared perception of common interests, reconciling the regional aspirations for autonomy with the need for a Central Government strong enough to hold them all together and protect them against external threats. What also came to be important was the public spirit and feeling of patriotism amongst people. Nehru took little interest in culture as one of the bases of national unity, but thought

---

[10] See, Bhikhu Parekh,' Nehru and National Philosophy of India,'<u>Economic and Political Weekly</u>, Special Article, January 5-12, 1991, pp. 35-47.

that industrialistion would bind the country together in a network of economic interdependence. Also Nehru failed to appreciate the importance of education as one of the major tools of national integration.

Though Nehru had a considerable sucess in uniting the country, the process of national integration remained slow, patchy and superficial.

Parliamentary Democracy was the second 'national goal' for Nehru. It involved such conventional institutions as universal adult suffrage, free and fair elections, an independent judiciary, free press, civil liberties and constitutionally guaranteed basic rights. India needed a democratic form of government not only because the latter respected the individual but also because a diverse, vast and divided country couldn't be held together and governed in any other way.

Industrialization was the third component of the national ideology.It was not just a means of solving the problems of poverty and unemployment, as Gandhi and others had thought, but necessary in order to keep pace with the rest of the world in a globally interdependent economy . For Nehru, industry,not agriculture,was the lever of economic development.

Socialism for Nehru offered the best means of securing economic growth, rapid industralization, national self-sufficiency and an equitable distribution. It also ensured that the state remained autonomous, retained overall

control of the economy, kept capitalism within bounds and preventing from forging unacceptable links with its foreign counterparts. For Nehru, only socialism could guarantee national independence, an autonomous state and democracy.

Scientific Temper, fifth national goal of Nehru's national philosophy consisted in the civilization of the 'scientific temper' 'culture' or 'approach to life'. By this was meant,. scientific thinking relying on facts alone, taking nothing on 'blind trust' or faith, being precise and enact, relying on the method of trial and error, ceaselessly searching for truth, keeping an open mind. In doing so, he implied that scientific temper was not the most important principle but only one of the several organising principles of life. And so to quote Parekh, 'Nehru was anxious to avoid the positivist mistake of regarding it as the only valid form of knowledge'.[11]

The state, Nehru believed had to be secular in the sense of transcending and being indifferent to religion. Secularism, in this sense, informed his policies and attitudes. Religious political parties were banned. There was objection to Bande Mataram, for the simple reason, that it had religious connotation. Also not allowed, were religious symbols and images to be associated with official functions.

India being the largest continent in terms of area

---

[11] Ibid ; pp. 40.

and population,in being an ancient civilization, and the cradel of all great religions, it was important to assign it an International role.[12] And as says Parekh 'India had a right and duty to speak up on world issues. It was unlikely to be effective unless it spoke with one voice, opened up a dialogue between apparently opposite points of view, peacefully resolved its inherited territorial and other disputes and recaptured its cultural unity. In many ways, Nehru created the third world and gave it a distinct identity and role.[13] For Nehru,, it was a world of sharing in common their experiences of oppression and struggle and striving each in his own way to attain the four crucial goals of national integration, economic development, self-determination and freedom from external interferences.

For Nehru, then, it was a historical necessity and indispensable condition of its survival and economic development. Modernization, was a process anchored in this ideology or a normative system,` as mentioned above, constituting a process of more or less steady role and status differentiations necessitating, in course of time, a basic re-structuration of society. The national ideology, argued Nehru, was vital to India's survival,' imperatives to our existance and progress,' in 'our national interest' and generated in the 'logic of history'.[14]

------------------------------------------------------------

[12] Ibid ; pp. 43.

[13] Op.cit ; pp. 43.

[14] Op.cit. ; pp. 45.

Great deal of debate in India took place during the 1960s and 1970s. The empirical observations were unanimous that traditional institutions, belief and social structure responded positively to the demands of modernization. Micro-structures like caste, family and village community have retained their traditional character; caste showed unexpected elasticity, latent potential for adaptation with modern institutions such as democratic participation, political party organisation and trade unionism. Due to legislations, attempts were made to abolish social inequalities and exploitations handed down by tradition and accord democratic rights and constitutional priveleges to all members of society.

Given its values both as a civilization and as an heir to the modern world, the paramount challenge that India faced once the authority of alien power was lifted, was to evolve a nation, out of a vast heterogeneity of social and regional entities and to do this, by involving all these entities into a common undertaking rather than imposing something new and alien on them. While this idea was novel for India, it was not alien. Four major tasks for Independent India then were :

i.   National Integration
ii.  Economic Growth
iii. Social Justice
iv.  Political Democracy

Of these, national integration was considered to

be the paramount goal. The other three provided the strategy of integration, and also provided the building block of India's model of Integration a model rooted in Indian social reality and responsive to India's specific historical situation.

This design was laid during the long nationalist movement itself before Independence. The powerful combination of political communication through the interpretation of old and the improvization of new symbols, a variegated programmes of involvement that bridged the gap between the classes and masses and a structure of authoritative institutions that could mobilise mass energy had laid the foundation of Indian nationlism. Once India became independent in 1947, the nation building process itself had to be carried further and deeper. The makings of a nation were of course, there, but these had to be institutionalized into an integrated framework of a state, which was to serve as an existence of a nation in definable terms. A nation by the name Indian or Bharatiya had already come into existence long before the British rule. During the British rule the Indian nation became aware of itself as a nation suffering oppression and exploitation under Colonalism -Imperialism. This awareness developed under the impact of unified polity, economy and administrative arrangement and with the renewation of contradictions between the interests of Indian nation and that of colonalism-imperialism. This awareness in turn consolidated the Indian Nation as amenity. A sense of belongingness to a

common stock of a common identity within the same physiognomy and of a common identity, was reinforced by the national movement when it became the spokesman of the whole of India.

According to Yogendra Singh, the process of modernization should be described in the following terms :[15] - role structures emerging from the continual impingement of science and technology and continual differentiation of social structure.

- a system of values and role structures represent a scientific world view. The meaningful role of tradition is not ruled out, which essentially is to serve as a reservoir for drawing categorical or moral values. Tradition is not pitted against modernity, in fact says Singh,'it is the very substance through which processes of modernisation articulate themselves'.

- a parallel system of values categorical in nature and representing both a sub-trancendence of pre-existing traditions as well as the tradition of modern science. Such a formulation is free from the fallacies of unilinear universalism, of insular dichotomies, and of cultural ethnocentrism that most formulations of modernisation imply.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------

[15] See, Yogendra Singh, Essays on Modernization, New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1978, pp. 10.

Modernization in India , began with the colonial heritage which meant encounter of a traditional society with the modernising west.

According to Yogendra Singh, modernization, in the post-independence India, can be seen both in terms of changes in both the micro structures and the macro structures[16]. The macro structures of the Indian society include family, community, tribe, caste and sub caste. These structures are relatively autonomous institutions and provide a social space for primary relationships. Macro structures refer to those organised roles and relationships which are more extensive, more formal, are organised or acclaimed to be organised or universalistic priniciples, that is, rational legal norms.

In the cultural sphere, major changes introduced by legislations seek to abolish social inequalities and exploitations handed down by tradition. Democratic rights were accorded and constitutional priveleges to all members of society. This lead to trend away from sanskritization ( emulation of the great tradition) and towards formation of new identities and associations of castes, regional groups. Membership in caste associations is not purely ascriptive ; birth in the caste is necessary but not a sufficient condition for membership. The processes are accelerated by

---

[16] See Yogendra Singh, <u>Modernisation of Indian Tradition</u> Jaipur, Rawat Publications, 1988.

`great traditions' of modernization, industrialization and speed of education and politicization. The traditional structures and loyalties are being mobilised for objectives which are essentially modern and an increased emphasis is on protest movements. However the tradition also gets reinforced in the process ; modern media of communication and transport are increasingly used for spreading ritual order and for rational organisation of religious groups, and their mode of activities and social participation. There is a tendency amongst the religious sects to organise themselves on rational bureaucratic model and previous fission of each new sect from the parent body has now changed into strong orientation towards fusion.

Similarly, inconsistencies figure in structural changes that India has undergone during the post colonial phase of modernization. Micro structures like caste family and village community retain their traditional character, caste shows unexpected elasticity and latent potential for adoption with modern institutions such as democratic participation. Political party organisation and trade unionism and persists unabatedly. Joint family loyalties and particularistic norms continue to prevail.These contradictions are however further magnified at the level of macro-structures such as the political system, bureaucracy, elite structure, industry and economy. The colonial period

of moder nization had a homogenity in the elite structure[17]. They had equitable exposure to western education and socialization. They also had uniformity of ideologies and aspirations. This was because the social base for recruitment of these elites was limited. This fairly widened during the post independence period, argues Yogendra Singh ; it was not equitable in terms of stratification system, but in cultural background, there is a gap coming into being between political elite and non-political elite ; the former, being less westernised and externally at least identify with traditional cultural symbolisms more stongly than latter. Contradictions grow in the federal structure of the union as one party government is replaced by multiparty governments in states having divergent ideological policies.(Communist led united front governments in Kerala & West Bengal, DMK in Tamil Nadu.) Planning accentuated and sharpened the gap in social stratification. This, along with the slow rate of economic growth and rapid increases in population, creates additional intensities for structural tensions. Despite years of effort at industrialization, Yogendra Singh claims that India continues to be a rurar peasant dominated society with general poverty of living standards.

The major sources of breakdown in the Indian process of modernisation may, in one form or other, be attributed to structural inconsistencies such as

------------------------------------------------

[17] These elite from Industrial, civil and military bureacracies as well as political spheres came from similar caste-class stratum.

democratisation without spread of education, bureacratisation without commitment to universalistic norms, rise in media participation (communication), aspiration without proportionate increase in resources, distributve justice, verbalisation of welfare ideology without its diffusion in social structure and its implementation as a social policy, over urbanisation without industrialization and finally, modernisation without meaningful changes in the stratification system.

Another major sociological contribution in the study of modernity is reflected M.N.Srinivas's analysis of caste [18] and social transformation, [19] and secularization.

Srinivas considers the Brahminical model of Sanskritization and Westernization to explain the features of religions, cultural and social changes in India.[20] and doing so , it gives a complete analysis of the dynamics of the Indian caste system.

------------------------------------------------------------

[18] See M.N.Srinivas, Caste in Modern India and other essays, Bombay, Media Promotors and publishers Pvt Ltd. 1994, pp. 1-42.

[19] Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India. New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1996.

[20] For more details on Sanskritization and Westernization' see,' Far Eastern Quarterly Vol. 15,No. 4, August 1956, pp.481-496.
M.N.Srinivas, Caste in Modern India, Ibid., pp. 42-62.
and Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, Ibid., pp.46-48.

Srinivas defines Sanskritization as" a process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high frequently, 'twice born' caste[21]. Srinivas integrates the concept of sanskritisation with the phenonmenon of power and domination, both economical and political. He writes " the meditation of various models of sanskritization through the local dominant castes stress the importance of latter in the process of cultural transmission. Thus, if the locally dominant caste is Brahmin or Lingayat, it will tend to translate the Brahminical mode of sanskritization where as if it is Rajput or Bania it will transmit Kshatriya or Vaishya model. Of course, each locally dominant caste has its own conception of Brahmin, Kshatriya or Vaishya models[22]. The Brahminical model exemplified the taking over of customs, beliefs, rites of the Brahmins and the adoption of the Brahminic way of life by a low caste. Therefore, one of the most potent sources of mobility lay in the system's political fluidity. Any caste that acheived political power at the local level could advance a claim to be Kshatriyas. The king in the traditional India had the power to promote as well as to demote castes and he occasionally exercised this power to bestow a favour on a

-----------------------------------------------------------------

[21] See, M.N.Srinivas, <u>Social Change in Modern India</u>
Ibid ; pp. 42.

[22] Ibid ; pp.14.

caste or punish it. The king cosulted brahmins learned in the laws before he promoted or demoted a caste, but this meant only that the power exercised had to be subject to some conditions.

With Sanskritization it was possible for the low castes, which had acquired wealth or political power, to shed their low ritual status and be included among the high caste. While the traditional system allowed individual caste to move up or down, the system itself remained unaltered. In other words, there were only positional changes and not structural change. In traditional India, sanskritization was not only of great importance for the ambitious caste but was difficult of achievement, as their were both religious and legal sanctions against taking over the ritual and style of life of the 'twice born' castes. The British refusal of ban on sanskritization made it accessible in theory to every one though every where. The locally dominant castes often used sanctions at their disposal - boycott and physical violence- to prevent local castes from rising. But with increasing spatial mobility and urbanization and with more and more castes participating in the new educational and employment opportunities, fear of bycott and physical violence by the dominant caste diminished, if it did not disappear, sanskritization came to be seen by the lower caste as an adjunct to other and more important things such as education, prestigious employment and political power. Certain amount of liberalisation accompanied by the greater

activity of caste in administration and politics ; Adult franchise and Panchayat Raj provided new opportunities for caste mobility

Srinivas says, the British rule in India brought with it new technology, institutions , knowledge, beliefs and values, the changes resulted due to these were termed Westernization[23] ; the new technology and revolution in communications - railways, post and telegraph and so on. Knowledge, which was both traditional and modern knowledge knowledge was no longer the privelege of few hereditary groups. Emphasis on humantarianism and rationalism as a part of Westernization, led to a series of institutional and social reforms in India. Establishment of scientific, technological and educational institutions, rise of nationalism, new political culture all by-products of Westernisation. Principle of equality found expression in the abolition of slavery and in the opening of the new schools and colleges to all irrespective of religion, race and caste. Introduction of reforms and the British legal system involved the changing or abolition of customs claiming to be part of religion. This meant religious customs subjecting to the test of reason and humanity if they were to be allowed to survive. As British rule progressed, rationality and humanitarianism became broader,

--------------------------------------------------------------

[23] See, Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, Ibid., pp. 52.

deeper and more powerful. The attack on untouchability was a stiking example of this powerful extension. Humanitarianism resulted in many administrative measures to fight famine[24], control epidemics, and found schools hospitals and orphanages.

