

CHANGING PATTERNS OF CASTE RELATIONSHIP IN BIHAR

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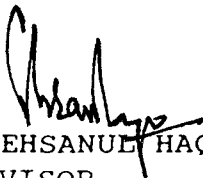
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled, "CHANGING PATTERNS OF CASTE RELATIONSHIP IN BIHAR", which is being submitted by RABINDRA KUMAR for the award of Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY is his original work and may be placed before the examiner for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this university or of any other university.


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DEDICATED
TO
MY PARENTS

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PREFACE

A democracy does not automatically become a democratic state because merely the Constitution declares so. Rather, the real nature of polity is known by the distribution of power and authority and the socio-political institutions it has. After independence large scale efforts were initiated to induct the backward and deprived sections of the society in the wider political culture of the country. Politics were hardly known to the weaker sections in the society of pre-independence period. It was only the rough constitutional safeguards, implementation of reservations and other facilities for those weaker and deprived sections were some of the important steps in this direction. It was realised that a share of these sections in power and authority structure of society would not only influence the government in policy making in their favour and healthy growth to give a real meaning of Indian democracy, but also contribute to their own socio-economic mobility. Their participation in politics and their leadership was considered all the more significant in socio-economic development of the State as a whole. This process of participation into political structure, through a own arena for those backward and deprived sections,

through which they entered into power structure and articulate the interests of their castes and communities. Hence the present study is an attempt to explore the changing patterns of caste relationship with a special reference to Bihar. However, effort in the present study has been made to approach the phenomenon from the socio-economic and political structure, and thus examine the changing patterns of caste relationship in Bihar. It is hoped that this work would help to understand how far socio-economic structure is interlinked and influenced the political structure and its changing patterns from time to time.

The study is divided into four chapters. Two approaches has been applied to review the literature in the first chapter. Dialectical approach has been applied to analyse the caste relationship as the one hand and the functional approach has been applied to analyse the class relationship on the other. Traditional patterns of caste relationship in the second chapter and the changing patterns of caste relationship in the Bihar has been described in the third chapter. Finally chapter four is concerned with concluding remarks.

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CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

Caste system is one of the major dimensions of social stratification found most exclusively in India. This is a system which has existed over several centuries in the Country. It is taken as a fundamental unit of social structure of Indian Society. The complexity, rigidity, elaborate division of labour, occupation endogamy and hierarchy characterise the nature of the caste system.¹ Social inequality is in built into this system which governs intergroup behavioral patterns. This inequality is reinforced by religious sanctions. Caste is considered as a critical determinant shaping the patterns of relationship in Indian society. The forces of modernization tend to change the shape of caste-based structure of relationship. The changes which have taken place in the post independent period such as, the reformist policy of the government, emphasis on all-round development, particularly of the backward classes, discontinuance of Zamindari, equalization of opportunity etc, have attended the patterns of caste relationship and given rise to new caste formation and caste alliance, like the domination of Yadava, Kurmi and Koeri as

1. Hutton, J.H. Caste in India 1963, P 46; Oxford University Press, Oxford.

a 'neo-twice born' caste in Bihar and Yadava and Kurmi in Uttar Pradesh.

Such development have made the question of caste more complicated. Here is an attempt to explore the emerging patterns of caste relationship on the basis of relevant works. Castes, the most striking feature of Indian society.

It divides as pointed out by Bougle the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics:-

- (a) Separation in matters of marriage and contact, whether direct or indirect (food).
- (b) division of labour; each group having, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which their members can depart only within certain limits and, finally.
- (c) hierarchy with ranks of groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another.

The spirit of caste units of these three characteristics, separation, division of labour and hierarchy (hereditary specialization) are taken into account to get a complete definition of the concept of caste.²

2. Bougle, C. "Essays on the caste system, "translated by D.F. Pocock, 1977, P 10, Cambridge University Press; London.

To understand caste system it would be better to understand the features of Hindu society. Hindu society has been divided into groups. G.S. Ghurye³ calls them "caste". There are 'duija' and 'non-duija' caste groups according to him. The duija caste groups are Brahmans, Kshatriya and Vaisyas. At the bottom, there are non-duija groups, the shudras, and Panchamas. He has discussed six classical features of Indian caste system:-

- (i) Segmental division of society based on birth. The status of a person in the society is not determined on his/her wealth but on caste in which he/she had been born. If a shudra acquires wealth, his social status would remain the same as Sudhras.
- (ii) Hierarchy based on a definite scheme of social ranking amongst the castes, with Brahman at the top of the societal hierarchy and the other two duija caste groups (Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) are the next in the hierarchy. At the bottom are the non-duija groups, the shudras and the panchamas.

3. Ghurye, G.S. Caste and Race in India (fifth edition) 1932, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.

- (iii) Restriction on feeding and social interaction as observed by Ghurye. This restriction has developed different food: Kachcha and Pakka.⁴
- (iv) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges where by high castes get polluted by the touch of the low castes depending upon the social distance in the hierarchy. In many cases, even the sight of a particular low caste pollutes the high caste person and hence restriction on society interaction due to this disability.
- (v) Restriction on choice of occupation would mean to carry on hereditary occupations. According to Abbe Dubois⁵, caste assigns to each individual his own profession or calling and handing down of this occupation from generation to generation. This makes it impossible for any person or his descendent to change the occupational position.
- (vi) Restriction on marriages where by intercaste marriages are forbidden. Each caste and subcaste is

4. Note:- The Kachcha is the food which is cooked in water and Pakka food is cooked in ghee or edible oils.

5. Dubois, Abee. Hindu Hierarchicus: The caste system and its implications (trans) by Mark Sainbury, 1906 P 29, Vikas Publications, New Delhi.

endogamous. This principle of strict endogamy is a dominant aspect of caste society. There are few exceptions to the general rule of marrying within one's own caste group because of the marrying within one's hypergamy.

Ghurye has talked about caste in early twentieth century but Anil Bhatt finds out that in the present situation caste is no more a highly hierarchical system. Modern profile of social stratification in India is that of increasing status incongruence relative openness, mobility between and competition among social status for relative equality. Now Ghurye's model is regarded as useful only in an abstract analytical sense. However, before starting the field of enquiry in Bihar, we may have first a schematic look at various studies and approaches to caste and class relationship.

The most studies are centered around the two major dimensions of Indian society. The phenomenon of caste has been approached from mainly two perspectives: one view is that caste system as a unique aspect of Indian society should be analysed in terms of Hindu tradition (Dumont, Leach, Peacock). Dumont's view that the better way to look at the Indian caste system is to examine the Indian tradi-

tion first. The other view emphasis on the study of caste from the perspective of culture or Indian civilization. It enables us to analyse caste system in the cross-cultural perspective (Bailey, Barth, Berreman). Dumont (1968) observes that this view hinders the analysis of the fundamental aspects of the Indian caste system. Sinha (1968) is of the opinion that a deeper understanding and analysis can be gained by combining these two approaches. He says, "I would consider it as worthwhile to make a comparative study of social structure of interethnic stratification as it could be to make a cross-cultural study of the concept of intergroup pollution". However, these two types of approaches, i.e. cultural and structural could be formulated as cultural universalistic, cultural particularistic, structural universalistic and structural particularistic (Singh, 1974). Leach (1960) has emphasised the structural particularistic view. According to him caste is to be defined in terms of system of Indian social organisation both in past and in present contexts and one should restrict caste as an Indian phenomenon only. In the structural universalistic approach Indian caste is viewed as a particular case of general phenomenon of a closed form of social stratification. This view of cultural universalistic

group is that caste is a cultural phenomenon based on ideology or value system, a system of hierarchy forming the basis of ranking among the people and thus culture based relationship, which is similar to caste relationship, is common among the traditional societies. Here status and honour are the basis of inequality. And caste, in India is a special form of the general system of the status based relationship. Ghurey (1957) emphasis on this approach. The cultural particularistic approach of caste is expressed in Dumont's (1972) work. The structural particularistic approach to the study of caste is most prominent in stratification studies in India.

Caste has been viewed as institutionalised form of inequality with hierarchical stratified hereditary groups for marriage, division of labour, enforcement of cultural norms and values by certain bodies and performance of rituals based on concept of purity and pollution. Bougle (1958) and Dumont (1961) emphasis on the binary opposition and mutual repulsions as the principal features of caste system in terms of "pure" and "impure" - which create several divisions in a caste society. This view of caste has been opposed by Sinha (1968), because "pure" and "impure" concept underlie the hierarchy of occupation and corporate caste

status, so "mutual repulsion" cannot be the primary principle in social interaction among the caste groups. He says that the reality lies in the fact that the jati groups within a caste system are committed to the maintenance of internal boundaries in the caste system as well as to organic intercaste solidarity. Dumont's notions of "system" and "structure are, as he mentions, "the caste system is above all a system of ideas and values, a formula, comprehensible, rational system, a system in the intellectual sense of the term ... our first task is to grasp this intellectual system, this ideology."⁶ The jajmani system is based on ritual values rather than on economic logic and caste hierarchy is based on the concept of "pure" and "impure".

Kroeber (1930) says that caste is an extreme form of class and it is a system of social stratification which is rigid hierarchical system based on birth ascription and where no individual mobility is permitted. According to Hutton (1969) central foci of caste system lie in the Socio-religious and ritual aspects of the Hindu society. Hocart (1965) offers a definition that "casts are merely families

6. Dumont, L. "caste: A phenomenon of social structure or an aspect of Indian culture?" in caste and Race, comparative approaches, Reuck, Ade and Knight, J (eds), 1968 p.35 Churchill Ltd. London.

to whom various offices in the rituals are assigned by heredity." Srinivas (1965) says that "purity" and "impurity" principles are the main basis of intercaste relation. One important feature is that there is religious or ritual inequality of caste. The inequality among the members of society which is an essential feature of the caste society is the religious or ritual inequality. At the same time all caste groups constitute a single religious community as Hindu. In some caste studies emphasis has been given on the social solidarity of village life and on power and conflict as well (Srinivas 1955). Orenstein(1965) show the social solidarity of the village life, and demonstrate the relationship between it and the potentially centrifugal factors of caste, conflict and power. He writes that "pollution" produces alienation and dehumanisation because it creates large differences in caste ranks. S.C. Dube's (1967) view is that division of labour among the caste groups is required not only for agricultural activities, but also for soci-religious life. No caste alone is self-sufficient. Inter-personal and intercaste relations are governed by established usages and social ethics. Marriot's (1965) opinion is that caste ranking is a part of social structure. His concept of elaboration of caste ranking

reflects that differences in the degree of elaboration of caste ranking in various regions in India and Pakistan may affect by the difference in certain other gross dimension of community structure.

The problem of change in the caste relation in India is greatly complex. There are two types of hypothetical conception regarding it, which are (a) "mode of production hypothesis" and (b) caste resilience and adaptation hypothesis." The mode of production hypothesis refers to the transformation of caste society into class society under the impact of new economic forces like industrialisation, urbanisation etc. (Davis 1951). Desai (1969), a Marxist sociologist, says that caste system is a social manifestation of mode of production and ownership of property based on agrarian-feudal complex. So change in the economic structure may bring about a direct blow to other caste characteristics. Though, in these types of social stratification studies powerful theoretical base is present, there is a imitation in objective analysis of stratification due to the lack of empirical studies (Y.Singh, 1974). On the other hand, Srinivas (1968) assumes that nature of caste has undergone considerable changes to adapt itself in the new environment but caste characteristics have not changed. Beteille (1964)

also supports srinivas's view. But other sociologists assume that caste is gradually losing its original character and possessing class like feature (Bailey 1963).

We find from all above studies on caste system is caste as an aspect of social relationship has got the principal emphasis and the ritual aspect is considered as the basis of ranking. This indicates that caste is only ranked vertical and horizontal mobility of the caste groups is impossible. However, there are a very few studies where both these aspects have been dealt with proper emphasis. Most of the studies on caste are holistic in nature and these are inspired by the rigour of empiricism. The authors of these studies have ignored the dysfunctional aspect of the village system and particularly the role of feudalism and more specifically land tenure systems on the village people.

There is another approach to study the caste system is approaches, to class relationship. There are a few studies where caste as well as other dimension of stratification such as economic position, styles of life, educational, occupational and political statuses etc. have been considered (Beteille, 1969). Beteille (1969) observes the dynamic nature of the rural stratifications system in Sripuram which, according to him has acquired much more complex

nature. He says that the caste, class and power, which are characteristics of stratification system of traditional rural society in a cumulative fashion, have, now-a-days, dispersed among the different groups in a non-cumulative manner. The change from cumulative to dispersed inequalities is the important feature of rural social stratification of the present day. His study explains that hierarchy of caste, class and power are independently noticeable in rural society. Now-a-days higher caste group may not have higher rank in class and power hierarchies. Where as the intermediate caste have improved their economic position and achieved higher power position, the lower caste still remain in the lower economic and power position. Our emphasis is also on caste, class and power dimensions of rural stratification of new cumulative inequalities from the traditional inequalities. Beteille's study has not analysed this aspect of the social mobility.

Bailley's (1972) study in Orissa reflects that the caste which was superior as a land owning group was politically dominant and enjoyed high ritual status. In the past there was a considerable degree of coincidence between economic, political and ritual ranks of caste. Now land is a marketable commodity and is going to the hands of different

caste groups and the traditional landowning class has considerably lost its economic power. Now-a-days structure of the caste hierarchy is rapidly changing and the landownership does not go together with the caste hierarchy, and there are cleavages between caste and class, caste and power and class and power.

On the basis of his study in Rajasthan villages K.L. Sharma (1974) finds some changes between caste and class, caste and power, and power and class. Though wealth is a factor for determining higher status, it alone is not sufficient for gaining higher status. He says that the ex-zamindars who have lost their land have gone down in status hierarchy and the ex-tenant peasants who have accumulated considerable amount of land, since the time of the abolition of the zamindari system, have raised their status. In rural areas the neo-rich peasantry is emerging as bourgeoisie. Some of the ex-zamindars have lost their former class status and come down in lower class position almost to the extent of what he calls the status of "proletariat". But the banias who are richer than the Rajputs and Brahmins could not secure equivalent power and prestige.

According to him there is close association between these changes and the traditionally higher castes and

classes. The higher caste and class people are in more privileged position to achieve higher education, power and economic status due to their already secured high position; and the lower caste and class people are not able to achieve higher status so ascription and achievement interplay in status determination and block the way of mobility.

The above discussion reveals that in most of studies principal focus is only on the caste and a very few studies go beyond caste to analyse the phenomena of class and power. The studies on class are also mainly confined to the level of attributional ranking. As a result most of the studies on caste and class have failed to generate wide ranging hypothesis. In these studies multidimensional approach has also not been applied properly. A proper application of the pluralistic approach to social ranking on the basis of caste, class and power can give deeper understanding of both vertical and horizontal cleavages between caste, class and power. The basic assumption here is that status and power are also important and not wholly determined by economic factor; and class, status and power closely interdependent and none of them can be fully explained without the others. Here some might be argued that Indian caste hierarchy is basically built around the opposition of "purity" and

"pollution" (Dumont, 1972). But it is not true, because the existence of economic and political distinction cannot be ignored.

Due to impact of the various modernisation process the harmonic nature of society has been breaking down. Beteille says "In this context a harmonic social system would be one in which there is consistency between the existential order and the normative order; inequalities not only exist in fact but are also accepted as legitimate."⁷ At present changes in the traditional economy have brought about changes in the basic structure of society. Villagers are now engaged in different types of non-traditional occupations. The economy of the society is directly connected with the wider economy of the country, even with the world economy. Participation of villagers in the wider political sphere through village panchayat, state assembly and parliament has created "disharmonic and incongruent structures and relations.

In agrarian society class categories may be of following types: landlord, tenant, agricultural labourer, etc. This class system in many cases overlaps to a considerable extent with the caste system and sometimes it cut across the

7. Beteille, A. Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, 1974, p.196, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

caste system in many points. Power is difficult to define and it does not have any well defined boundaries, and it is almost fluid in nature in the rural society. This distribution of power also creates hierarchy in the village society. This hierarchy is also based on status position in respect of high and low. In traditional society distribution of power and economy were subsumed under caste, but both class and power now-a-days are more or less autonomous in character and independent of caste. Now, the economic classes and power status are seen to be existed side by side with ritual status.

The word 'Bihar' has originated from word 'vihara' which means a Buddhist monastery. Bihar is surrounded on the North by Nepal, on the South of Orissa, on the East by West Bengal and on the West by Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Most striking geographical feature of Bihar is the sharp division between its north and south. The northern portion is almost entirely a plain while large areas of the southern Bihar are hilly and covered with thick forests.

The total area of Bihar is 1,73,876 sq. Km. and according to 1991 census the total population is 86,338,853. In population, it is the second largest State in India. At the same time Bihar is one of the poorest and the least de-

veloped States. It is the richest state in India in terms of mineral resources.