Christian missionaries played a notable part in humanitarian activity, especially in providing education and medical aid to Harijans, woman, orphans, tribal folk. Equally important were their criticism of such Hindu institutions as caste, untouchabilty, low position of women. The British-Western attack resulted in a reinterpretation of Hinduism both at ideological and institutional levels and the conversion of lower castes ( especially Harijans )  to Islam and Christanity was an important factor in producing a changed attitude among hindu elite towards caste and untouchability. The political and the administrative integration of India involving as it did, the development of communications, the beginnings of industrialization and agricultural development, increased spatial and social mobility, not only for the elite ( tiny fraction of the with the British or other Europeans.) but also for the rural poor. This laid the foundation for subsequent nationwide Indian population who came in direct contact face to face

-------------------------------------------------------------

24 See in this connection P.Spear,'India a Modern History' pp.286. Also Kingley Davis , the Population of India and Pakistan' Princeton ,NJ, quoted in Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India. Ibid., pp.38-41.

westernization. Srinivas prefers the term Westernization to `Modernization'. He contends that modernisation presupposes rationality of goals which is the ultimate analysis could not be taken for granted, since human ends are based on value preferences and `rationality could only be predicted of the means not of the ends of social action".

British rule brought with it process of secularization of Indian social life and culture, a tendency that gradually became stronger with the developement of communications, growth of towns and cities, increased spatial mobility and the spread of education, in other words ,Westernization.

"Secularization", for Srinivas, implies that what was previously regarded as religious is now ceasing to be such. It also implies a process of differentiation which results in various aspects of society, economic, political, legal and moral, all becoming increasingly discrete in relation to each other[25]. The distinction between church and state, and the Indian concept of a secular state, both assume the existance of such differentiation.

Another essential element in the process of secularization, according to Srinivas, is rationalism, a "compreh ensive expression" applied to various theoritical and practical tendencies, these tendencies aim to interpret

---

[25] See, Srinivas, Social change in Modern India. Ibid., pp. 118-146.

the universe purely in terms of thought, or which aim to regulate individual and social life in accordance with the principles of reason, and to elminate as far as possible or to relegate to the back ground every thing irrational [26]. Rationalism involves says Srinivas, the replacement of traditional beliefs and ideas.

The impact of secularization is well evident in the area of purity and pollution. Both caste and kinship is bound up with the idea of pollution- referring to uncleanliness, defilement, impurity short of defilement. As a result of education, among all sections of population, traditional ideas of purity are giving ways to the rules of hygiene another area which has been affected by secularisation process is life-cycle ritual. Ceremonies, such as name giving (chaula) and the annual ritual of changing of sacred thread (Upakarma) are beginning to be dropped. Enormous importance assumed by the institution of dowry. Sharp rise in the age of marriage of Brahmin girls enabled them to take advantages of opportunities of higher education. This resulted in a breach in the crucial locus of ritual and purity- the kitchen. Education made girls less particular about rules and ritual. Secularization, even politicization, is an important tendency in urban religion for example the famous Dasara or Navaratri festival which

----------------------------------------------------------------

[26] See, M.N.Srinivas, "Secularisation" in
Encyclopaedia of the social Sciences Vol.13, pp.113.

was bound up with royal family of Mysore changed its character. Other festivals like Deepawali, Ugadi (New Year) Rama Navmi, ( birth day of Rama ) are common to most Hindu groups in the Mysore state. Priestly brahmins (Vaidikas) steadily lost prestige in the face of growing secularization and westernization of Hindu life and culture. The gradual erosion of priestly authority and prestige and secularization of priests deprived them of their social position or intelligent equipment to undertake a reinterpretation of hinduism that would suit modern circumstances. As a result of increased secularization and mobility, and the spread of an equilatarian ideology, the caste is no longer perpetuating values traditionally considered to be an essential part of Hinduism ( as discussed earlier in this section.) Secularization of village life results in interdining among caste which is slightly more liberal than before. All the "touchable" castes however unite against Harijans to exercise their constitutional right of entering temples and drawing water from village wells. In the family system, the impact of development of communications, the growth of urbanisation and industrialisation led to mobility. This change is most clearly discernible among the new elite groups characterised by great spatial mobility and members establishing a serarate household in large cities live in a cultural and social environment, different from that obtained in a traditional joint family, in a small town or village.

In both these debates, on Modernisation, we find not only issues of cultural adoption or synthesis raised but the discussion also focussed on whether the traditional social institutions, structures and beliefs in India would be able to assimilate the roles, structures and values required for modernization. These observations were however, unanimous that traditional institutions, beliefs and social structure responded positively to the demands of modernization. As we saw, they underwent selective adaptive changes in order to accomodate the requirements of modernization. However observations differed on the nature and degree of uneveness of opportunities available to various castes, communities and groups to benefit from modernization.

## Counter Hegemonic Movements And Sociology.

A forceful cultural critic of the Indian state, Ashis Nandy, argues that the most prominent feature of the Indian political culture has been the emergence of the nation-state as the hegemonic actor in the public realm, so much so, that for the past 150 years, the western middle class has been looking to the state first and adjusting its culture accordingly, believing all the while that this was a sign of political maturity and development[27]. Even the Hindu

-------------------------------------------------------------------

[27] See Ashis Nandy,' Culture, State and Rediscovery of Indian Politics, <u>Economic and Political Weekly</u> Vol.XIX, No. 49, 1984, pp. 2078.

reformers of the nineteenth century were actually yielding to statist directives when they wanted a political space for Hindus within the terms of Hindu religious discourse. Thus, these advocates of indigenous traditions were not really anti-west or anti-Islam. 'They were only anti-British and anti-Muslim in the Indian context[28]. Nandy pushes his argument further and states that, 'the culture of Indian politics has in recent years depended more and more on a mix of Indian high culture and metropolitan culture of nation-state. The traditional dialectic of the Brahminic and the non-Brahminic, the classical and the folk, the textually prescribed and the customary pratices has been bypassed[29]. Indian political culture is moving away from pluralism that the culture of Indian state was conceptually derived from and legitimised by a variety of political cultures or ways of life. The new culture of the state has come to depend upon the expanding pan Indian, urban, middle class culture, serving as an emerging mass culture. This mass culture is not the central tendency of the diverse popular cultures of different regions of India but an identifable well-bounded culture.

------------------------------------------------------------

[28] Ibid., pp. 2079-80.

[29] Modern states emphasize the classical and the frozen-in- time, so as to museumise culture and make it harmless. In doing so, believe, in time-travel to the past,(Revivalists), culture as a distant object of study (Orientalists) and culture as what one sees on the stage (deculturised).

With the state having established close, inviolable links with the principles the scientific temperament/modern science and technology, it has not only to give teeth to its coercive, apparatus but also because it can use the

achievements in these sectors, to legitimize itself as a repository of scientific knowledge and a negation of native irrationalities. Scientific temperament and technology become two proged weapons. They prompt a constant search for grand technological and organizational feats as evidence of cultural superiority of the new elites and a search for spectacular examples of the decadence or retrogression and irrationality of everday life, as evidence of the cultural inferiority of non-modern India. Consequently, says Nandy, where there was diversity we now find only 'scaled down homogeneity'.[30] Not only this, the state, argues Nandy, with its growing tendency to identify the secular rational processes of the state with the tolerance of the ethnic and cultural diversity, has led to the strengthening of the integration of the minority cultures into the national mainstream and the management of ethnic conflicts by flattening diversities.

Nandy is also critical of the growing tendency of the Indian elites to identify the development of the state, with development in general. Not only does the Indian state hegemonize all social resources, it eats up an increasing

------------------------------------------------

[30] See, Ashis Nandy, 'The Political Culture of the Indian state', Daedalus Vol.118, No. 4, pp. 11.

proportion of the resources, primarily for its own development. The Indian state is irrelevant to large number of people precisely because it has forsaken its traditional moorings at the hands of the forces of modernity. For Nandy, culture in the sense of traditions, represents the accumulated wisdom of the people. It does not automatically become absolete as a consequence of the growth of modern science and technology. He also emphasises upon the notion of culture as a dialectic between the classic and the folk, the past and the present, the dead and the living, unlike the modern state ideology which is a culture dismissive oriented as it is lived. In other words, Nandy is arguing this does not mean the absence of a theory of state but it means, a theory of state rooted in the non-modern understanding of modernity. The emphasis here is on the representation of concept of state as confederation of cultures including a multiplicity of religions and languages. This would mean resisting the homogenising thrust of the culture of the modern west. Nandy's approach also favours for pursuing a logic of an open polity to its end, to widen the compass of democratic politics. This means a culture sensitive polity in India, standing for greater democratic participation, participation by people from all sections of society, as against a mechanical electoral representation of atomised individuals.

A critique of Hindutva - Brahminical social order

is put forward by Kancha Ilaiah[31]. The attempt here is not to describe the caste system ( a 'Manuvaadi' effort) or to affirm a primordial caste identity and celebrate/ preserve the 'rich plurality' of Indian cultures. The point is to create, set in motion affirm - a new 'dalit bahujan'[32] point of view : a voice, its orientation, its structure of feelings. Ilaiah turns to his own experience and to the everyday lives of those around him in order to develop his analysis of Dalit Bahujan history culture and political economy. He mines this territory, of which he has intimate knowledge, for the resources with which to resist and challenge the hegemonic imperative on his own life.

['in our childhood ] all of us, the Dalitbahujans of India never heard the word "Hindu" - not as a word, nor as the name of a culture, nor as the name of the religion. We heard about Turukoollu (Muslims), we heard about Kirastaanapoollu (Christians), we heard about Baapanoollu (Brahmins) and Koomatoollu (Baniyas) spoken of as people who were different from us.[33] This is one of the provocative statements from

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

[31] See the critique of Hindutva - Brahminism in Kancha Ilaiah Why I Am Not A Hindu' : A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy, Calcutta, Samya, 1996.

[32] Ilaiah coins the term dalit bahujan, combining the Ambedkarian 'dalit' which means supressed and exploited people and Bahujan which means majority.

[33] See, Kancha Ilaiah, Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy; Ibid; PP.XI

Kancha Ilaiah ( author ) who identifies himself as a Dalitbahujan of 'the exploited and supressed majority' of Indians.

The critique of Brahminical educational system is seen in terms of violence of the upper-caste classroom, and devastating effect of a Hindu curriculum. This picture is well exemplified in a quote: 'We do not find our lives reflected in their narratives. We cannot locate our family setting in them. In none of these books, do we find words that are familiar to us. Without the help of dictionary neither English textbooks, which talked about Shakespeare's Othello or Macbeth, or a Teleugu text book, which talked about Kalidasa's Meghasandesham, make sense to us.[34]

A major strand that runs through the weave of Ilaiah's book is gender relations. Critique of brahminical modes is strikingly counterposed with the practices in working castes. Thus, 'If a Dalitbahujan woman has a relationship with a man who is not her husband, the relationship does not remain a secret. The entire waada discusses it.... each one of these practices are discussed in terms of its morality and immorality. But this morality and immorality is not based on a divine order. It is discussed in terms of the harmony of the families.[35]

---------------------------------------------------------------

[34] Ibid : pp. 15.

[35] Ibid ; pp.5.

As against that, discussion of sexual behaviour is taboo Hindu families. Mothers are not supposed to talk to the daughters about their sexual experiences. The father's atriocities against the mother cannot be discussed in Brahmin or Baniya families... the more wife puts up with her husband's atriocities, the more she is appreciated.[36] In contrast to the Docile'feminine' Sitas and Saraswatis of the Hindus, who live in the shadow of their husbands, the dalitbahujan goddess Pochamma's role is not restricted by her gender. Says Ilaiah, 'She is the person who protects people from all kinds of diseases. Nobody considers her inferior or useless because she does not have a husband. Pochamma is independant. Her relationship to human beings is gender neutral, caste-neutral, class neutral... The people can speak to her in their own tongues. A Brahmin can speak to her in sanskrit: an English person can go and talk to her in English'.[37]

A real question here is not which is better dalitbahujan or Hindu ? But, question of the resources-personal political and imaginative - that are lost to Indian feminism as a result of its Hindu-brahminical norming. In its bourgeoise - male mode of domination, the focus is on the distinctive individual. The male patriach establishes his authority over the entire family by creating and constantly

------------------------------------------------------------

[36] Ibid ; pp.9.

[37] op cit; pp.92.

reinforcing the consciousness of patriachal authoritarianism in terms of spirituality. As against this, among the dalitbhaujans, political relations within the family or community setting are basically democratic. The notion of private and personal does not exist in dalitbahujan consciousness. Every personal relationship among them is both social and political. Here human bonds are structured in terms of 'we' but not 'I'.