The social groups in Bihar can be broadly divided into six categories. The upper castes or the twice born, constitute 12.7 per cent of total population of State. The Brahmins, Bhumihar, Rajputs and Kayasthas belong to this first category. There is multistandard dominance of upper castes. The second major social group is known as backward castes, who constitute half the population (48.9) of the State. This category can be divided (a) upper backwards and (b) lower backwards. The upper backwards make up 18.7 per cent and the lower backward constitute 30.2 per cent of the population. The Bania traditionally the followers of trading and merchandise occupations, the cultivating casts like Yadavas, Kurmis and Koeris belong to the upper backward castes. The next of the backward category do mainly some specific occupations. They are artisan of different types. The scheduled castes categorises consist of 14.5 per cent of population. The scheduled Tribes account for 8.9 per cent of population. The muslims account for 12.2 percent and the remaining 2.8 percent are made up by mostly Bengalies and others. (See Table I) Chapter 3

Caste has played a significant role in the politics of Bihar. "However, as the base for political functions in intra party conflict of the congress party" observes the Director of a Survey Research Unit," Caste came to be widely recognised only after adult-franchise became a living reality for the mass of the people." ⁸ Consequently, caste-consciousness, like politics itself, has now percolated to every important aspect of group life in this state, especially due to caste based electoral politics and reservation in jobs.

The proposed analysis of the changing patterns of caste relationship in Bihar is based in verification of the following hypothesis:-

(a) The backward castes and the scheduled castes have gradually become aware of the rights granted to them in the democratically ruled country. They are becoming conscious of their social, economic and political deprivations.

(b) The political leadership and the ruling leadership have remained so far only in the hands of the upper caste to some extent intermediary caste or changed.

8. Prasad, R.C. Political Transition in Bihar, p.107. (Magadh University : Survey Research Unit, New Delhi).

(c) They have learnt to demand equal opportunities for their uplift and welfare which the conservative and dominant section among Hindu have been refusing to heed.

(d) After abolishing the zamindari system and with modernisation and growth of democratic institutions in the state neo-class in other sense neo-twice born caste has emerged. They are facing the adjustment problem in stereotype caste based Indian society. The present study aims to analyse the changing patterns of caste relationship in Bihar in context of social, economic and political domain. Our approach to study patterns of relationship would be different from others at least in the following way:-

(i) Social, economic and political aspect of caste would be studied independent of each other as parts of overall caste relationship in Bihar. The change in these aspects of Caste relationship would be analysed individually and independly of each other.

(ii) Analysis of change in caste system in terms of relationship between two or more variables would be made.

(iii) Overall system of caste relation may be analysed on the basis of the analysis made at the above two level.

Method of Study

We would state at the very outset that the data for this study were gathered from the secondary sources - and that no field work was undertaken. Hence, the present study is based mainly on the books, articles, published in academic and general periodicals, the newspapers reports etc. These sources include primarily census reports, historical studies and documents, national sample survey reports and anthropological and sociological studies. As the information used here is entirely based on the published materials, the analysis has been handicapped partly due to its inadequacy and inaccuracy. Due to the lack of sufficient materials the present analysis is tentative. However, the proposed hypothesis will be thoroughly examined.

CHAPTER - II

TRADITIONAL PATTERNS OF CASTE RELATIONSHIP

Caste is the unique 'Hindu' contribution, to be more precise, Brahminical contribution to the world of social stratification. Some of the most outstanding studies on social stratification in India are centred around the system of caste. It is such a social dimension that it shaped the whole framework of Indian society, but at the same time it created a large mass of people considered as Subhumans.¹ The characteristic feature of this was social inequality built into the system which governed the intergroup behavioural patterns. This inequality was reinforced by religious sanction. In this chapter an attempt has been made to discuss the relationship between varna and caste on one hand and a special emphasis on Socio-economic, political and cultural sphere on the other.

The varna model has produced a wrong and distorted image of caste. It is necessary for a student of sociology to free himself from the hold of the varna model if he wishes to understand caste system.² Castes or Jatis are

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1. Stephen Fuchs, *At the Bottom of Indian Society: The Harijan and the other low castes*; 1981, p.3., Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi.
 2. Srinivas, M.M.: "Varna and Caste" in Dipankar Gupta (ed.) *Social Stratification*, 1992, pp.28-34, Oxford University Press, Delhi.



endogamous groups. Varnas are categories and they refer to an all India frame of division of the Hindu society. Literally the word 'varna' means colour, originally referred to the distinction between the Arya and Dasa. Varna term is often confused with caste or Tati, though it is far from having the same meaning. The varna seems to have been originally a social order into which Rigvedic society was divided; that is, the three categories of twice-born, Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya and fourthly the Sudra. The 'twice-born' castes (dwij) are so called on account of the imitation ceremony (Upanayana) at which they are ceremonially reborn and assume the sacred thread, a ceremony not permitted to Sudras.

At the time of the Rigvedic invasion the four varnas were held to represent a four fold division of society into classes - Brahman who acted as priests, Kshatriyas or Rajanyas who were rulers, nobles and fighters, Vaishyas the people generally, ordinary householders so to speak and Sudras, the servile classes. The term Sudra does not even occur in the early parts of the Rigveda i.e. the early vedic period.

The varna are often claimed not only to be of the nature of castes but upto a point to be castes - Brahman and

Kashtriya at any rate are terms which seem at first sight to be still in use as labels associated with particular castes, while the term Vaishya has come back into use of recent years, generally with some qualifying adjective and associated with some particular caste group. As a matter of fact none of the four terms for varna now represents anything but groups of castes.

The varna scheme at best refers not to its real effective units, but only to the broad categories of society varna is to some extent fluid. In it's earlier history there seem to have been Brahmans by work as well as Brahmans by birth. The whole of the Kshatriya varna is claimed by Brahmans to have been extirpated by Prasurama,³ but if so it has been replaced by manufactured Khatriya and in any case Kshatriya rank is claimed by many who is title is one of function or of creation rather than of inheritance. Numbers of Sudra castes have taken to wearing the insigma of the twice-born and some of them gain acceptance after a time, as doing so legitimately. Romila Thapar printed out that the distinction between varna and Jati is that varna

3. Dowson, J.A.: Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religious Geography, History and Literature, 4th edition of 1903, p.230.

represents "the theory of structure whereas Jati relationships represent the actual way in which society functioned and this word is better translated as caste." VArna became the ritual rank whereas jati was the actual status so that its order in the hierarchy could be easily assigned.⁴ In short varna, like caste, is a somewhat interminate expression and persons belonging to one varna in one locality may be otherwise vaguer than caste, like which it is a variable social unit.

To Each varna a proper duty is assigned to prevent social dissolution. It is believed that dharma for every individual is determined by his origin, because the nature of every person is originally determined. The dharma wanted order in the society. If people who are meant for servitude be allowed to give it up, then there would be no servant left, and who then would perform their functions? Sudras will begin to rule, who are unfit to rule and this social order would be completely destroyed. It is believed that caste and varna are natural things associated invariably with specific qualities. A Sudras cannot be of noble quality; servitude his nature. If there be any doubt regarding

4. Thapar, Romila: The Past and Prejudices, 1975, p.27, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi.

the varna of any individual its could at once be revealed by his nature or by actions which are due to his nature.

Dharma based on the theory of Karma, three gunas and the transmigration of soul. All these three theories, as they applied them justified the entire system. By 'Karma' (Action) are caused the various conditions of men, the highest, the middling, and the lowest. In consequence of many sinful acts committed by one's body, voice or mind that individual in the next birth will become a bird, or a beast, or a low caste person respectively. There are three gunas (qualities) predominate the body distinguished by quality. The study of vedas, austerity and knowledge and purity etc, are marks of the quality of activity. Cruelty, covetousness, evil of life etc. are mark of dark quality.

Through each of these qualities man obtains various transmigrations. It is preponderance of various qualities that determines the birth of man as a Brahmana or a Sudra. Those who commit sins go into inferior existences or wombs; and those who lead an ideal life obtain cessation of birth and death.

There is tradition only found in southern India by which certain castes are regarded as castes of the Right Hand and others as castes of the Left Hand. All castes are

not concerned in this dual division. Brahmans, for instance, are spoken of as Mahajanam (of great birth) and are often regarded as belonging to neither division. There are generally said to be eighteen castes of the Right Hand and nine of the Left Hand. Right Hand castes include at any rate the following: Baliya, Banajiga and Komati (trading castes) Vaniyan (who yoke one bullock only), Challiyan and Seriyan (weaving castes), Janeppan (hemp dressed), Kusavan (Potters), Melakkaran (musicians), Shanan (toddy drawers) Ambattan (barbers), Vannan (washermen), Idaiyan (shepherds), Vellala, Paraiyan, Mala, Hoelya (cultivating castes), Kurara, Odde, Irula, Vedan and Vettuvan (mostly labourers). The principal castes of the Left Hand are the following: Berri-chetti, Vaniyan (who yoke two bullocks to their oil press), Devanga (weavers), Golla (cowherds), Panchala (give artisan castes carpenters, masons, goldsmiths, coppersmiths and blacksmiths), Chakkiliyan (leather worker), Bedar, Palli and Pallan (cultivator and solder castes). Right or Left Hand-ness of castes differs apparently to some extent with locality. For instance - The Kaikolans, a weaver caste associated with Devanga, belong to the Left Hand but the devadasis (dancing girls) and nattuvass (teachers of dancing

girls); drawn from the Kaikolan caste, belong to the Right Hand.