Therefore, the life world of the Dalitbahujans of India has hardly anything in common with the socio-cultural and political enviornment of Hindu- Brahamanism. Hindu mythology is built by destroying the dalitbhaujan cultural ethos. Dalitbhaujan castes were never allowed to develop into modernity and equality. The violent hegemonic brahminical culture sought to destroy dalitbhaujan productive structures, culture economy and its positive political institutions. All this is reflected in the institution of marriage, work curriculum, market relations, technology, science, linguistics, philosophy, morality, arts. And, therefore, Ilaiah says an 'Indian to be egalitarian, secular, scientific rational', calls for a dalitisation, not Hinduisation of its institutions system and ethics. This would mean a transformation of the notion of identity and politics. The dalit identity is concrete, abstract coming to consciousness, and identity that is shaped in the very conjunctures we are traversing : designed to take on the full scope of ethno-political tasks of Dalit world engaged in the making of history.

A major contribution in the analysis of Dalit movement as part of the broader anti-caste movement, a central democratic movement in Indian society, comes from Gail Omvedt[38]. In this movement, Dalits sought to transform the basic structures of the Indian social system while challenging 'Hindu nationalism'. Not only this, the ideology and the organization of the movement and its interaction both with freedom struggle, particularly with Gandhi and Gandhism, and the class struggles of the workers and peasants (and their dominant idology - Marxism). The main figures of this larger anti-caste movement were, Jotiba Phule, Baba Saheb Ambedkar and E.V.Ramaswami 'Periyar', and with many others throughout India[39], all of who attacked the system of exploitation at all levels, culturally, economically and politically. The non-Brahman and dalit movements arose separately though interlinked and drawing on common ideological themes. Non-Brahman movements were strongest in Maharashtra, Madras presidency (Tamil Nadu and coastal Andhra) and in Mysore, and had rather different impacts (the South Indian movement had more of a base among 'zamindars'; the Mysore movements

-----------------------------------------------------------------

[38] See Gail Omvedt, <u>Dalits and the Democratic Revolution :
Dr Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in India,</u>
New Delhi/ Thousand Oaks / London, 1994.

[39] Narayanswami Guru in Kerala, Acchutanand in Uttar Pradesh, Mangoo Ram in Punjab also attacked the system of exploitation due to caste. They were also part of the anti-caste movement.

more among the educated urban section; the Maharashtra movement more among the peasantry). Dalit movements were actually widespread, if weaker in resources, intending not only South and West India but also movements such as the Ad-Dharma in Punjab, Adi-Hindus in western Uttar Pradesh, and Namashudras in Bengal. Let us look at the common traditions which the dalits shared with non-brahman movements, stressed common themes, used a common language and nearly always looked at alliances. All challenged the 'Hindu-nationalism' which was emerging as a consequence of the elite organizing from the nineteenth century onward to define Indian society, and the majority of Indian people as essentially 'Hindu': not only did they criticised distortions and 'excrescences', they attacked Hinduism itself by arguing that it was in essence Brahminical caste-bound and irrational. They asserted that Hinduism had not been the religion and culture of the majority but rather was an imposed religion; and that escaping exploitation today required the low castes to reject this imposition to define themselves as 'non-Hindu' and take a new religious identity. Jyotirao Phule tried to formulate a new, theistic religion; Periyar promoted atheism ; Ambedkar turned to Buddhism and many more. [The dalit and non-brahmin movement were anti-systemic movements (in the framework of such Marxist theorists as Immanuel Wallerstein) or (in the language of functionalist sociological theory), as 'value-oriented movements' as those opposed to 'norm-oriented

movements'[40]. (these were represented within the Dalit movement by leaders such as Jagjivan Ram of Congress. Reformist - incorporative and 'norm oriented' - trends were also embodied in Gandhi's 'Harijan' movement, which stood in the tradition of the broad upper caste social reform tradition and which sought to cleanse Hinduism of its impurities). 'Value oriented movements' challenged and sought to transform the basic structure of the Indian social system, replacing caste and the accompanying social oppression, economic exploitation and political domination by an equalitarian society.

Rejection of Hinduism remained a feature differentiating the anti-caste radicals from the reformers. They were also economic radicals, though from different points of view, identifying themselves not simply with low castes but with peasants and workers as such. Phule strongly attacked the exploitation of peasants by the bureaucracy ; Ambedkar and Periyar both supported and helped organize movements of peasants against landlords and workers against capitalists ; and Ambedkar unambiguously identified himself as a socialist. Politically, they opposed the Indian National Congress as controlled by upper castes and capitalists ( as 'Brahmin and Bourgeoisie' in Ambedkar's terms ; as that of the `Irani arya-bhats in Phule's

-----------------------------------------------------------------

[40] See, for example, Immaneual Wallerstein's Original paper,` The Rise and Future demise of the World Capitalist System : Concepts for comparative analysis, comparative studies in society and history 16, 4 ( September 1974 ), as quoted in Gail Omvedt's Dalit and the Democratic Revolution Ibid.,pp.20.

moral elevation which every self- governing peoplefeel
cannot be felt by them, and their administrative talents
must gradually disappear owing to sheer disuse  till at last
their lot as hewers of wood and drawers of water in their
own country is stereotyped.'

Nearly all of the regionally diverse dalit movement
had both an economic and social thrust : they tried to get
land for dalits (normally forest and waste lands), freedom
from 'Vethbegar' or the caste enforced, caste specific
imposed labour; and became involved in working - class
organising  where  dalits were in the mills in  cities  like
Nagpur and Bombay. They also fought for education and  tried
to  generate  internal  social  reform,  including  marriage
between sub-castes and ending customs such as
'devadasi' - type prostitution and so forth.

But  power  was  key Ambedkar's statement,  'we must
become a ruling community' has become one of the most famous
sayings of the movement. In 1930 Round Table conference, he
argued that Untouchables more than any other section needed
freedom from British rule, because only under 'Swaraj' or
self-rule, would they have a chance at a share in power and
was the key to their liberation.

But  how  was  power to be  achieved  ? Ambedkar's
political strategy / orientation involved two  things  :
firstly,  that  Congress was irrevocably a party,  a  unique
platform  of  Brahmans and bourgeoisie and that  dalits
should remain independant from it secondly, that this  could

not be done as a dalit party alone ( in terms of autonomous dalit movement ), but as part of a political party uniting, or in alliance with, between 'peasants' and 'workers' in class terms, dalits and shudras (bahujan samaj) in caste terms. His first and most vigorous political effort, the formation of the Independant Labour Party in the 1930's and its campaign against the 'khoti landlord system in the Konkan spearheaded by activists in that region from 1930 and against the anti-working class 'black bill' of the 1938[41]. The 1938 massive textile workers strike was initiated by Ambedkar's party and carried out in alliance with communists and moderate trade union leaders.

However, Ambedkar's 1930s radical strategy of a united struggle against brahmanism and capitalism did not succeed, and the whole of his political activity in the 1940s has to be seen in the light of this failure what succeeded, instead of a revolutionary democratic political movement of workers and peasants, dalits and shurdras, was the congress strategy which for a time succeeded in bringing all sections, from'harijans' to many of the non-Brahman peasantry under the hegemony of the upper-caste controlled congress.

Against the background of this failure, the overall radical liberatory strategy was given up for one of constituting dalits as simply an 'interest group', whose activities focussed on demands for reservations and separate village settlements.

-----------------------------------------------------------------

[41] Though this struggle has been neglected by left historians, perhaps because it was outside the framework of the Kisam Sabha (farmer's union) of the time.

**Conclusion.**

**Political Potency Of Sociological Knowledge.**

Having examined the politico-ideological charater of contemporary sociological knowledge whether in terms of agenda of modernity or in terms of challenging/ debunking this agenda, one thing is clear. The whole analysis reflects the political potential/possibilities of sociological knowledge. By addressing to political orientation of knowledge, we stand the best chance, to make knowledge democratically relevant to humans, especially all those who are economically exploited and socially oppressed, in free society, and what men are interested in, is all that concerns us.

# CHAPTER - III

## SOCIOLOGY AS PERCEIVED BY POLITICAL AGENTS : AN EXAMPLE FROM INDIAN POLITICS

### Introduction.

Having examined the political possibilities of sociology in the previous chapters, it now becomes important to analyse how sociological knowledge is perceived by political agents. This shall be done in two ways:

i) Review of the contemporary literature of political parties[1] and examining the traces and use of sociological insights in the party literature;

ii) Interviewing the political leaders and trying to explore how they perceive society and sociological perception of reality[2].

and finally, general observations on politics.

### Section 1
### Political Literature and Sociological Reflections.

Selected articles and books on social issues like Caste, Social justice, Religion, Secularism, Nationalism, Class question, Liberalisation and Economic Equality, have been chosen for the analysis of political literature. These

---

[1] Five Major National Political Parties considered for this study are, Janata Dal(JD), Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party Of India(CPI) and Communist Party Of India ( Marxist ) (CPI(M).

[2] Refer to the Appendix, for questionnaire put up for interviews.

articles / books published within the time period 1990-1997, are taken up for this study. The reason being this period has been politically fertile/ volatile ground for the debates on social issues and more so, various political parties were ( and still are, as we shall see) reflecting on these issues.

**Caste and Social justice.**[3]

In an article from CPI(M) literature[4] there is striking evidence of trace and use of sociological insights.

Caste system, in Marxist terms, is the superstructure of an economic base which is pre- capitalist. The article

------------------------------------------------------------

[3] Contemporary Indian Sociological works have been dominated by inquiries on caste and social justice.
     For caste analysis see, for example, M.N.Srinivas, `Varna and Caste' in Dipankar Gupta (ed) Social Stratification, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 23-34. This article critically considers the relationship between caste as it is infact and as it is subsumed by traditional concept of varna. Also see G.S.Ghurye 'Features of the Caste System'in Dipankar Gupta (ed) Social Stratification Ibid., pp. 35-48. for analysis of the essential features of the caste system in India. For debates on social justice, sociological contributions have come from, for example, K.S.Chalam 'Caste Reservations and Equality of Opportunity in Education', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXV, No. 11&12, 1990 pp.2333-9. This article is a review of history of reservation policy and its achievement over the years in terms of its costs and efficiency. Not to forget, major contribution from, Andre Betielle 'Distributive Justice and Institutional Well Being,' Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXVI, No. 11&12, March 1991, pp.591-600. Also see, for example, D.D.Kosambi, `The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline', New Delhi, Vikas Publication, 1988. The book draws deeply from history to provide a profound Marxist alternative to idealist and culturological conceptions of Indian society and the caste system.

[4] See, For example, Sitaram Yechury, 'Caste and Class in Indian Politics Today,' People's Democracy, New Delhi : A CPI(M) Publication Vol. XXI, No. 21, May 25, 1997 pp 8,9&12. People's Democracy is the mouth organ of CPI(M).

says that 'It is necessary to debunk a common fallacy that attempts to pit caste versus class.' Such a mechanical distinction between caste and class is not only a vulgar simplification but divorced from the present day Indian reality. The emphasis has been laid on the fact, that most exploited classes in Indian society constitute the most socially oppressed castes. And to that extent, it says the 'struggle againt class exploitation and the struggle against social oppression complement each other'. Further more, the article has made use of sociological insight, when it speaks of caste system in the present context, to be examined and understood in terms of its historical context. And as it says 'in anti-colonial struggle. . . revivalist ideology within the freedom movement.'

For advancing social justice to the socially oppressed, the article projects the question of reservation and analyses it within a wider class struggle, for changing the present socio- economic order. However it warns us against considering reservations, in jobs, in central services for OBC's, SC's, ST's as the final solution to the problem of bringing about social justice for the oppressed and backwards. This is because 'these (reservations) are projected as an end in themselves and not as a means to achieving that end (social justice)'

In the analysis of article from Congress literature[5] there is evidence of sensitiveness to the

------------------------------------------------

[5] See, Narasimha Rao,'Six Speeches of Prime Minister Shri P.V.Narasimha Rao on the Theme of "Middle Path Approach" to Economic Changes and Role of India in the Changing Global

problem of social justice, in terms of creating jobs and making them available to all. But at the same time, is also aware of the hidden meaning ( going beyond commonsensical understanding) of the social justice, which the article says, is to raise the top of the pyramid alone. And as it goes, 'the bottom is not neglected while the top is being raised'. Indeed, there is trace of sociological insight.)

Much sharper evidence of trace and use of sociological insight is manifested in BJP's selected article on social justice.[6] There is a profound sensitivity shown towards the sanctity of human personality and the dignity of the individual, the integration of which is the basis for the sustenance of the country as a modern dynamic nation. This concept is called Integral Humanism. Along this way, the economically and socially backward, weaker sections of the society will get a chance to open up, reach their potential for contribution to society without any hurdles. This basis of social justice is analysed in terms of the historicity, when the article says, 'this emphasis on integral humanism derives its inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, integral humanism of Shri Deendayal Upadhaya and social thought of Baba Saheb Ambedkar.'

A high degree of sensitisation to social reality and its approach to social justice  is fully exemplified

---

Scenario,' <u>India, in the Changing Global Scenario,</u> New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Brodcasting, Government Of India, August 1994, pp. 48-50.

[6] The article 'BJP's New Thrust on Social Justice : Text of BJP's Social Policy Statement' <u>Organiser</u>, Vol. XLIV No. 50 New Delhi, July 18, 1993, pp. 8-13.

and its approach to social justice is fully exemplified in article in the JD literature[7]. This is evident in terms of democratisation of power 'which means empowerment of the weak, dispossessed sections like dalits, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who have been historically denied all priveleges and opportunities.'

This new India of equality, justice shall eliminate entrenched injustice and inequality. To build this new India the article lays emphasis on the attitude that one should have. It 'must not be done with anger but with compassion ; not with confrontation but through cooperation.'

Exemplified in another article in CPI literature[8] and use of sociological insight. The caste system it says is a socio economic phenomenon characteristic to India and to the Indian sub-continent. Not only this, the article traces the history of caste system, (useful sociological insight) as it says 'the caste system appears to have its origins even before the consolidated dominance of Hinduism as a regigon'. Further more, the article says, castes were codified and caste hierarhy established within the framework of 'Chaturvana'. It is not based on equality of human beings. Only 'the Brahmins had the privelege to integrate the caste doctrine into dharma and into specific value

---------------------------------------------------------------

[7] See, for example, V.P.Singh ' Social Justice For a Secular India, ' Social Justice for a Secular India
New Delhi;Janata Dal Publication November 1990 , pp.17-26.

[8] The article examined is by D.Raja 'Struggle Against Caste System' New Age, Vol.XXXVIII, No.37 , December 31, 1995 / January 6, 1996 ; pp.21.

systems    for each and very caste'. This understanding of

caste system indeed draws a similarity with sociological

understanding of the caste and caste hierarchy.

The article makes an attempt to see a. possibility

of a vision of a classless society, indeed an appreciative

and sociological insight. This fight for social justice is

possible through political power that shall establish an

egalitarian society by abolition of caste, where everyone

shall be    guaranteed livelihood, human dignity and

democratic rights. Indeed the article has made use of

sociological insight.

### Religion, Secularism and Nationalism. [9]

The article from CPI(M)[10]identifies the solution to

the problem of Hindu - Muslim conflict in particular, not in

an anti religious stand or spirit but the one based 'on

unity through consensus and working for the preservation and

---

[9]    Contemporary    sociological    works    on    Religion,
Secularism,   Nationalism include Andre Betielle  'Secularism
and  the Intellectuals', Economic and Political Weekly,  Vol.
XXIX,   No.10, 1994, pp.559-66. This article puts  forward  a
critical  analysis of the ambiguity of the connotation  of
secularism - as whether it stands for rejection of  religion
or for the equal treatment of all religions. Very thoughtful
and  lucid exposition indeed. Also, See for example,  Asghar
Ali   Engineer 'Religious Fanatism and communalism'   in
Economic  and Political Weekly, Vol.XXXII, No.14,   April  5,
1997  , pp.701-4.This gives a detailed analysis of  religion
and  its  use as a pretext in the threat  of  socio-economic
interests from combating social forces leading to  political
mobilisation.  T.V. Satyamurthi 'Indian Nationalism :  State
of  debate'Economic and Political Weekly,' Vol.XXXII No.  14,
April  5, 1997, pp. 715-21, is an analysis of the  hisorical
overview of the nationalist discourse analysis of three main
tendencies represented by the Indian National Congress,  the
Hindu   Nationalists   and   the  Communists  in    the   pre

promotion of unity of Indian Union on the basis of real equality and autonomy for all, and to develop a democratic structure with a dialogue spirit despite different nationalities inhabiting the country'. And this is also the basis of secular thinking of Marxists. This concept indeed has a sociological angle, that of unity in diversity.

Heavily dosed with the traces and use of sociological insight is the article from Congress literature,[11] which says that Secularism promises sustainence of divergent religious communities, their differences of opinion their multiplicity of thoughts, because 'it ( secularism ) means harmony, sense of togetherness, and not anti-religion'. 'It is also the pursuit of truth in the conviction that truth will truimph :

---

independence period. In post-independence India, the article disinguishes between newly emerging local elites based on regional and political forces, on one hand, and, on the other hand, popularly based democratically inspired movements with local autonomy, as their corner stone. Also see Avijit Pathak 'Religious Articulations in a Secular World' Mainstream Annual December 9,1995, pp. 45-53. This article seeks to examine the possibility of religion in a world where there seems to be no escape from secularization.

[10] See, for example, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, 'In Defence of Communist Approach', People's Democracy New Delhi, CPI(M) Publication, Vol. XVIII, No.45, November 7, 1993, pp. 3.

[11] See, for, example Rajiv Gandhi,'Speech of the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi at the Inaugural function of Golden Jubilee of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly at Vidhan Sabha, Bombay, September 3, 1988',Democracy, Socialism, Secularism :The Three Pillars of our Nation, New Delhi, Ministry of INformation and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1988, pp. 5-8.

"Satyameva Jayate".' The very fact that secularism is also seen in terms of tolerance of customs and the beliefs, the rites and rituals, the philosophy and way of life of others also gives a sociological insight. This article further says that Secularism also enables one to be aware of one's civilization which makes one open to the best of influences from elsewhere to seek a cross-fertilization of cultures and ideas which makes possible for one to move forward while maintaining a continuity with the past . The article best summarises in its own words as 'through history we  have been the great synthesizers, so absorbing and assimilating what comes from outside, that it gets transformed into our own, not as an alien graft but, as a part and parcel of our heritage. Secularism is not just anti-communalism, its deeper hidden meaning is inherently positive; it is profound humanism, spirit of compassion presupposing a socioligical insight.

Yet again we encounter a useful sociological insight in the article[12] from the BJP literature which puts forward a humane approach towards religion, in terms of paying respect to all religious faith,'Hindu worship God in his several forms and are tolerant of each other. Indeed Hinduism is the very anti-thesis of fundamentalism'.

-----------------------------------------------------------------

[12] See, for example, L.K. Advani, ' Basis of Nationalism is our Culture and Heritage', BJP Today, New Delhi, BJP Publication, Vol.XIX, No.21, June 16-30, 1994. pp.4-12.
BJP Today is the mouth piece of Bharitya Janata Party.

The basis of Indian culture and heritage, the article goes on, is cultural nationalism. In other words, it says, 'Cultural nationalism or Hindutva is not religion or a recipe for a theocratic stage. Its a way of life, state of mind. It is the cementing force that keeps the nation together'.

The article also stresses the historicity of the basis of this nature of nationalism. It says nationalism has no meaning separated from the inheritance of the Vedas, the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Tilak, Gandhi, Aurobindo and others.' And in this way, culture nationalism or Hindutva links the past and the future with the present. It is the Indian identity related to the wider socio-political environment. In other words, it is context-specific.

Another article which seeks to look at the concept of secularism as the fundamental pre-requisite for a plural society like India.[13] Secularism is tolerant of different religious faiths, there's multiplicity of thoughts. And this heterogenity of rich Indian cultural heritage is provided by secularism.

An article figured in CPI literature looks at religion as being an entirely private thing/affair[14].

--------------------------------------------------------------

[13] See, for example, V.P.Singh, Secular Road to National Unity', <u>Social Justice For a Secular India</u> Ibid; pp. 33.

[14] See, for example, Shameem Faize, 'Threat to Secularism,' <u>New Age.</u> a CPI Publication Vol.XXXXIII, No.53 December 31, 1995 / January 6, 1996, pp.23.

Secularism is seen in terms of 'respect to all beliefs, are tolerance towerds others, love and brotherhood among men of all creeds and religious communities'. However solution to any conflict between convictions born of different religions, should be through 'consensus, mutual understanding and compromise'.

The article also recognises the pluralistic nature of Indian society ( a sociological insight) in terms of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic basis. Its retainence is possible through secularism. Secularism is not seen as anti-religious or bounded by religious traditions but as reflected in what the article says. It says 'Our concept of class unity and class struggle are the basis of our secular ideas'. It seeks to unite the oppressed and the exploited classes irrespective of caste, religion, creed and raise voice in support of those sections of masses which are discriminated against on the basis of caste and religion. The article says, that any attempt to define secularism in terms of differences based on religion will result in the degeneration of the pluralistic nature of society, into mutually exclusive sectarian or communal violence or strife/conflict, all of which will destroy the fabric of nation's unity and thus impede nation's progress.

## Class Question, Liberalisation and Economic Equality[15].

The traces and use of sociological insights in the

---

[15] Sociological contributions on these issues have come from, for example, Rajni Kothari 'Integration and Exclusion

analysis of class comes out very explicitly in the CPI(M) article [16]

It says 'Class is a social category.' It is to be understood with reference to its location in the mode of production and in the distribution of surplus. The bourgeoisie who are the owners of the means of production examine every question from an apparently " objective ", non-class standpoint, whereas in reality, the bourgeoisie-landlord ruling class seeks to exploit the proletariat who own nothing except for their labour power( exemplifies a sociological insight, by going beyond the commonsense understanding of bourgeoisie ideology.)

The working class, the proletariat is looked upon as having revolutionary potential under whose leadership class struggle will be fought in a capitalist society. It will be a struggle that will sought to integrate struggles against both social opression and against class

--------------------------------------------------------------

in Indian Politcs' Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XXIII No. 43, October 22,1988 ; pp 2223-7. and Ashis Nandy 'Culture State and the Rediscovery of Indian Politcs', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XIX No 49, December 8, 1984, pp. 2078-83. Both the articles put forward a cultural critque of Indian nation state because it has foresaken its traditional moorings. Also see for example , Praveen Jha 'Economic Reforms and Agricultural Labourers,' in Economic and Political Weekly Vol. XXXII, No. 20 & 21 May 17-24, 1997, pp. 1066-8. This article deals with the issue of impact of new economic policy on agricultural labourers and how official publications tend to hide the ground reality, that new economic policy instead of benefiting the labourers has worsened their plight.

[16] See, Sitaram Yechury 'Caste and Class in Indian Politics Today,' People's Democracy. Ibid ; pp. 8,9.

exploitation, in one overall wider class struggle, to change the existing socio-economic system and unleash an agrarian revolution. Indeed the emancipatory potential of the working class is exemplified- a trace of sociological insight.

Another article from CPI(M)[17] discusses liberalisation in terms of the technological advance but in the process the most important social property, that is, 'labour is turned into an adjunct of capital.'

In the BJP literature a selected article[18] makes a striking use of sociological insight with economic nationalism or Swadeshi. With it, liberalisation policy is criticised on the ground that, instrument of power is technology. Technology, which although is favourable in the sense of being liberating (commensensical point of view.), 'it often results in blatant cultural invasion of India.)'(sociological view point.)The article lays emphasis on internal liberalisation and, at the same time, is in favour of providing protection to its indegenous industries, saying that Indians should have pride in their capabilities.

An awareness that liberalisation has a latent meaning is very well exemplified in the literature of

---------------------------------------------------------------

[17] This article by Manini Chatterjee ' Technological Advances and the New Working Class,'People's Democracy New Delhi, a CPI(M) Publication,Vol.XIX, No. 29 June 15, 1997. pp.5.

[18] See, L.K.Advani, Blatant Cultural Invasion of India,' BJP Today A BJP Publication Vol.XIX, No.24 January 1-15, pp.17.

Congress.[19] In other words, the article says 'when economic reforms are undertaken what really happens is deeper than the mere economic impact of the reforms. Economic prosperity brings with it certain disparities that equilibrium tends to get disturbed and we run into conflicts and strife.'

In another article,from the Congress literature[20], sociological insight is seen in terms of concept of socialist Democracy. It believes in the possibility of spirit of dialogue and joint consultation between the working class and the technical experts.

An awareness that technology is essential for economic developement but at the same time leads to large scale displacement of labour, is indeed an evidence of sociological insight. This explanation is exemplified in article of Janata Dal literature[21]

Rigorous critique of liberalisation is also reflected in an article in CPI literature.[22] The critique

------------------------------------------------------------

[19] Article examined here is by Narasimha Rao, 'Text of the speech of Shri P.V.Narasimha Rao at the World Summit for Social Developement at Copenhagen, Denmark, March 11, 1995,' International Co-operation for Social Development, New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government ofIndia, March 1995, pp. 4.

[20] See, Congress Marches Ahead, January '92- February '93' : AICC Publication, March 1993, pp.41-2,49.

[21] See, for example Election Manifesto, New Delhi : a Janata Dal Publication. 1996, pp. 5,7.

[22] A.B.Bardhan 'Our Party-The CPI'' 1996, New Age New Delhi, CPI Publication, Vol. XXXXIII, No.53 December 31, 1995 / January 6, 1996. pp. 7.

comes in the wake of its imperialist cosmopolitanism and consumerism ( thanks to MNC's) all of which 'seeks to threaten India's cultural pluralism'. Not only this, 'it weakens and destroys our public sector, erode our self reliance'. The article is adamant about being critical of the liberⁱlisation policy because as it says 'only by being critical can we analyse class struggle in a democratic manner, involving working people's participation. Its their struggle against exploitation of all sorts' and thereby a movement towards socialism, a stage of economic equality. Herein, the critical role of sociology with an emancipatory consciousness is well evident and appreciative indeed.

## Section - 2

## Political Personalities And Their Orientation To Social Issues / Sociological Knowledge.

This section is about examining the responses of political agents to various social issues like Caste, Social justice, Religion, Secularism, Nationalism, Class, Liberalization and Socialism.