Secondly, the aspect of relationship of caste as form of taboo on drink and food will be discussed. The taboo on food and water as between caste and caste is subjected to many gradations and variations. In Northern India there are a number of Sudra castes from which men of higher caste can take water, whereas in southern and western India the higher caste at any rate will as a rule only take water from men of their own caste or a caste higher than their own. Ganga water, however, can be taken apparently even from untouchables on account of its sacred character which is beyond pollution. No one in practice drinks out of a vessel belonging to another caste though theoretically a man can drink from one that has been used only by a higher caste than his own. In northern India a Brahman will take water poured into his 'lota' (drinking vessel) by men of several Sudras castes-regarded as clean, e.g. Barhi (a carpenter caste, claiming an origin from the god viswakarma the Architect of the universe), Nai (the barber caste, the services of which are important in much Hindu ritual), Bharburya (grain parchers), Halwai (confectioners), Kahar (well sinkers and growers of water-nuts). The southern Brahmins are

particularly, the water distributors at railway stations, so that anyone can accept water poured out by the. Taboos vary from one region to another. For instance the Gola (cowherd) caste. In Bihar Brahmans can take water from them but not in Bengal, or at any rate in parts of Bengal. No one can take water from untouchables.

Restriction in regard to eating are generally speaking more severe than those which govern drinking. It do not depends as in that case, on who supplies the food but rather on who cooks it. The cooking is very important and a strangers shadow or even the glance of man of low caste,⁵ falling on the cooking pot may necessitate throwing away the contents. Members of the some exogamous unit can, of course, share each other's food. So, as a rule the members of different exogamous groups who can intermarry, for a man must be able to eat food cooked by his own household. E.A.H. Blunt speaks that this commensality is a result of intermarriage and that until such intermarriage had taken place the two groups could not eat each other's food.⁶ A Kahar employed by a superior caste-Brahman, Rajput, Kayastha

5. Thurston, E. Omens and Superstitions of Southern India 1912, p.109, Madras.

6. Blunt, E.A.H. The caste system of Northern India, 1969, p.109, S. Chand and Company, New Delhi.

etc. may eat their leavings so long as he himself is not married,⁷ after marriage he may not do so. Some castes will not take food from their own daughters once these daughter are married, even to men of their own caste.⁸ Each man makes off his own cooking place, makes his own mud over and cooks apart from his fellows. He may cook for others of his own caste or subcaste also, but so particular are most castes that a number of sarcastic proverbs attach to their scruples - 'Thirteen Rajputs, Thirteen cooking place', Three Tirhut Brahmans and Thirteen cooking place, quoted by O'Malley. He (Brahman) must not touch an earthen vessel that has contained water, nor a piece of cotton touched by anyone in a state of ritual impurity unless it has been decontaminated by dipping in ghi (liquid butter), nor leather, nor bone, nor paper unless it has Hindu characters on it. He must not read a printed book while eating, nor a manuscript book unless bound with silk and pasted with pounded tamarind seed paste. It is typical of the sort of restrictions that accompany cooking and eating, for the eating of grain,

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7. Risley, H.H. Tribes and Castes of Bengal - Ethnographic Glossary, 1891, p.374, Calcutta.
 8. Russell, R.V. and Lal, H. The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, 1916, p.179.

cooked with water is of the nature of sacrament used, it is passed from hand to hand (and thus from mouth to mouth) in turn, a practice at least as intimate as drinking or eating from the same dish. Smoking in fact, is normally spoken of as 'drinking tobacco'. Generally speaking, however, smoking comes into the same category as taking water or kachcha food, and the usual expression for suspending a man's caste privilege is 'hugqa pani band karna', to deny tobacco-pipe and water which prevents a man from associating with his caste fellows.

The fundamental conception reduced to a single true principle i.e. the opposition of the pure and impure. This opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlines separation because the pure and impure must be kept separate and underlines the division of labour because pure and impure occupation must like wise be kept separate. The whole is founded on the necessary and hierarchical co-existence of the opposition.⁹ There are restrictions on the material of which eating and drinking vessels are made earthenware, for instance, is

9. Luis Dumont: "Hierarchy, states and power: the caste system and its implications", in Dipankar Gupta (ed.) Social Stratification, 1992, pp.471-491, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

tabooed by all higher castes, the reason usually given being that it can not be made really clean as well as on the use of certain animals for food. The only castes that will eat beef are untouchables like the Chamar (leather worker) or some of the scavenging castes like the dom. Vegetarian castes are more pure than non-vegetarian. Mutton, goat and game whether ground or winged is generally eaten freely, the superior Rajput eating the wild pig as many other castes do. As regards fish custom varies greatly more perhaps by locality than by social position. Thus most respectable castes eat fish in Bengal. A Marwari baniya (traders) has been heard to remark that to carry fish for food was as bad as carrying snakes.

Purification is strictly speaking necessary as a result of contact with certain low castes whose traditional occupation whether actually followed or not or whose mode of life places from them outside the pale of Hindu society. Such castes those commonly spoken of as untouchables or out-castes. Thus Chamars (the work in cowhide), Dhobi (they wash dirty, particular menstruously defiled clothes), Dom (they remove corpses) sweeper castes and many others who are impure because they eat beef or the filth of the domestic pig, all pollute a Brahman or upper castes by contact. In

southern India this principle of untouchability has been carried a good deal further in the observance of what is known as 'distant pollution' or 'contact pollution'.

Since indirect contact and even sight can be polluting, it is clear that the use of the same wells by caste and outcaste would give trouble, though A.K. Forbes mentions wells from which outcastes drew water on one side and Brahmans on the other side.

The periods of death pollution are generally spoken of as being varied according to varna. The Brahman must observe mourning for ten days, the Kshatriya for twelve, the Vaishya for fifteen days and the Sudra for a full month.

Different materials are prescribed for the sacred thread for different varna: that of the Brahman is nowadays usually of cotton, of the Kshatriya hemp, the material used for bausstring and of the Vaishya wool. In the southern India the wearing of clothes above the waist was formerly a privilege of the twice-born castes, while the Sudra castes themselves until quite recently insisted that it was forbidden to the exterior or untouchable castes. The same prohibition extended to the use of gold or even silver ornaments, of umbrellas and even of shoes. Further cases in north have occurred of chamars, for instances, being beaten up for

dressing like Rajputs or for weaving gold ornaments in a similar ways.¹⁰

In the keeping with these restrictions as to dress and ornament are the restrictions of language. Upper caste people address to the lower caste very roughly. Their children also not use a respected word to the lower caste people.

Among the Hindu caste there is the purification ceremony which involves drinking the Panchgavya that is, the five product of the cow milk, clarified butter, curds, urine and dung all mixed together, than which no remedy is more efficacious for purifying the body from defilement. Cow's urine is likewise a potent cleanser of external defilement. It was common enough for many strict Hindus to crop the sea and it is probable that the panchgavya was reduced to purely ceremonial minimum for those who have to consume it on return to India.

There is restriction on occupations in connection with taboo infections. These are to be generally associated rather with the Hindu creed in general than with the caste system specially since certain occupations are unclean eg.

10. Hutton, J.H.: Report on the Census of India, 1931,1933, pp.485-486, Delhi.

scavenging or flaying cattle, the persons following these occupations became untouchable and anyone adopting them, unless in company with his caste, must necessarily be out-casted to preserve the whole caste from pollution.

Thirdly caste plays a significant role in the economic structure in the society. The pattern of the economic organization of Indian society is intimately intertwined with caste system and occupation in Indian villages are functionally interdependent. The division of labour and specialization of skills by various caste groups characterise the traditional economy of village India. Whether all its member practise it or not, each caste is linked to some occupation. There are some occupations which could not be taken over by persons other than those belonging to a particular caste without attend changes in the status of individual or the group adopting it. Alongside these caste occupations there are what may be called "open occupation" both traditional and new which may be pursued by anyone irrespective of caste. There is also an intermediate category of occupations which, on the one hand, are not confined to a single caste, and on the other, are open to only a limited number of castes belonging to a particular stratum of occupational and ritual hierarchy.