**Shri Sitaram Yechury,[23] Member of Communist Party of India (Marxist ).**

As communists, CPI(M) strive for an establishment of a society free from exploitation of man by man. This is

---

[23] Shri Sitaram Yechury is the Politbureau member of Communist Party of India(Marxist). He was interviewed on May 27,1997.

reached through various stages of development. And presently,"we are in the stage which may be defined as People's Democratic Stage where it is not socialism really that we are going to achieve is the conclusion of this stage but we are going to achieve in the people's democratic situation in the country, where it will be people's democracy in the sense that leadership will be in the hands of the working class in the country. But that does not mean that other classes wouldn't exist. In fact, they would continue to exist. But after, the stage will come towards a Socialist Transformation. At present however we are in the People's Democratic Stage."

CPI(M) believes in Marxian method of class analysis, wherein, under capitalism, development of society into classes takes place between those who owns the means of production and those who have nothing else except their own labour power, which they own. India is going through the process of capitalist building. Simultaneously, the process of division of people amongst these two classes is also going on. 'What you have in India is multiplicity of layers of social stratification in which the process of class combination between Indian Bourgeoisie, Industrial - Capitalist class and the landlords is going on. It is this ruling class in India represented by Indian Bourgeoisie, in alliance with the landlords led by Indian big bourgeoisie, which is the Indian monopoly in present. They are the leaders of this ruling class alliance. CPI(M), at this stage (People's Democracy ) is seeking to replace the existing ruling class

alliance led by the working class. And through that process, to advance in the direction towards socialism, which we consider will be the next stage. At this stage, our targets are basically anti-feudal ( In the sense whatever are the feudal reminiences to remove feudal vestiges), anti-monopoly- capitalist and anti-imperialist ( against existing ruling classes who for their maintenance links with the feudal landlords on the one hand, and on the other hand, maintaining links with imperalism. And in doing so, are keeping the interests of both imperialists and feudal landlords alive in this country.)' The moment there's elimination of the monopoly of the ownership of means of production in the hands of few people and it is made the property of the society as a whole, that is when exploitation ceases and socialism reaches at. This Yechury says is perfectly possible.

Yechury says class formation is taking place on the existing caste stratification. Those who are economically worst exploited are also those who are socially worst oppressed. Bulk of agricultural labour in India comes from scheduled castes / tribes, bulk of your working class and others who really have no property at all come from backward classes / SC's & ST's ; caste and class, therefore, overlap. Both these converge in India. In Yechury's words, "only when you integrate the struggles of the people against social oppression and the struggles of people against exploitation that this system of inequality can be overcome."

And that's why, continues Yechury, "the final solution to problem of caste oppression is not reservation in jobs, in central services, for backward classes, SC's and ST's. It is the class unity and the class struggle to change the existing socio-economic system and unleash an agrarian revolution which are the basis of our secular values. Religious sentiments of the people should be respected and honoured. And therefore, CPI(M) is of the view that the Babri Masjid - Ramjanamboomi dispute should be resolved either by a negotiating settlement acceptable to both sides, or failing this , by a court verdict which will be binding on all.

Emphasis is laid on the importance of land reforms, as a means of solving the basic problems of rural poor they would yield decentralisation and devolution of power in the local bodies. Panchayats and Zilla Parishads would be vibrant, functioning democratically where the people have full scope of participation in developmental activities.

In fighting against communalism, CPI(M) have been the staunchest fighters for national unity. In Punjab, Assam & Kashmir, CPI(M) has stood the main force championing the unity of the Indian people and in countering the separatist forces.

**Shri D.Raja[24], Communist Party of India.**

He says, CPI is a party of working class . It

------------------------------------------------------------

[24] Shri D. Raja is the National Secretary of the Communist Party of India. His interview on May 27, 1997 was part of field work.

believes in the science of Marxism, the objective of it being to bring about a fundamental change in the social life so that society moves towards a new society - society which is free from enslavement and exploitation of man by man. In simple words, a movement towards socialism.

"We take a class approach and that should be, because society is divided on the basis of classes : the owners of the means of production, the industrial - bourgeoisie and the working class who do not own any thing except for their labour power. As communists, we look at social reality not just from a class point of view but we also address the question of class. Class struggle, for CPI, is a national liberation / democratic struggle. It is a comprehensive struggle including political, philosophical and ideological struggle. You can't seperate these. It is a struggle against neo-colonalism, apartheid and exploitation by transnational corporations and, thereby, to strengthen its anti-imperialist stand."

Quoting Ambedkar, Shri Raja says, 'caste has a mental twist. So people don't think objectively and positively but entirely in terms of casteism. Caste system is a hurdle, an impediment in our social developement. We as communists, want to break the caste system and abolish it.'

Reservations for Raja, are important and necessary for Dalits and OBC's because they are considered to be outside the mainstream and hence not part of it. They don't enjoy their part of priveleges and, in this sense, are

exploited, are far behind in terms of provision of their rights, full freedom, equality of opportunities. The attitude towards them is that of discrimination. "Reservation in jobs in assemblies, in education gives them a chance to rise up the social ladder, attainment of full freedom. However, reservation is not the final solution to the problem of overcoming caste oppression and class exploitation and ensuring Social justice to dalits and OBC's. The need is to go for a structural change through drastic land reforms in the society. Thas would mean change in the basic production relations of the classes and surplus land to the landless and poor peasants and, thereby, putting curbs on monopoly houses". In fact CPI the main objective of CPI is to defend national unity and integrity and work for the maintainence of communal harmony and for safeguarding democratic set up. This is CPI's stand on Secularism. And Raja, urges all to participate in this endeavor to see and ensure that there is no intrusion of religion into the affairs of the state or the political life of the country.

**Shri Yadav Reddy[25], Janata Dal.**       *TH-6522*

Reddy begins by saying that " Basically our party believes in democracy / social justice which includes both social and economic equality. We believe in the empowerment of the underpriveledged sections of the society. This is possible through reservations for the Other backward

---

[25] Shri Yadav Reddy, member of Janata Dal was interviewed on June 2, 1997.

classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes. Reservations would ensure economic freedom, educational equality and true equality of opportunities to these people. However how far one is translating this policy into action is the main concern of our party. Reservations for SC's, ST's and OBC's is justified because unless and until these sections of society are not given reservations to ensure security in the economic sense, they will not be in a position to reach the level of people who are already priveleged with these benefits or with whom they have competition" Not the class but Caste criteria for Reddy is the criteria on the basis of which reservations should be given. However the Mandal Commission which was set up to look into reservation policy for underpriveleged in the central services comprised of people belonging to upper castes and not from the backward castes. Reddy confesses that reservation in jobs have not been successful owing to the reason that the reality about OBC's / SC's & ST's was never understood by the people ( upper castes ). Actual problems never surfaced. Local needs of these backward sections was never taken into account. 'Our stand on secularism, continues Reddy means there should be separation of state and religion. Attempts by sectarian or communal forces to erode the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic character of our society are strongly resisted. For us, religious minorities should enjoy the fullest protection and opportunity to pursue their modes of worship.'

Nationalism according to Reddy, should be viewed not as

compartmentalization but as a comprehensive concept without having to view it as any of its brand separately. This is because "that would make the nationalist angle a very narrow and limited angle and point of view."

**Shrimati Sushma Swaraj.[26] Bhartiya Janata Party.**

'The basic foundation of our party, Swaraj says, is Hindutva or Cultural Nationalism. By this we mean Indianess, It is a distinc culture, a way of life that is exemplied in our daily code of conduct. But in our country nationalism is a casuality. Anything that is spoken in the nation's pride is conceived as communal. In the name of secularism a pseudo- secularism drive was lashed out which further more reinstated the misconception of relating cultural nationalim with comnmunalism. By religion we mean not code of conduct but a sect. And when we respect all religion, it implies respect for different sects in our country. This is the real meaning of Secularism.' Says Swaraj,"We are secular in the sense, we give equal status to all the citizens of the country. No body is a second class citizen neither better than first class one. We are not anti-muslim. This is evident in the fact that we recruit muslim workers in our party. But surely we are against the policy of appeasement which renders some people better than first class citizens and all this is done in the name of vote banks. For example if special facilities are made

------------------------------------------------------------

[26] Shrimati Sushma Swaraj is a BJP, MP. She was interviewed on May 25, 1997.

available to muslims for Haj, then why not the same facilities made available for the people who go to Amar Nath yatra.'

By social justice, Swaraj means, bringing scheduled castes and scheduled tribe people on par with the rest of the society, in terms of both economic status and social. The principle of social justice calls for reservations should for the backward sections. Reservations also imply that this since 27 % can't possibly include all percentage of backward sections, hence the process of reservation should be done in phases. Include the first lot of 27 %, raise their economic and social status and then remove them. The next 27 % comes in and so on. Reservations should not be a monopoly of few people. However some body who is poor / backward, devoid of its benefits just because he belongs to a Brahmin family is unfair and should be included in 27 % lot.

BJP also talks of protection and fostering the spirit of economic nationalism in the form of Swadeshi amongst the people. Importance of swadeshi is seen against the background of the onslaught on our economy by means of GATT, WTO by foreign companies. "We are certainly in favour of internal liberalisation, in terms of removal of quota permit licence. We are, also, for globalisation in selective areas. In hi-tech areas like power, infrastructure, roads etc. multinationals should be allowed entry in Indian economy. This is so because if infrastructure is laid here

by MNC it will be permanent asset to us. But in consumer goods, foreign investors like Mcdowell's, Pepsi Cola should be discouraged because that would lead to consumerism. Foreign investors also should not be allowed in areas of small industry. To safeguard & ensure protection to small scale industries, like cottage and handloom sectors of textile industry, we must resist foreign companies in these areas".

**Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha.[27] Congress Party.**

Mirdha begins by saying that our approach to economic developement is based on economic planning. Ideologically, we are pro-communists or rather, those who earlier believed in the socialist pattern of society based on the Nehruvian model of Socialism.With time, when private sector gained / benefitted tremendously from state / public sector, which it was meant to, in terms of experience and resources, Congress became in favour of private enterprise. Not to undermine the importance of state, Mirdha says, socialist ideology along with importance to public sector gave way to mixed economy, where the whole idea is to be self reliant and get rid of dependance on other countries for certain goods like wheat etc. Liberalisation in this context is analysed not in terms of departure from earlier Nehruvian model but certainly in continuity with it. Liberalisation of the economy means giving more and more power

------------------------------------------------------------

[27] Shri Mirdha was interviewed on May 21, 1997.

125

to the private sector. It included bringing in Indian economy latest technology, electronic system and so on. But in 1992 the liberalisation policy soon ran into trouble when all along ( during Rajiv Gandhi era) the ground realities of the foreign investment in India were not tested. And as Mirdha says we did not have a clear concept of as to which area to open. For example, telecom privatisation was done in a hurry without knowing the complete rules and transparencies. No prior thinking about the consquences and implications of the policy was done. Instead, what we allowed was globalisation without internal liberalisation of the Indian economy resulting in shattering of the economy. Globalisation should take place after liberalisation and not the other way round, as was done earlier by the Congress Government.'

Secularism has been a very important tenant of Congress. ' For us, it means not just emphasizing the significance of religious belief of a particular section of society but it should also include the efforts of bringing minorities, into the main strata of the society. All religions should be allowed to prosper and be preached.' Congress's secularism according to Mirdha, is promoted by including tribals, SC's, ST's in their endeavour to assert their identity. This is because they have been neglected for very long. Therefore Congress has a lot of sensitivity towards ethno religious loyalties. "We have helped tribals to help gain them their rights, to shape their own destiny, full fledged space in the nationalist mainstream. We believe that nation becomes stronger when we include all

ethno-religious loyalties in the main stream, because in doing so our indigenous cultural heritage is enriched all the more." Social justice in terms of reservations for the backward classes is justified for these economically and socially backward sections of society. Through reservations will be able to have social recognition / status in society and will assert their identity. Reservation benefits should go to a backward class person, and not to his family, because his getting the benefits would enable him to look after his family members. Reservations haven't turned to be the way they were meant to be. Instead whole thing has been messed up. Reservation instead of going to one member of family goes to the same family which means benefits through the reservation process takes place within the family relationaly rather than any addition in the family.

## Approach to sociology as an academic discipline.

For Sitaram Yechury of CPI(M), 'Sociology as an academic discipline has its merits and demerits. As a useful knowledge it is seen in terms of social behaviour whether based on kinship criteria, on traditions or legacies. Sociology has made a tremendous contribution in the understanding of both human nature as well as social organizations that exist in India. But to conclude that, all norms of social behaviour is explained only by such examinations which are essentially sociological in nature, is , we think is skirting the fundamental issue.'In other words, says Yechury that all human beings exist today as social animals primarily on the basis of economic relations,

as seen in marxist terms. However this sociological knowledge looses its significance (on the basis of sociological understanding and insights, human civilization is possible) if it is not oriented towards application in society. Therefore, sociology as an academic descipline is seen in terms of being a useful knowledge which derives its legitimacy through its application for social good.

For D. Raja of CPI, sociological knowledge is useful knowledge because it gives an understanding of the functional mechanism of society and the functional behaviour of human beings in a society, at both micro and macro level, and at individual and social level, be it in a family, class, a factory, in village or community. He says,' We give importance to sociological understanding but at the same time also believe that, until and unless, this (sociological Knowledge) understanding/thinking is not put into practical use for social good it looses its significance and therefore, the very fact that we believe in the science of marxism and actually practice it, in terms of identifying ourselves and our theoretical knowledge with masses of the society, this in itself is a manifestation of importance given to sociology, both as useful theoretical knowledge and its acknowledgement by its practical use ( in Marxism, for us).' Highlighting the theoretical significance of sociology, Raja says, 'it is exemplified in the fact that while formulating our policies, we do have discussions with sociologists, because we know that they sensitize us to the social reality at the local level and, therefore, play a

role of mediator between us and the masses, the people of our country, towards whom the policies are directed'. Nevertheless 'practical significance of sociology is realised/ and known to us and that's the reason we are people-oriented, work in various toiling/exploited sections of society, have different mass organizations, class, peasant and kisan sabhas, workers, student's union and so on. All these actually requires participation from people's side, by sensitizing them to the immediate social reality through the available sociological knowledge'.

Therefore, Raja, at one hand talks of sociology as useful knowledge and on other hand, also gives importance to the fact that for sociology to be acknowledged, it has to come out in the public realm, amongst masses, amongst people. Both these aspects of sociology as an academic discipline are equally important. No attempt should be made to separate these two but that they should be seen in 'dialectical unity with each other'.

Yadav Reddy of Janta Dal, says that sociology as an academic discipline should not be seen as armchair theorising, nor sociologists as arm chair theoreticians. He approaches sociology as a useful knowledge, because 'it gives us an understanding of various social issues, opens up possibilities of discussions, debates on issues relating to society. However this theoretical orientation has to have practical significance'. He also says that sociological knowledge should be contextualised, it shouldn't be generalised, it should be context-specific relating to wider

socio-politcal concerns'. Reddy continues,'our party, in the formulation of our policies, does and is open to discussion various viewpoints as put forward by sociologists, economists other experts all of which who are members of our policy formulation board. Everytime party policy is on the cards it is first discussed, debated on by sociologists like Rajni Kothari, Surendra Mohan and then, weighing the prons and cons, only then formulated and made final (if feasible for society at large)'.

Unlike earlier views on sociology Sushma Swaraj of BJP has altogether a different viewpoint. Her approach to sociology as an academic discipline varies from earlier viewpoints in the sense that she says sociology is mere commonsense and sociologists, armchair theoreticians. And this is in the fact that it is practical knowledge which is a purposeful education. Sociology is a combination of mere commonsensical knowledge but with a theoretical understanding of any issue, without any practical/ grassroot experience[28]. In the sense, whatever policies are formulated, theorising is done in closed rooms, by sitting on chair/in assemblies/constituencies without knowing or being aware of the actual real, and immediate situation, policies won't be successful. Policy formulation for development in one area represents the development of the

---

[28]To quote Swaraj, "Many agricultural policies were formulated by experts who never knew the actual conditions favourable to particular crop and they weren't aware of the conditions required for growing sugar cane."

whole country. The syllabi of sociology has the same chapters for every long gives a student a bookish , and very academic oriented information about society. But this information and education through old sociology books does'nt make sense when today we have a different situation, different and changed / altered social reality. Going to the field with outdated bookish knowledge, and a mindset, might result in it being incompatible with the reality / actual situation and therefore, may result in disastrous consquences. Swaraj, in this way, is contextualising sociology saying it should be 'context specific'. She spoke of sociological knowledge (common sense) gained through practice; and therefore, every individual who has practical / grassroot experience, who knows about the living conditions of the people, and is aware of their problems is a sociologist in its itself. Further contemplating on this, Swaraj says, 'one doesn't have to read sociology to be a sociologist. A commonsensical knowledge about society through grass root experience would convert a layman into a sociologist. That is the reason while in the sense of theoreticians formulating party policies, we don't require sociologists but our party workers, MLA's who are associated with the grassroot / practical / public realm - world of action, struggles, and who come to us with authentic knowledge are sociologists. And for that reason we don't instal, consult sociologists in our agenda for policy formulation.'

Ram Niwas Mirdha, Congress says that sociology as a

branch of knowledge has to be approached not in terms of practical or grass root experience but in terms of useful knowledge. This is so because sociological knowledge debunks the certainity of commonsensical world and, thereby one knows and realises the latent / hidden meaning of the practical, social problems of our society. Sociologists are important people because they think, theorise, on various problems through discussions, debates, putting forward alternatives and in short, in the words of Mirdha,'sensitizing and making us aware of the problem confronting us'. Its through this understanding that subsequently we come to a practical solution of the problem. Sociologists are 'think tank' of the society and they should be allowed to remain so because " sociologists make us see the problem in a particular perspective, in a particular way. Our society being very complex, with all sorts of social problems on the rise, it becomes all the more important to realise and nurture sociological understanding of reality."

Section - 3

General Observations.

**Examining the seriousness, criticality and reflexivity of politics.**

No doubt the entire exercise of continual engagement of politics with sociology as an academic discipline and some of the major issues involved in this study have yielded enriching results but at the same time

it reveals the boundedness, the limitedness of politics in the study of sociology and the manner in which political personalities view the social issues.

'New Age', 'People's Democracy,' 'Organiser' 'BJP Today '. These are the mouth-organs published by various political parties in the capital. The first belongs to the Communist Party of India. People's Democracy is of the CPI-Marxist and the last two are from the stables of Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bhartiya Janata Party. All four with strong ideologies, by virtue of necessity, have senior party leaders voicing their opinions on various political matters( as has been analysed in section 1 and 2.) This in itself is an indication of their engagement with issues relating to wider context / other than politics. The corollary is that in the unorganised sector of centrist forces, perched between the extreme left and right, there is a huge vacuum. None of the centrist parties, like the oldest political party, the Congress, have news papers, magazines or any other organ to serve the purpose that New Age or People's Democracy do. How ever a magazine - Janata Dal Patrika by Janata Dal published every fortnight has more to do with petty party politics than with reflecting on major social issues. And that is the reason there was not a single article in JD Patrika worth examining. This shows the degree of seriousness of mentioned political parties, with respect to reflecting on various social issues.

Seriousness of politics is also to be examined in terms of whether there is compatibility between the views on

social issues as put forward by the political personalities and that of the party literature or not. What needs to be mentioned here is that a critical examination will be simultaneously put forward along with the reflections on politics. Regarding the issue of caste and social justice, there's a great deal of sensitivity amongst the political literature and politicians regarding the problems of the backward classes, SC's and ST's- Backward castes, Dalits. There's compatibility between both, views put forward by political personalities and the party literature. Though all agree that reservations should be given to backward sections of society and all final solutions to bring about social justice but parties like CPI and CPI(M) believe that reservations in educational institutions and jobs are projected as an end in themselves and therefore they aren't final solution to the problem. There have been useful sociological insights from CPI, CPI(M) on caste ( both literature and interviews.) However the rest of the party's literature doesn't deal with caste analysis at all, though most of the interviews have yielded useful insights.

Reservations, as propounded by Mandal Commission Report, throws up some very important questions in this context. For instance, while substituting castes by economic tests appears to be more plausible, does it not ignore the real genesis of social and educational backwardness in our society ? Can we do away with the hierarchic discrimination and inequality inherent in the caste system and their evil effect in perpetuating social, educational and also economic

backwardness ? Can one close his/her eyes to this reality ?

On the other hand, do economic tests have no relevance? What about the poverty ridden and deprived sections of the so-called upper castes ? Do they have no claim to our 'special consideration'? Moreover assuming that the lower castes are identified as backward classes, should it mean that everyone amongst them- but everyone even, if he is well off, must get the special help, the benefit of reservation ignoring the claim of economically deprived sections ? Is this not creating and perpetuating another form of discrimination with new and far reaching consequences ? Will this help maintain the social equilibrium ? BJP's Sushma Swaraj and Mirdha of Congress do raise the latter part of the inquiry. Also, how do we identify the backward classes ? As to reservation, how much and how far and what are the fall outs ? In the upshot, has this help reduce inequality and backwardness or has further consolidated castes and aggravated caste tensions ? These questions bear relevance in the issue of reservations, which no party or politician has raised except for Sushma Swaraj of BJP.

On religion and secularism, one finds exhaustive literature and place in the interviews, views of which coincide with each other. Nationalism has been analysed in terms of sensitivity regarding the problems of keeping India united; its national integrity if one could say. Despite long history of nationalism/national discourses of three main tendencies represented by Congress, the Hindu

nationalists, and the Communists in India none of the party deals with it seriously. It has been dealt with very vaguely (except for BJP whose directing principle is feeling of nationalism for both economic and cultural deal with, very insightfully, in both literature and in the interview.

However, BJP's notion of cultural nationalism comes under criticism. It may be said that in the name of cultural nationalism BJP presumes today that Indianess is synonymous with Hindutva and, that Indian nationalism is Hindu nationalism. This is certainly inappropriate because the terms Hindu, and Hinduism and Hindutva have very specific meanings. Initially Hinduism denoted those whose faith is built around Vedas, Smritis and so on and multiple sects like Vaishnavas etc. Hinduism in its present form is nothing but a slightly modified version of Brahminism. Cultural nationalism is a move to impose the Brahminical culture on country projecting the political agenda/aspirations in the disguise of cultural language , For example what happened at Ayodhya was move in this direction. ( No doubt the Brahminical culture has its own significance ). In doing so the homogenising influence of Hindu Religion, Hindutva stands out prominently. This is different from Swaraj's assertion of Hindutva. In this context, it is important to throw relevant questions like is the debate between secularism and cultural nationalism really as essential one ? Is the debate really worth ? Are secularism and nationalism really at war with each other and, if they are, is it a holy war or fraticide ? Is there

anyway the majority can stop sermonising and minorities starting getting rid of the carefully nurtured comple ? And above all can we say that Islam, Sikhism, Christanity and Hindusim are larger issues for an Indian than the fact of his being Indian ? None of these religions placed religious bigotry above nationalism, but their professed followers, including those in the BJP, as said earlier appear to do so today - as before. Moreover one should be clear that religion needs no defence. Religion is self-protective for the reason that it aspires not for victory but for humility and service in matters visionary and spiritual. Unfortunately, expansionism seems to have lost its spiritual and religious context and has become a more political and geographical denominator.

One needs to appreciate CPI, CPI(M) for having dealt with the issue of religion and secularism in their literature in a very comprehensive and manner yeilding sociological insights. Similarly the question of class is extensively and sociologically oriented in both the literature of CPI, CPI(M), as has been analysed in Section one and two and there are absolutely no discrepencies between what has been told by Yechury and CPI(M) literature, and between D.Raja and CPI literature. This is for other issues also. One can also find a rigorous critique of liberalisation policy ( in the terms of New Economic Policy) by all party literature and politicians except for congress who actually formulated this policy. Critique of technology, liberalisation, globalisation is correctly pointed out in

the wake of its causing for example, displacement of labor, for Janata Dal, cultural invasion for BJP, and more, exploitation of the working class and erosion of the public sector for CPI and CPI(M).

Overall, there has been seriousness on the part of politicians regarding their approach on various social issues Literature / articles mentioned, discussed, analysed lack serious concern for nationalism (all parties), class question (except for communists) Nevertheless, there have been heavy doses of social justice and religion, secularism, liberalisation in all party literature, which does coincide with view from interview.

Regarding the approach to sociology as an academic discipline, D.Raja and Sitaram Yechury have shown serious concern/interest in their approach that as an academic discipline. For them, sociology is a useful knowledge about society seen in terms of the functional relationship that exists between various sectors of society, be it related through kinship, tradition or legacies. There exists between these functional mechanism a very positive picture indeed. At the same they also give importance to the applied aspect of the knowledge through which it derives its legitimacy. Ram Niwas Mirdha of Congress gave more importance to the theoretical concept of sociological knowledge, to quote Mirdha,. Until and unless we don't have the think tank or the poeple who think - the intellectuals, we will never be able to come up with the insights into the practical problems that our country is facing. Through knowledge comes

experience, practical/ grass-root experience". Yadav Reddy gives importance to sociology as a useful knowledge and its application. This is how says Reddy, 'one can have a complete and a comprehensive picture of sociology as an academic discipline.'

We therefore find all four politicians that is, Yechury, Raja, Mirdha and Reddy give importance to sociology as a useful knowledge but at the same time are also stressing on the practical/applied nature of the discipline (except Mirdha) because that becomes a source of livelihood for people who are students of sociology and subsequently take up sociology as a profession.

BJP's Sushma Swaraj has a very hard core view point on sociology as an academic discipline and very much adamant about it. For her, sociology is a mere common sense and sociologists armchair theoreticians, who keep formulating theories without any sense of practical reality. And that's why she says that for some to actually know problems of people doesn't need to be a sociologist. Mere commonsense and practical/grassroot experience would be sufficient. She infact distorts the actual meaning of sociology She didn't hesitate to reply back in negative. She reduces sociology to applied science/social work.

However it was time for celebrating sociology when it was yielded during interviews, delighted to know that in the formulation of party policies (except BJP) sociological knowledge/insights were taken into account through debates,

discussions on the concerned issues. In fact sociologists are part of policy formulation board, Janata Dal and Congress.

Despite critisms, this engagement with the world of politics has been sensitizing ( which it was meant to be) to the extent that thoughts have been provoked, number of view-points, perspectives, on the social world from a political point of view have been developed which help one stimulate our understanding ( understanding in the sense of providing systematic, coherent & testable ways of studying social world, ways which enable us to enhance and to develope our knowledge.) This provides basis for practical action in the world.

## SOCIOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY AND ITS PERPETUAL NEED IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE.