Harper very rightly states that 'some castes are more occupationally specialised, other more occupationally generalised. In addition, there is a nebulous group of occupations which are open to nearly all castes and may be undertaken in conjunctions with or in lieu of, the designated caste occupations.¹¹

Thus, the traditional occupational matrix of the villages are built up of three major types of occupations:

- (a) Closed
- (B) Limitedly and
- (c) Open

All such occupations can be divided broadly into the following categories and sub-categories.

- i) Agricultural
 - (a) Owners of land
 - (b) Owners and tillers
 - (c) Agricultural labour

- ii) Non-agricultural.lm11

(a) Related to the production of articles required in agricultural pursuits (eg. the plough, the cant, the leacher bucket and other implements).

11. Harper, E.B.: "Two System of Economic Exchange in Village India". American Anthropologist, vol.61, no.5, Part 1, 1959, p.760.

(b) Related to the production of articles required for domestic consumption.

(c) Domestic service.

(d) Priestly pursuits.

(e) Others

The agricultural group includes all those non-artisan and non-service rendering castes which traditionally and/or hereditary practise agriculture. However, the non-agricultural group should not be taken to mean a group which cannot take to agriculture under any circumstances; castes in this group offer certain specialised services for furnish specialised goods to the agriculturists, who in return compensate them with a part of their produce. In this category, four different types have been identified: (a) suppliers of producer's goods include castes who manufacture and repair tools, implements and other gadgets used in agriculture; (2) Those artisans who make articles for domestic use (this group include potters, tailors and smith); (3) Domestic workers including members of all castes which are assigned some special tasks to perform in the houses of their patrons (these services may be required only on special occasions); and (4) The priests and ascetics who regularly or occasionally pay visits to their clients for alms

and for other priestly functions. It may be emphasised here that these distinctions of various types are only analytical. In concrete terms, one caste may supply both the producer's and consumer's good and even perform domestic services. This is especially true in the caste of those castes which have more than one traditional occupations.

Occupational specialization accounts for the interdependence of castes. As no village can have a full complement of all specialist castes, these relationships also have an inter village dimension. The relationship of artisan castes, service rendering castes and priestly with agricultural castes is popularly described as the Jajmani system. It is William Wiser who first coined the term "Jajmani system using the Hindi word to describe the patron as "Jajman". Several studies have been undertaken all over India to examine the relationships between patrons and clients or "Jajman" and "Kamin".¹² Oscar Lewis maintains that "this dependence organized along hierarchical line is institutionalized in the traditional semifudal jajmani system of reciprocal obligations in economic and ceremonial

12. Orenstein, Henry: Exploitation or Function in the Southern Journal of Anthropology, 18, 302-315.

affairs among the various castes".¹³ As early as 1861, Maine first used the term "contract" and status relation "to indicate the assigned specialized occupations of Jati which covered preferred permitted and forbidden occupations. They involve" a range of relations along a scale from purely contractual, individual, impersonal temporary limited transaction at one end, to broadly supportive group-oriented long term, multiple bond at the other.¹⁴

The word 'jajman' means he who give the sacrifice, i.e. the person who employs a priest to carry out a sacrifice for him: but it is now extended to include a client of any kind. The jajmans of a Brahman priest are his parishioners, whose domestic rites at birth, initiation and marriage. It is his duty and right to superintend. Similarly Chamars, Doms, Dafalis, Bhat, Nai, Bhangis, Barhais and Lohars all have their jajmans or clientele, from whom they receive fixed dues in return for regular service. The Chamar's clients are those from whom he receive dead cattle, and to whom he supplies shoes and other articles of leather. The Dom's and Dafali's jajmanies are begging beats, the Dom has also the

13. Lewis, Oscar: Peasant Culture in India and Mexico, 1955, p.151.

14. Mandelbaum, David G.: Society in India 1972, p.161. University of California Press, Berkeley.

right to steal, the Dafali to exercise evil spirits, within his beat. The Nai has regular clients whom he shaves and for whom he acts as match maker. He also performing their minor surgical operations, such as drawing teeth and lancing boils. Barhais and Lohars make or mend the ploughs, and other implements of a fixed circle. Bhats are perambulating genealogists for their clients, visiting them every two or three years and bringing their family trees upto date. These Jajmanies are valuable sources of income, both heritable and transferable. They are strictly demarcated and the crime of poaching on a fellow caste man's jajmani is bitterly resented. It should be mentioned that in some castes the women have their own jajmani: the Dhanuk's and Chamar's wives are both hereditary midwives and the Nai's wife is the hereditary monthly nurse.

Their caste Panchayats are often extremely powerful bodies, dealing with such matters as methods of sale or manufacture, the level of prices and the limits of the level of prices, and the limits of the workman's clientele (Jajmani or birth). There is a circle of clients from whom the village artisan or menial receives fixed dues in return for regular service. The jajmani is undoubtedly a valuable asset and many a villager derives at least as much of his

income from this source as from his fields. The following instances shows the nature and extent of such fees. The Lohar and the Barhai, who between them make and repair all agricultural implements, receive from each of their clients at harvest time a head load of unthreshed corn; a head load is estimated to produce about 15 'seers' of shifted grain. After sugar cane pressing, they receive one seer of gur. Further on all ceremonial occasions, they receive presents. The Chamar in his capacity as farm servant receive the same remuneration as the Lohar or Barhi, plus a 'seer' of grain for every three mounds of corn that he and another five seers of grain as payment for threshing. Dead cattle, of course, also belong to him. The Nai, who besides serving his clients as a barber is often their messenger receive one paise for every shave or haircut in the case of children and two paise in the case of adult. His customary remuneration, payable at harvest, is six seers of grain. He also assists on ceremonial occasions as also does his wife and both receive presents.

These jajmanis as has already been mentioned, are both inheritable and transferable. The moneylender also work on a jajmani system. When the Sahukar, as he is called accepted a cultivators, as his client (assami) it becomes his

duty to give advances in money for any purpose. Whatever and also in any kind in which he deals.

The jajmans are the patron of those groups which require their services and/or good in agricultural pursuits and in socio-cultural activities. For these services, the payment is generally made in kind, occasionally in cash. Besides this, however, services are rendered and good supplied among artisan castes on a reciprocal basis. The underlying principles of the jajmani system had been aptly summarised by Harper.¹⁵

1. "Either some or all members of some or all castes are involved in the system", but the major emphasis is on the relationship of artisan and service castes to members of the landowning or farming castes.

2. "Jajmani alliances are between families not between castes, but the family alliances are heritable at the lineage level."

3. "Although the alliances are between families rather than castes, it is at the caste level that they are manipulated and enforced."

15. Harper, E.B.: op. cit., p.763.

4. "One of the enforcing mechanism of the system is the assumption that these specialised service cannot be performed by the group served." Further "certain occupations impinge upon concept of ritual purity."

5. Payment for goods and services received under the jajmani system generally is not in cash but in other goods and services, grain rent free land or other non-monetary benefits.

The caste hierarchy is essentially aristocratic. Every caste has its appointed rank and every individual's status in society is governed by the rank of the caste to which he belongs. That status cannot be raised. It can, however, be lowered, if any respect a man fail to obey the dictates of custom; and the higher the caste the greater the need for such observance. Some of the customs affecting social status have an important economic bearing.

a) A high caste woman must remain in seclusion. She can give no assistance in the fields.

b) Custom forbids a Brahman or a Rajput to handle the plough. The custom is said to be growing weaker, but is still generally prevalent. Its origin is uncertain. It appears to have no religious sanction; indeed, Manu in referring to the various means of livelihood open to a

Brahman, after first mentioning the priestly and military occupations, adds, if it be asked how he (the Brahman) must live should he be unable to get a subsistence by either of these employments, the answer is that he must subsist as a mercantile man, applying himself in person to tillage and attendance on cattle.

c) A high caste man who comes into physical contact with a member of an untouchable caste becomes impure and must at once wash both himself and his clothes.

The result of this taboo and of the taboo on holding the plough, is that the high caste man is apt to confine his energies to supervision. The economic result of all these customs taken together is, firstly, to increase the cost of cultivation for since neither the higher caste man himself nor his wife can take any active part in agricultural work, they are compelled to employ for more labour than lower castes. Whilst secondly, the high caste man is generally content to leave his cultivation to his servants and give it little personal attention, with the result that it is rarely as skillful or productive as low caste cultivation; where the Kurmi produces wheat, the Brahman produces barely and only second rate barely.

d) Finally, expenditure on various ceremonies is much higher amongst the high caste than the low. Not only has a Brahman or a Rajput to spend more lest he lose social standing, but he must observe all the twice born rites, whilst the man of lower caste can restrict himself only to the most important.