We have discussed the political possibilities of sociology. We have also discussed and analysed, how politicians look at Sociology. We now turn to examine the profile of Indian politics which is essential to be looked into, in this context.

### Nature of Indian Politics.

Indian politics seems to have entered a new era with a new slogan: 'Grab wealth and power, forgetting all but self'.[1] Indira Gandhi was the pioneer in this sort of dehumanised politics. During her regime the humanistic conceptions of politics as cherished by Jawaharlal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri started receeding, and a chronic obsession with immediate power, a crude power-centred Machiavellian politics emerged. This had the effect of severely eroding the institutional base of India's ordering framework. Equally damaging was continued assault made by Mrs. Indira Gandhi upon the national and democratic organisational order of the congress. When prime political institutions started crumbling, the institutional checks upon misgovernance began disappearing. This had the effect of

---

[1] See Amal Ray, ` New left Initiatives - Need to ReinvigorateIndian Politics' in <u>Deccan Herald</u>, January 9,1997 pp.8.

breeding colossal public corruption while almost concurrently there has emerged the widespread use of populism as a crude substitute for liberalism. Other mainstream parties followed. Janata party then, Janata Dal now are notable examples. The known rules of the democratic game have come to be increasingly twisted and flouted to serve partisan interests. Sh. Sitaram Kesri's election as the leader of the congress parliamentary party by manipulated consensus, is a case in point[2]. One can see that power, then, is the dominant aim to be unscrupulously pursed, in politics. Politics is no longer an inner call, or a heritage of consciousness of democratic values and norms but a lucrative career for immediate/temporal material gains. Noorani says 'Politics is simply no renewal of life, of consciousness. Politicians work their way up with patronage that purchases their souls[3]. Anybody fuelled by a pervasive sense of insecurity and uncertainity about the future, finds his way in politics as it is the easiest way of making money and as Rajni Kothari says 'Increasing need for money keeps you going[4]. Money is also imperative for electoral success. Consequently political parties found difficult to field candidates unless backed by huge

-------------------------------------------------------------------

[2] See Amal Ray, ' New left Initiatives - Need to Reinvigorate Indian Politics, <u>Deccan Herald</u> Ibid; pp.8.

[3] See A.G.Noorani, ' Political Decay -I ; An Irreversible Process ?; <u>The Statesman</u> April 10, 1997. pp.7.

[4] See, Rajni Kothari, 'Democracy And Facism in India' : <u>State Against Democracy : In Search of Humane Governance</u> Delhi, Ajanta Publications , 1988 , pp.282.

donations: Extortion was the easiest way to get funds.[5] In the process, toughs, musclemen came to be employed by politicians to ensure their hegemony. All this focusses attention on the criminal-politics nexus. The Ayodhya riots and the Bombay blasts in Bombay and Bowbazar showed the nation, the nexus threat. Bowbazar blasts and discovery of receipts confirming donations by the sattadon, Rashid Khan, to the CPI(Marxist) offers clinched suspicions of a nexus in West Bengal. It took 1993 Bombay blasts to make Congress accept that they had indeed created a Frankenstein monster[6]. That 'Politics is the last refuge of scoundrels'[7], aptly describes the makeup of many Indian politicians. Criminalisation of politics is further heightened when persons with 'police records' become more successful in the elections compared to those with careers free of crime, Phoolan Devi, D.P.Yadav to name a few.[8]. At the wider level, criminalisation of politics is leading to criminalisation of civil society.[9] This becomes evident when children die of cholera deaths, when professionals do not do the jobs they are paid for. Response of the congress to issues, be it the

-------------------------------------------------------------

[5] Shiv Sena in Maharashtra pionered this approach.
With congress in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh deliberately swelled their ranks by enrolling criminals. The south saw criminals adorn local and national political parties Quoted in Rina Mukherjee ' Vice regale' in Telegraph, Calcutta , September 22, 1995. pp.3.

[6] See Rina Mukerjee 'Vice regale, Telegraph Ibid; pp.3.

[7] Ibid; pp.3.

[8] See, Chand Joshi 'Crime does pay at the Hustings' Hindustan Times, June 2, 1996. pp.7.

[9] See Neerja Choudhary ' Common Man's Haunch gets Official Sanction', Indian Express, New Delhi August 7, 1995. pp.8.

'Tandoor case'[10] or any other , show complete lack of insensitivity to issues that touch the people. The growing criminalization of politics will also seriously hamper the process of political empowerment of women. It'll alienate women further from politics. Cases like Naina Sahni's murder may work as an antecedent.[11] Criminalisation of politics is characterised by decaying state of affairs.[12] No economic progress is possible for the entire system is held at ransom - the civil service, the police, the entire state apparatus, all the checks and imbalances stand impaired today.

With cherished values almost forgotten in the realm of politics a philistine culture threatening to take over populism has become more pernicious as 'it defies all civilised norms, serious thinking'.[13] Onrush of populism negates all democratic values. In this context, Indira Gandhi's 'Gharibi Hatao' slogan, her recklessly declaring of Emergency in June, 1975 are branded "populist"[14]. There is absolutely no coherence, no consistency in politician's views, their way of thinking. This is because, as Pathak

-----------------------------------------------------------------

[10] The Tandoor case - Naina Sahni murder was just one indicator of the general decline of India's political culture. Ibid; pp.8.

[11] Refer Narendra Kaushik, 'Sex, Lies and Politics, Patriot August 6, 1995. pp.12.

[12] See A.G.Noorani 'Political Decay -I, An Irreversible Process ? ; Ibid; pp.7.

[13] See Nikhil Chakravarty 'Populism in India: A threat to Healthy Politics' Tribune, Chandigarh, February 3, 1997. pp.10.

[14] Ibid;pp.10.

says, 'the politicians can do anything, provided there is sufficient money to make them dance and swing like a pendulum'.[15]

In the wake of growing trend of erosion of democratic values in Indian politics, it becomes essential to safeguard the basic norms and institutions of India's constitutional democracy. Politicians need to engage themselves in a meaningful interaction with the world. Therefore, there is a **need for awareness/knowledge.** One such awareness comes from Mahatma Gandhi's writings. When Mahatma Gandhi came and opened up the path of freedom for India he had no obvious medium of power in his hand, no overwhelming authority of coercion. For him, Swaraj or self rule was to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.[16] Swaraj means replacing violence with self sacrifice.[17] It pits some force against brute force[18] and to quote Narayan, 'Gandhiji regards it as a cosummation devoutly to be wished'. Gandhiji is indeed uinque in political history. He invented an

---

[15] See Avijit Pathak, 'Learning in the Age of Uncertainity' Indian Express, May 23,1996, pp.6.

[16] See for example, Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, in Shriman Narayan ,'Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House Vol.IV 1968, pp.112.

[17] See Mahatma Gandhi Young India, in Shriman Narayan(ed) Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Ibid; pp.5.

[18] Ibid ;pp.421.

entirely new and humane technique for the liberation struggle of oppressed people and carried it out with the greatest energy and devotion. He urged all to render social justice to the least and the lowliest in the society and said'let us be humble and recognise the place of the lowliest of His (God) creatures. Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else'.[19] To continue 'spinning for the lowliest is the greatest prayer, the greatest worship, the greatest sacrifice'.[20]

Our people have hardly ever laid emphasis upon Gandhiji's natural cleverness in manipulating recalcitrant facts. They have rather dewlt upon the truth which shines through his character in lucid simplicity. And as Gandhiji himself said,'Truth and Ahimsa are not merely for chosen few but for the whole of humanity to be practised in daily life[21].The moral influence which Gandhiji exercised upon thinking people through civilised world, may be far more durable than would appear likely in our present age, with its exaggeration of brute force. Gandhiji has been credited with arousing and consolidating moral forces of his people through his personal example and educating influence. He has

-------------------------------------------------------------------

[19] See, for example Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, in Shriman Narayan(ed) Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi ; Ibid; Vol. VI pp.539.

[20] See for example Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, in Shriman Narayan(ed) Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi ; Ibid; Vol. VI pp. 538.

[21] See for example, Mahatma Gandhi, Harijan in Shriman Narayan(ed) Selected Works Of Mahatma Gandhi, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, Vol.VI 1968,pp.470.

been the spirit of active life, of which breathed into the peoples of India the proud consciousness of their unity, of their power and the will to their independence. For Gandhiji 'persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisite for acquiring learn-ing of any kind. He said 'There can be no knowledge without humility and the will to learn as a response to the political passivity of social democracy'.[22]

And therefore, when one goes through the writings of Gandhiji, one's mind is struck by the analogy of his character with that of the great masters, whose spiritual inspiration comprehends and yet, transcends all varied manifestations of humanity, and makes the face of worldliness turn to the light that comes from the eternal source of wisdom. Indeed, this is the kind of awareness and knowledge that is required in comtemporary Indian political realm.

Antonio Gramsci's Selections from Prison Notebooks[23] discusses one of the critical dilemma of politics, the urge towards spontaneous, but momentary, expressions of the collective will and the problem of 'permanent passion'. Organising passion so that it does not remain limited within a political moment but is instead transformed out of

---

[22] See for example, Mahatma Gandhi, <u>Harijan</u> in Shriman Narayan(ed) <u>Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi</u>, Ibid; pp.503.

[23] See Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith(ed) and tr. <u>Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci</u>, London; Lawrence and Wishart, 1971,pp.289-324.

its immediacy into a category of permanency was of critical importance to him. Here Gramsci lay emphasis on the active conscious inter-vention into the process of history.[24] He attempts to restore the role of human subjectivity in the realisation of the proletarian revolution and in the historical transformation. Man's position is seen as the creator of history and human subjectivity and collective social, political action as the driving force of history[25]. The achievement of Gramsci, at this point, of taking cognizance of the revolutionary significance of conscious human action, leads him to lay a unilateral emphasis on it due to the absence of the conception of the objective mediation between the collective will of the proletariat and the realisation of its ultimate historical objective. Gramsci, in his Prison Notebooks, wishes to stress that the subject and the object existed in an interactive relationships manifested in Praxis. At the centre of the philosophy of praxis Gramsci places real men who inhabit actual history and not man as an abstract category, as hypostalized 'spirit'.[26]

------------------------------------------------------------

[24] This was as against the deterministic and objective view of Marxism. It explained development of history as a process of auto-development of a single contradiction between capital and labour, internal to the mode of production. It also viewed the domai n of politics as being an instance of the superstructure understood as a mere reflection of the economy.

[25] This resulted in the rejection of the positivistic and naturalistic conception of history.

[26] In doing so Gramsci is critical of Croce and at the same time his alliance with Marx is evident.

The apparent inconsistencies in Gramsci's thinking was evident on the topic - between his passion for unity, (for combining the rewards of both free expression and disciplined centralization), and his committment to free debate (his obsessive preoccupation with leadership and his passionate belief in self-autonomy) - were never solved properly. Perhaps things become easier if we make a distinction between 'Gramsci the Intellectual' and 'Gramsci the Politician' whereas the former was anxious to uphold the liberal value of free and open discussion and,in doing so, passionately defended democratic debate and intellectual integrity, the latter was a true believer prepared to resort to dictatorial methods in order to impose his monolithic vision of life. The puritan fundmentalist in Gramsci sought for a universality and tidiness which could not easily tolerate mass vulgarity or the excesses of individualism. Inspite of these contradictions inherent in Gramsci's thought, the theoretical value and energising effect of Gramsci's efforts should not be in doubt. Even though he didn't succeed in enunciating a truly convincing non-authoritarian Marxism, he deserves credit for keeping the possibility alive, for attempting to fuse the humanitarian and practical sides of the doctrine. Gramsci's work provides stimulus and point of departure for all those who wish to explore the possibilities for a genuinely western and democratic form of Marxian socialism.

**Social Scientist and Reflections on Politics: A Study of Rajni Kothari**

One of the most notable proponents of politics in India is

Rajni Kothari. He examines the crisis of governance in India in relation to themes of cultural and ethical legitimation. In Kothari's view, the crisis of governance in India is due to the increasing irrelevance of the state to the mass of Indian people. The Indian state forcibly fosters a unity for its own perpetuation ignoring the myriad diversities in Indian society.[27] In the name of national unity this diversity is stifled by a techno-managerial elite operating on the basis of 'technological fixes'.[28] Kothari goes on to assert that for this reason the authenticity of India's cultural tradition, which always priveleged diversity, is undermined and uprooted by a hegemonic state.[29]

Indeed the whole analysis of the Indian politics, by Kothari, is a humanistic critique of bureaucratic and centralised state. Kothari shows a deep fascination with decentralisation, hope in innumerable grass root movements and his project of a plural egalitarian society. In doing so, Kothari makes efforts to come up with alternatives. Kothari goes beyond governmental decentralisation which proposes devolution of powers and resources to the state decentralised to the local levels. He addresses to the

---

[27] See Rajni Kothari, 'Integration And Exclusion in Indian Politics, Economic And Political Weekly, Vol XXII, No.43, 988, pp.2223.

[28] See Rajni Kothari , 'Transformation and Survival : In Search of a Humane World Order, Delhi, Ajanta Publications 1988, pp. 91.