On the other hand, members of high castes usually possess certain privileges. Both Brahmans and Rajputs for instances usually enjoy a rental privilege. Again, they generally possess for more than their fair share of the larger holdings. The Brahman, moreover, by virtue of his Brahmanhood has a valuable subsidiary source of income in the shape of his priestly and caste dues; which include not only fees for services rendered but presents (usually of food) that are made either on ceremonial occasions or by way of a caste penance.

Fourthly, in the caste system a hierarchy of human groups was created with increasing power to those up in the pyramid i.e. Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra. In the past, landownership and high ritual status were the most important bases of power; numerical strength, though of some importance, did not play a very crucial role. The status was stratified to determine privileges in society, high

status with comfortable and respectable life, low status for manual work. In the caste system, society emphasis birth as the value for acquiring status. The areas of education and administration were kept reserved for the upper castes whereas manual and dirty work was assigned to lower castes. The lower castes were kept out of power so that they are compelled to concentrated on heavy manual work and the surpluses are siphoned off by power vested castes by keeping the remunerations depressed. Religious sanctions were also applied to ensure that some one will perform those task in society that are necessary for the functioning of society but are undesirable because of being manual, dangerous, dirty and monotoneous. Power, income and wealth were reserved for the uppercastes.

Caste system therefore is held together by power, concentrated in certain groups, more than by concerns "and is a device for the protection of privileged".¹⁶ The unique characteristics of caste system was that each member of society had a fixed status and therefore power and privilege according to the accident of birth. In this system every individual had ascriptive personality and there was nothing

16. Berreman, G.D.: Caste and Other Inequalities; 1979, p.112; Folklore Institute, Meerut.

for him to achieve on his own. Life chances of individuals were shadowed by the chance of the caste. The relations of dependence or dominance between individuals were the by product of relations between castes. A caste is dominant in a group of neighbouring villages and is also linked with the regional dominance. Such linkage also exists when the caste which is locally dominant is different from the caste which is regionally dominant.

Traditionally for each caste group there was a panchayat - literally a committee of five but not necessary five in practice who adjudicated on breaches of the rules of the caste. Some rules would be disregarded by every one but an eccentric few: others particularly those which lower the group in relations to others of similar status - meant the offender was excommunicated. His pipe and water are shut is a literal translation of the expression generally used in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. No one could smoke with him, take water from him or give him water or permit him to draw from their well. He could offence by complicated and protracted ceremonies, some of which would be extremely distasteful to anyone not a Hindu, and by the payment of fives to the Brotherhood and in the case of the higher caste fees to Brahmans as well. Incidentally in Northern India the word

used colloquially to describe the group in this context exactly 'brotherhood'.

Lastly, the caste system had been the absence of violence in maintaining the order of society. It does not mean that there was absence of coercive power, what it means is that cementing force of society was the conditioning of mind through the ideology of caste supported by the weight of power. There was a large number of violent clashes among caste groups but these were mostly for the sake of improving status of certain castes rather than abolishing the system. Different castes in society have been held together both by the agreement of rules and customs of caste and by the coercive power wielded by superior groups. The inferior groups conformed to their action due to the acceptance of Dharma. The Sudra was introduced to accept without protest the 'Sudra Dharma' and the Chandala lived his life according to his station. Dharma put the highest premium on the acceptance of one's station in life and the existing social order precluded any idea of rebellion.

So far we had discussed the issues such as caste and its definition, the relationship between caste and varna, the taboo on drink and food and economic important and implication of caste, with reference to jajmani system and

its impact on socio-cultural and political spheres of life, which centres around the traditional patterns of caste relationship. And now we shall focus on social stratification and agrarian relations, changing caste relation and structure of political dominances in general and Bihar in particular.

CHAPTER - III

CHANGING PATTERNS OF CASTE
RELATIONSHIP IN BIHAR

Bihar has 10.23 percent¹ of country's total population according to 1991 census. It represented at the same time own ideal and extreme case of multi-standard dominance by upper castes like Brahmins Bhumihar, Rajput & Kayastha. Although they have been numerically small groups as shown in table I. Their dominance is reflected in their ritual status, concentration of land rights, their position in the legitimate social hierarchy and the concentration of resources. They controlled the society for at least one thousand years. In the post independent period, with the implementation of provisions such as, universal suffrage, the reformist policy of the government on several issues including zamindari abolition brought drastic change in the dominance of the upper castes. Thereafter, there emerged a group of 'neo twice born' caste consisting of Yadas, kurmis and koeries. In this chapter an attempt has been made to study such changes in the socio-economic and political dimensions of caste composition of Bihar particularly during the post Independent period.

1. Census of India 1991; Series 5, Bihar p. 25.

TABLE I
CASTE COMPOSITION OF BIHAR

Caste Categories	Caste/group	% of total Population
I Upper castes	1. Brahmans	04.6
	2. Bhumiars	02.8
	3. Rajputs	04.1
	4. Kayasthas	01.2
	Total	12.7
II Backward Casts		
(a) Upper Backwards		
	1. Banias	00.6
	2. Yadavs	10.7
	3. Kurmis	03.5
	4. Koeris	04.0
	Total	18.8
(B) Lower Backwards		
	1. Barhis	01.0
	2. Dhanuk	01.8
	3. Hajjam	01.4
	4. Kaheer	01.7
	5. Kander	01.6
	6. Kumhar	01.3
	7. Lohar	01.3
	8. Mallah	01.5
	9. Tatwa	01.5
	10. Teli	02.5
	11. Other backward Castes	14.6
	Total	30.2
III	Muslims	12.2
IV	Scheduled Castes	14.5
V	Scheduled Tribes	08.9
VI	Bengali & Others	02.8
Grand Total		100.0

Source : Blair, W Harry : "Rising Kulaks and Backward Classes in Bihar" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XV No.2,; Jan. 2 1980, p. 65.

Bihar is one of those states where the upper castes, although numerically not large, have traditionally enjoyed ritual superiority and social prestige. The upper castes form only 12.7 per cent of the population of Bihar but their dominance in Bihar has been much greater than their number. Their limited numerical strength is compensated by their ritual status, social prestige and economic power. In ritual matters the Brahmins enjoy the first position followed by the Bhumihar, the Rajput and the Kayasthas. The Bhumihars and the Kayasthas, although low on scale of the ritual and status. They have a decisive role to play in the economic and political matters.

Historically, the centre of the old Brahmanical culture has been the maithili speaking region of Bihar. The socio-economic relations among various upper caste groups in the North Bihar were almost intact until the British rule. The north Bihar was nominally incorporated into several larger kingdoms or empires to impose the political suzerainty on the local rulers until the early sixteenth century. This produced 'an almost unbroken continuity in life and pattern of culture since times immemorial.'²

2. Bihar District Gazetteers, Darbhanga; 1964, p. 24.

The patter of social life was linked to succession of independent kingdoms centered around Dharbhanga in the maithili speaking region and the domination under a series of brahmin dynasties of maithili Brahmans. Table I shows that brahmans accounted for less than five percent of the total population of Bihar. Their numbers concentrated in the central Gangetic plain. However, the brahmans in Bihar were not enumerated from what had become Darbhanga district by the year 1930s.³

Historically, the maithil Brahmans owned the largest proportion of land in the Darbhanga region but they did not take up personal cultivation. Although many of them followed traditional occupations as priests, or sanskrit scholars under the patronage provided by pious brahman kings. Scholarship and genealogical purity constituted the standard of value for the maithili Brahmans who preserved the until modern times.⁴

The portion of Bihar lying south of the Ganges, by contrast had not been considered a 'Brahmanistic land' down

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3. Sengupta, Nirmal and Das, Arvind N. 'Agrarian change, Agrarian Tensions' Peasants moments and organization in Bihar, 1984; P. 15, A.N. Sinha Institute of Social studies, Patna.
 4. Brass, Paul R; Language, Religion and Politics in North India, 1974, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press; p. 57, 67.

to the time of Manu. Corresponding to the Mgahi-speaking area of pre 1973 Patna and Gaya districts, the region was subjugated by Rajput apparently were reluctant to accept Brahmanical notions of deference to Brahman priests in matter of worship and knowledge. Both Mahavira and Gautama Budha freely preached and taught in Magadha area. The imperial Gupta dynasty restored Magadhan supremacy and splendour between the fourth and seventh century A.D., but the Guptas began to shift court patronage from Buddhist monks to powerful spokesmen of neo Brahmanism. After Pataliputra was destroyed by repeated invasions at the end of the sixth century, 'Hinduism got the upper hand the association of the old Hindu religion (i.e. Brahmanism) and its various ideologies expressed in Puranas and smirtis.⁵ The caste flexibility and Brahmanical dominance in south Bihar differed to a great extent from North. The complete defeat of Buddhism after the Mohammandan invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji was decisive for the development of society in Bihar up to modern times. The Brahmanical ideology became the unifying set of values, ideas and practices across regions (with the exception of tribal areas). According to O'malley, who

5. Bihar District Gazetteers, Gaya, 1957, p. 14.

wrote at the turn of the century the brahmans, although they did not constitute the dominant economic class, were 'by far the most important caste owing to their hereditary priestly influence'.⁶

In South Bihar, the major land owners were babhans or Bhumihars, a community whose greatest numbers were concentrated in the old Magadha area. An important issue for the bhumihars and also for the well to do landholding rajputs was the claim, particularly of the bhumihars to the higher ritual status of Brahmans or Bhumihar Brahmans. The Bhumihar claimed to be Brahmans who had converted to Buddhism but later returned to Hinduism. The Bhumihar customarily wore the sacred thread but they were not learned in the sanskrit texts. They did not assume the priestly functions. Like the Rajputs they engaged local brahmans to perform religious rituals. The Rajputs often called the bhumihars as so called Brahmans who claimed rank higher than the Kshatriyas, the descendent of Aryan soldiers.

The Bhojpuri - speaking areas in western Bihar had no distinct history prior to British rule apart from the contiguous Bhojpuri speaking region in Uttar Pradesh. In Saran

6. O'Malley, L.S.S. Bengal District Gazetteers : Muzaffarpur, 1907, p. 40.

district Bhumihar were the dominant land holders and latter became the principal zamindars in the district. Very little is known about Champaran before the advent of the British, but during the period of Mughal rule, the whole of 'Sarkar' Champaran was in the possession of the Bettiah Raj.

The pervasiveness of the Brahmanical ideology, which had begun to penetrate even Chotanagpur by the early seventeenth century, was the constant cultural feature of the diverse regional configuration in Bihar. The Brahmans, Bhumihar and Rajputs had concentrated in different areas, north, south and west respectively. All of them were traditional rivals. They drew legitimacy for their dominant position from the twice-born status.

The Kayasthas, a small caste group whose origins are debated, were also accorded elite status, primarily because of their occupation as 'writers' or court scribes. They did not, however exercise power at the village level in the same degree as upper castes.

The census of 1901 attempted to fit different castes in the four varna described in the vedic 'varnashram' System.⁷

7. Sengupta, Nirmal. "Caste as an agrarian phenomenon in twentieth century Bihar", in Arvind Das and V. Nilakant, (eds), Agrarian Relation in India, 1979; p. 87, Manohar, New Delhi.

Brahmins were identifiable and the Rajput indicating martial origins was identifiable as the Kshatriya varna. The hundreds of other castes were lumped together as vaishya or shudra varnas in 1901 census. The Bhumihars and kayasthas were recorded as vaishyas making them socially lower than the Rajput and the Brahmin. They were mentioned as equal in status with the relating poor and downtrodden castes like the kurmis, yadavas, mallahs, Hajjam and Kahars.

Protests were registered immediately. The kayasthas and Bhumihars, led by the richest and most powerful men amongst themselves, began agitating for the upliftment of their caste status.⁸ The drive for the removal of lower status was not confined merely to petitioning the Government. Socially well-established Kayasthas and Bhumihars like Dr. Sachidanand Sinha and Sir Ganesh Dutt Singh who also suffered from the general lowering of the ranks of their own castes. Economically dominant kayasthas and Bhumihars were more vocal in demanding higher social or caste rank. However, they were not exceptions. The kurmis and yadavas, particularly the richer among them also did not want to be considered as equals with the Hajjams or the

8. Census of India : Bihar and Orissa Vol. VII, Part I, 1931.

Kahars. Several other castes demanded higher ranks. It was noted in the 1931 census that :

"The formation of caste sabhas to advance the social status of the lower castes is not a new phenomenon, but it has become very much more common during the last decade. IN most cases the procedures are more or less uniform. A new name is selected for the caste its members are to adopt the sacred thread and various resolutions are passed dealing with such questions as food and drinking, the abandonment of degrading occupations, raising the age of marriage."⁹

The caste movement had helped in spread of education and such other reforms as postponement of the age of marriage. At the same time they reestablished the old values like wearing the sacred thread. Many Bhumihars in their eagerness to receive the uppercase status, had begun practising the Brahminical taboo of 'not touching the plugh' a taboo whose root lay in dislike for manual labour. There were two most important leaders of the caste movement amongst the Bhumihar. Sir Ganeshdutt Singh, whose main concern was to protect the interest of the elite among his castemen ended his life as one of the chief spokesmen of the

9. Ibid.

landlord's interests in the Bihar provincial council. Another leader was Swami Sahajanand whose was concerned about the depressed social status of Bhumihars. This developed into a concern for the depressed people in general which led him to become the undisputed champion for the cause of the peasantry struggling to be freed from the oppressive zamindari system.

The second social group in Bihar was that of backward castes (lower and upper) were considered as intermediary castes between the uppercastes and the scheduled castes. There are castes in Bihar which belong to the lower and upper backward castes respectively 30.2 percent and 18.7 percent as shown in table.1. Backward castes consist of tenants and agricultural labourers. Two thirds of the tenants in Bihar came from the upper backward castes, mainly yadavas, kurmis and koeries. Previously the zamindari tenant economic relation was in accordance with the upper caste-upper backward caste social relations. Yadavas known as Goalas and Ahirs were the most popular caste in Bihar. They were basically "cultivators of all kinds" and also "herdsman and milkman".¹⁰ Kurmis and koeries were also

10. Census of India; Bihar and Orissa; Vol. VI, 1921, p. 294.

"great cultivating castes of Bihar".¹¹ Each of these, being one of the ten most popular castes, had a sizable strength. Koeries were particular known for being "the best tenants", and "market gardeners of Bihar".

With the emergence of the social reform movement there were certain discontinuities in the age old customs and traditions. This change produced a sharp breakaway from old practices that were obligatory on the part of the upper backward castes. In the most areas of the Gangetic Bihar, social reform movement occurred among the yadavas and kurn is such as wearing the sacred threads, adopting upper caste titles and stopping the practice of customary 'Pranams' and other courtesies to the upper castes. Early twenties yadava movement had given the instructions to their community to educate the children, to use the sacred thread, to stop early marriage, to keep unity among themselves, to herd cows, to collect and 'Anna' (six paises) per 'bigha' from all the yadava cultivators and utilise the fund towards the education of their children, to open shops of their own, not to do 'begari' for zamindar, to do all requirements, such as sharings, washing clothes, serving as midwives etc., not to

11. Census of India: Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Sikkim; Vol. V, Part I 1911, p. 512.

commit theft and not to quarrel with each other as far as possible They also decided to discontinue the sale of chipris (cowdung cake), milk, curds etc. except at the bazar rates to their landlords and forbade their women-folk to hawk their goods from door to door as was the custom.

The upper castes then started a counter and sought the cooperation of other high castes on the plea that yadavas had taken to wearing the sacred thread. The reprisals against the yadavas by the upper castes (landlords) were (1) to deprive them of the 'Khudkastland' and to turn them out of their houses on the ground that the houses belonged to upper castes, (2) refusal to allow their cattle to use the ordinary grazing grounds and to take water at the ordinary drinking tanks, (3) complete social boycott, the refusal by own priest (4) chamars refuse to bury dead cattle and attend midwifery cases, barbers to shave, kumhars to supply earthen pots, dhobis to wash and lohars to make ploughs etc. The effects of the above movement was to give a further impetus to the yadavas to organise themselves.

In addition to the social reform movements, sanskritization was also a major path to gain upward mobility particularly by the yadavas, kurmis and koeries. The yadav community in south Bihar for some time past has been agitating

for the improvement of the social status of their caste and pari-passu with taking the sacred thread they have been proposing to refuse manial and other services rendered to their landlords. The real motive behind the attempts of the yadavas, kurmis and koeris at sanskritizing themselves was to get aid of socio-economic operation, although the cause of sanskritization does not seem to lie in the economic prosperity of the yadavas, kurmis and koeris. Sanskritization was attempted here as a means to get rid of economic and social opperssion. Further, such attempts were resisted by zamindars and upercastes to protect their rested interests. The Yadavas and other lower castes used to do begari and other duties for zamindars as they were placed lower in the social scale. Their efforts to join up the higher social scale threatened the economic and social interests of the upper - castemen and zamindars. It was for this reason that the later became violent and not to maintain the structural distance with lower castes in their capacity as "cultural watch dogs".¹² These socio-economic vested interests of the uppercaste men and zamindars were responsible for such conflicts in India. However, in the case of Bihar

12. Srinivas, M.N. Social Change in Modern India 1972; p. 15-16, Orient Longman Limited, Delhi.

this fact of vested interests working behind the violent reaction of zamindars and uppercastes. The motivation of peasants regarding sanskritization was due to economic and social oppression rather than the economic prosperity. Therefore, the peasants of lower castes in general and yadavas in particular in Bihar during 1920s started the process of sanskritizing themselves.