[29] See Rajni Kothari, 'The Non- party Political Process', Economic And Political Weekly, Vol. XIX ,No.42,1984, pp.221.

central task of empowering the people, to themselves deal with the basic challenges of poverty and employment. The need is to hand over to these people, political power and resources. This is what Kothari means by decentralisation. People need to be organised vertically through functional inter-relationships along various tiers to reaching out at the state level. Kothari fixes his hope in the grass root mobilizations[30], based on deep stirrings of consciousness of an awareness of crisis that could conceivably be turned into a catalyst of new opportunities. These 'grass-root' movements are seen as a part of an attempt to redefine politics; not on the basis of electoral and legislative politics which relegated large sections of people outside the process of power, but on the basis of meaningful and active participation/intervention by the people. It is what Kothari says 'a people's movement'. With this redefinition of politics,issues and arenas of human activity that were not so far seen as amenable to political action - people's health, rights over forests and community resources, even deeply personal and primordial issues as involved in the struggle for women's rights - get defined as political and provide areans of struggle. In a number of grass root movements, like Chipko, the miner's struggle in Chattisgarh, the Jharkand Mukti Morcha and many more, the struggle is not limited to economic and political demands but is extended to

---

[30] D.L.Seth also argues on similar lines when he puts faith in grass root movements in 'Grass-Root Initiatives in India' in Economic and Poitical Weekly Vol. XIX,No.32. 1984 ; pp.259-62.

cover ecological, cultural and educational issues as well. This struggle is not just confined / against a particular local tyrant but against the larger social system in the creation of plural egalitarian society. All are to be given equal chance in the participation in political process. And therefore, Kothari opts for a humane governance in which people aren't marginalised from the mainstream. In such an endeavour, we encounter a generative consciousness on several layers releasing in the process new actors, new agendas and new, and hitherto, submerged 'voices' generating a new language of both self-understanding and societal understanding. The project should be churned out from a long history encompassing many diversities - the living past (much of it still around), the attempted present and the emergent tomorrows (Kothari's 'alternatives'). This is the difference between the postmodern dream of proponents of alternatives in the west and a perspective that opts for transforming without either annihilating or even disowning tradition or turning the back wholly on the modern.

To conclude, if not politicians, then it is our task as social scientists to perpetually reflect on politics, use our own knowledge and evolve a critique or a way of relating to politics. There is a perpetual need of sociological sensitivity in the political realm/sphere. In other words, sensitivity to cultural differences, authentic socialism, decentralisation of power and above all, an emancipatory pedagogy capble of seeing fundamental spiritual unity amidst all differences.[31]As almost all political

---

[31]See Avijit Pathak ' Learning in the Age of Uncertainity' Indian Express May 23, 1996.pp.6.

parties are stigmatised, we need new political agents to implement this alternate agenda. If we as social scientists intend to assume this historic responsibility, the results might be surely worth considering.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Q.1. Briefly outline the ideological orientations of your party. [ Congress, BJP,JD,CPI, CPI(M) ]

Q.2. How do you, as a member of your party, look at academics and particularly, sociology as a body of knowledge?

Q.3. Do you utilise sociological knowledge/resources while formulating your party policies?

If no, then why?

If yes, then what conclusions do you draw from a sociologist's way of perceiving society ?

Q.4. In elite universities, the present academic scene is characterized by the entire process of production of knowledge,laying more emphasis on the applied/practical aspect of the  discipline, than on its theoretical/ concept of understanding, nature.  Do you agree and perceive it as a problem? If yes, then why is it so ? Give reasons/solution to the  problem. If not, why do you feel so? give reasons.

Q.5. After 1960's, one finds the discourse of Indian nationalism in crisis. This is owing to the upsurge of ethno-religious movements gaining momentum in the last few years. How do you react to :

(i) the present situation of nationalist discourse ; and

(ii) importance of ethno-religious loyalties/movements in the above context.

Questions that were put up separately to different political parties.

**Congress.**

Q.6. How does congress react to the coming of MNC's in the Indian economy? Are you in favour of it? If yes, doesn't it mark a departure from the earlier Nehruvian model of Socialism which was so much state centric/oriented? How do you account for this? If don't agree, why ? Give reasons.

**BJP, CPI, CPI(M) & JANATA DAL.**

Q.6. How does your party respond to liberalization and globalisation of Indian economy? Are you in favour of it? Give reasons.


**CPI AND CPI(M).**

Q.7. (i) To what extent or how far has your party succeeded in applying Marxist ideology to the specific class conditions in India?

(ii)How do you account for the fact that in Indian society, where caste plays an important role, the emphasis on class affiliations is justified/significant?

(iii)How is/can Marxism be creatively applied to handle caste and other non-class contradictions in India?

**JANATA DAL.**

Q.7.(i)Could you reflect on divisions due to caste in Indian society? Give examples / reasons.

(ii) What steps have been taken by your party to remove
casteism from  the society?

(iii) How far and to what extent these steps (in
particular, reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs) is
justified and has led to equality ?

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Advani, L.K. : Basis of Nationalism is Our Culture and Heritage, BJP Today, Vol XIX, No 21 June 16-30, 1994.


All India Congress Committee Meeting Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi, 10th and 11th June, 1994. New Delhi, An AICC Publication, August 1994.


Bardhan,A.B.;'Our party -The CPI ' New Age.Vol.XXXXIII, No.53, December 31,1995 / January 6,1996. PP.7


Bauman, Zugmunt ; Legislators and Interpreters : On Modernity, Postmodernity and Intellectuals,Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987.


Betielle, Andre ;` Sociology and Common Sense' Economic and Political Weekly Special Number September 1996, PP.2361-5


Blatant Cultural Invasion of India BJP Today Vol.XIX No.24 BJP Publication January 1-15, 1997.


Byrant, Christopher ; Practical Sociology : Postempiricism and the Reconstruction of Theory and Application,Cambrige Polity Press, 1995.


Central Manifesto of the Indian National Congress: 1994 Assembly Elections, New Delhi, Briliant Printing and Advertising, 1994. PP.4-13


Chakravarty, Nikhil.;` Populism in India: A Threat to Healthy Politics. Tribune, Chandigarh, February 3, 1997.


Chatterjee, Manini.; Technological Advance and the New Working Class' People's Democracy New Delhi, A CPI(M) Publications. Vol. XXI No.29 June 15, 1997.


Choudhary, Neerja.;'Common Man's Hunch gets Official Sanction Indian Express, New Delhi, August 7,1995.


Congress Marches Ahead (Jan 1992-Feb 1993) New Delhi, An AICC Publication, March 1993.

Cuff, E.C. Sharrock and Francis, W.W., <u>Perspectives in Sociology</u> London, Unwin Hyman ltd. 1990 PP.27-139


Extracts from the Speech of Shri P.V. Narsimaha Rao, president, INC at Tirupati, <u>Issues before the Nation : The Congress Perspective, the message of Tirupati</u>, New Delhi, An AICC Publication, September 1995.


Faizee, Shameen.; `Threat to Secularism,' <u>New Age,</u> New Delhi, CPI Publication , Vol XXXXIII, No.53 December 31, 1995 / January 6, 1996. PP.23


Gadgil, V.N.; <u>The 1996 Mandate : Its meaning and message,</u> New Delhi, V.N. Gadgil,1997. PP.23-27


Game, Ann and Metcalfe, Andrew; <u>Passionate Sociology,</u>London, Sage Publications, 1996.


Gandhi,Rajiv.;' Speech of the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi at the Inaugural function of Golden Jubilee of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly at Vidhan Sabha, Bombay, September 3, 1988'. <u>Democracy, Socialism, Secularism: The Three Pillars of Our Nation</u>, New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India,1988. PP.5-8


Giddens, Anthony.(ed); 'Durkheim's Writings in Sociology and Social philosophy, <u>Emile Durkheim : Selected writings</u>, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972. PP.1-50.


Gouldner, Alvin W.; <u>The Coming Crises of Western Sociology,</u> New Delhi, Heinemann, 1971. PP.481-512.


Gupta, Dipankar (ed) <u>Social Stratification,</u>New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995.


Hoare, Quintin & Smith, Geoffrey Nowell : <u>Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci</u>, London, Lawrence and Wishrat, 1971.


Ilaiah, Kancha; <u>Why I am not a Hindu : A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy</u>. Calcutta, Samya, 1996.


Janata Dal.; <u>Election Manifesto of Janata Dal</u> New Delhi, Janata Dal Publications, 1996.

Joshi, Chand; 'Crime does pay at the Hustings,' Hindustan Times, June 2, 1996.


Kamath, M.V. ;   ` Hindutva : Time to stop being apologetic' BJP Today, Vol.XLIV No 22 January 3, 1993.


Kaushik, Narendra,; `Sex Lies, and Politics, Patriot, August 6, 1995.


Kothari, Rajni ; State Against Democracy :In Search of Humane Goverance, Delhi, Ajanta Publications, 1988.


Kothari, Rajni ; Transformation and Survival : In Search of Humane Social order, Delhi, Ajanta Publications, 1988.


Kothari, Rajni ;'Integration and Exlcusion in Indian Politics' Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXIII, No 43, October 22, 1988, PP 2223-7


Mathews, Sarah H ,'Rethinking Sociology Through a Feminist Perspective' The American Sociologist, Vol 17, February 1982, pp. 29-37.


Mills, C. Wright.; Sociological Imagination., New York, Oxford University Press, 1959.


Mukherjee, Rina.; 'Vice Regale,' Telegraph, Calcutta, September 22, 1995.


Namboodiripad, E.M.S.; 'In Defence Of Communist Approach' People's Democracy, New Delhi, Vol XVIII, No 45 CPI(M) Publication, November 7, 1993.


Nandy, Ashis.; 'Culture, State and the Rediscovery of Indian Politics.' Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XIX No. 49, December 8,1984. PP.2078-2082


Nandy, Ashis.; 'The Political Culture of the Indian State' Daedalus, Vol.118, No.4, PP.1-25


Narayan, Shriman, Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Ahmedabad, Navajivan, Vol IV and VI, 1968.

Nicholson, Linda, (ed) <u>Feminism and Postmodernism</u>, New York, Routledge, 1990, pp 91-101.


Nisbert, Robert.; <u>The Sociological Tradition</u>, London, Heinemann, 1996.


Noorani, A.G.;'Political Decay -I: An irreversible Process?' <u>The Statesman,</u> April 1o, 1997.


Omvedt, Gail.; <u>Dalits and the Democratic Revolution : Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit movement in Colonial India</u>, New Delhi/Thousand oaks/London, Sage publications, 1994.


Oomen T.K. and Mukherjee, Partha Nath., <u>Indian Sociology: Reflections and Introspections</u>, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. 1986.


Parekh, Bhikhu.;'Nehru and the National Philosophy of India' <u>Economic and Political Weekly</u>, Vol XXVI, No.2 Special Articles, January 5-12,1991.


Parsons, Talcott.; <u>The Social System,</u> Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1951.


Pathak, Avijit.; 'Learning in the Age of Uncertainity', <u>Indian Express,</u> May 23, 1996.


Pathak, Avijit, 'Teaching Sociology ; Reflections on Method Truth and Knowledge' ; <u>Recasting Indian Sociology : The Changing Contours of the Disclipine</u>, March 20-21, 1997.


Pathak Avijit, 'Religious Articulations in a Secular World', <u>Mainstream,</u> Annual, December 9, 1995.


Pusey, Michael, <u>Jurgen Habermas,</u> New York, Tavistok Publication. 1987.


Raja, D. ;`Struggle Against Caste System,' <u>New Age</u>. Vol.XXXXIII, No.53,. December 31,1995 / January 6,1996, PP.21


Rao, C. Hanumantha,: `Job Reservations for Backward Classes Right Step Forward', <u>New Age.</u> Vol XXXVIII. No.37. September 16, 1990. PP.5

Rao, Narasimha.; ` Six Speeches of Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao on the theme of "Middle Path Approach" to Economic Changes and Role of India in the Changing Global Scenario.' India in the Changing Global Scenario. New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, August 1994,


Rao, Narasimha.; `Text of the Speech of the Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narsimha Rao at the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen, Denmark, March 11,1995.' International Coperation For Social Development ,New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, March 1995, pp 4.


Ray, Amal. ;`New Left Initiatives -Need to Reinvigorate Indian Politics,' Deccan Herald. January 9,1997.


Rokkan, Stein (ed) ; A Quarter Century Of International Social Science ; Papers and Reports on Development, 1952-1977.New Delhi,Concept Publishing Co, 1979, pp 291-311.


Rose Hillary; Love, Power and Knowledge : Towerds a Feminist Transformation of Sciences, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1944.


Sheth, D.L, 'Grass-Root Initiatives in India' Economic and Political Weekly Vol XIX, No 32, 1984, pp 259-62.


Singh, V.P.; Social Justice for a Secular India New Delhi, Janata Dal Publication, November 1990.


Singh, Yogendra.; Modernization of Indian Tradition, Jaipur, Rawat Publications, 1988.


Singh, Yogendra.; Essays on Modernization , New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1978


Singh, Yogendra.;Image of Man : Ideology and Theory in Indian Sociology , Delhi, Chankya Publications, 1984


Singh, Yogendra.;Social Conditioning and the Emerging Concerns, New Delhi, Vistar Publications, 1986


Srinivas, M.N.; Social change in Modern India, New Delhi, Orient Longman,1996.

Text of BJP's Social Policy Statement, <u>Organiser</u>  Vol XLIV
No 50, New Delhi, July 18, 1993.


Yechury, Sitaram ; 'Caste and Class in Indian Politics Today'
<u>People's Democracy,</u> New Delhi : CPI(M) publication,
Vol.XXI No.21. May 25,1997.