The third social group in Bihar is that of untouchable, the scheduled caste or 'Harijan'. They are about 14.5% of the total population of Bihar. The status of untouchable in Bihar is not distinct from the condition of the untouchables of other parts of the country. The basic features of exploitation and humiliation are observed every where in India. They comprise a large labour force for the landowning upper castes. There are so many castes in this group like Chamars, Pasi, Musahar, Dom, Dhobi, Dusadha etc. They have their own traditional occupations. They have been serving the higher castes for several centuries but were not allowed to draw water from public wells or visit temples. They were called 'untouchables' and forbidden to visit public places. Even till seventies they were not allowed to sit with other non-scheduled castes. There were many other restrictions for the 'Harijan' in the society. Still they

are mainly meant to serve the higher castes who think if Harijans are educated who will plough their lands or render domestic services. Even if they are educated, the people of the higher castes look down upon them as untouchable or people of the 'Neech Jati'. Such castes prejudices on the part of the higher castes have been the part of their normal behaviour. If the scheduled castes try to resist, their houses are burnt and women molested. They are paid very low wages for the services rendered by them. They are dependent for livelihood on upper caste people who have large pices of land and the monopoly over other occupation or sources of income. They are unable to raise their voice against atrocities and continuous harassment for two seasons: (i) they are socially backward and served their masters for generations and (ii) their economic condition is precarious even after implementation of reservation policy for many years.

The higher castes still have a feeling that the untouchables are to serve them in all respects. Once there was a custom in Barh block that after the marriage of scheduled caste male, the bride should spend first night with her landlord. It was on this occasion that the untouchability principle did not function. However, this custom stopped

during the fifties.¹³ Till some years ago, the Dalit and even backward caste people were not allowed to wear good clothes or put on shoes in the villages of Bihar. They could not remain sitting or stand with their heads before upper caste men to argue with them. The upper caste landlords enjoyed an undisputed right over Dalit and backward caste women - in the feudal order which existed in the villages in Bihar. This was institutionalised by the landlords through the system of dola' by which every - newly married Dalit women had to pass her first night after marriage being raped by the landlords had to undergo the trauma after getting married.¹⁴

Modern education and governmental policies have had little influence to bring about a substantial social change. Even after getting education some chamars still continue their traditional occupation. Chamar's occupation is to take out the skin of the dead cattle and make shoes or chappal out of this skin. If a cattle is dead, it is charmar's duty to take the cattle out of the village and do the

13. Joseph Benjamini : Scheduled castes in Indian Politics and society, 1989, p. 122, ESS ESS Publications New Delhi.

14. Indu Bharti, "Dalit Gai Newizaat" Economic and Political Weekly Vol 25(19). May 5-12, 1990 p. 980.

rest. Some, educated chamars now take such dead cattles on contract. The chamar contractor ask their caste follows to take away the dead cattle and take off the skin. The contractors fix up some percentage with those co-workers for taking away the dead cattle from the demarcated areas.

In the same manner, many women of this community perform the same kind of traditional job. Some of the chamar's wives do mid-wife's job during delivery time in villages. The work they do is called 'parasuti' in Bihar. Women who are involved in this type of work are called "chamaien". Any lady, whether she is from higher caste family or a lower caste, is about to give birth to a child, needs chamain's help. She acts as a lady doctor. The chmain goes to that women, does all type of working during the delivery and after. In rural areas these days women also prefer to go to the Primary Health centres of Blocks but in urban areas, pregnant ladies prefer to go to hospital. But all chamars' women are not chamains. In one village, there would be few who know how to do the mid-wife's job. They are trained by the mothers. After the child's birth, chamain will put first drop of water in the mouth of newly born child. She usually takes care of the child and remains mother of the children for three weeks.

Some others scheduled castes also continue their traditional occupations. Like the 'untouchable Doms.' They find that their traditional occupation is more profitable than new jobs. Dom usually lives on the bank of the river and make Broom 'Supa', Bamboo curtain, basket etc. Besides, bamboo works, they also serve the society by rendering services in various forms. If a person dies, a dom will perform the cremation for which he is paid. The presence of Dom for this function is considered sacred because only he who lits the fire to hand it over to the elder son of the family to lit the chita and commence the cremation.

Among subcastes of scheduled castes are Pasi also known as Chaudhry. They are traditional toddy-tapers. They are find traditional occupations more profitable than other jobs. They take out palm juice from palm trees. This is the business for pasi in Bihar. The Dusadh Subcaste whose traditional occupation was chaukidars or watchmen, but they were also employed as village messengers, grooms, elephant drivers, grass and wood cutters, punkha coolies and porters.¹⁵ Nowadays they have opted the traditional occupation of Paris. The pasis sell the palm juice to Bihar Khadi

15. Prasad, Ramchandra : Bihar 1983 p. 24. National Book Trust, India, New Delhi.

Gram Udyog. They also sell sweat rice, popularly known as 'Nira'.¹⁶ Another caste is that of Dhobis whose traditional occupation was washing of clothes but now they have opted for the laundry business in the urban areas.

After 1977 when the Janta government introduced caste based reservations in Bihar for backward castes, three basic castes groups emerged : Forward castes, backward castes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.¹⁷ It was the Janta Party government in Bihar headed by Kurpoori Thakur who was the representative of backward caste implemented the recommendations of the Mungeri Lal commission in 1978. Upper castes had taken it as challenge to protect their dominance. It was at this time that the uppercaste had launched a fierce agitation against the reservation leading to a virtual caste-war between the forward and the backward castes. They opposed reservation for the backward castes, the upper castes feigned compassion for the Dalits, as was reflected in their slogan "Agra - harijan bhai-bhai, yeh pichdi jati kahan se aie?" (upper castes and Harijan are brothers, from

16. Note: Nira is like other cold drinks. It is prepared from palm juice. The pasis sell it in open market.

17. Verma, Ravindra Kr. "Caste and Bihar Politics" Economic and Political Weekly vol. 26 (18) 4th May 1991; p. 1142.

where have these backward castes cropped up?| There was another slogan during that period "Karpuri kar pura chhod gaddi utha chhura." (Karpoori Thakur fulfil the promises otherwise you leave the Chief-ministership and do your caste occupation. It was clear that upper caste was not willing to give up their social recognition and social status. There was also a counter slogan by the pro-reservationists of 1978-79 such as "Abki bhado me duji ke hath kado mein". (In this year of June-July the hand of twice born will be in the muds). It reflects a social situation like a caste - war in Bihar to perpetuate and enhance the social status by various caste groups.

When the Janata Dal government implemented the Mandal commission report at the centre, the stir began to spread with reports of arson and ransacking of government properties and offices from various parts of the state, notably Muzaffarpur, Chapra, Gopalganj, Purnea, Arrah and Buxar. Bihar Rajya Arakshan Virodhi Manch was formed in overnight as an organization to make an organised effort to demand a "Swarn Land". The encounter between proreservationist and anti reservationist occurred in different parts of the state. The arson and ransacking by the antireservationists were witnessed by the upper caste dominated Bihar police.

They remained mute witness and acted some how only when the situation threatened to go out of control. This shows the lack of willingness and human face on the part of the upper-caste to give higher social status and recognition to the backward castes. It refers to, in the congress regime in the state administration, important field postings were granted to the upper caste officers. These officers were likely to be friendly to their government. The Janata Dal government in power under the leadership of Laloo Prasad in 1990, changed the existing pattern and granted important field postings to the officers from the OBCs backgrounds s shown below in

TABLE II

CASTE WISE BREAK UP OF BUREAUCRATS IN BIHAR 1995

Social Background	No. of District Magistrates	No. of Deputy Divisional Commissions
OBCs	26	30
Minorities	4	4
Forward Castes	20	16
Total	50	50

Source : India Today, Feb 28, 1995 p. 100.

The Table II. clearly shows a drastic change on the caste composition of the officers. Out of 100 postings, 64 field postings went to the officers from OBC backgrounds and minorities and only 34 were granted to the forward castes in Bihar in 1995. Similarly, out of 354 IAS cadre positions 113 secretariat postings (less important than field-postings) were done in 1995 in Bihar but the important point to note here is that out of 113 secretariat postings 100 went to the forward castes and only 3 to the OBC and others.¹⁸ This shows that the most important postings were done in favour of the backward castes than the forward castes. It reflects a marked change in the distribution of power by caste factor. Contrary to this, congress party in power in Bihar openly protected the forward castes alone. Ranjan Yadav, chairman of the Janata Dal Parliamentary Board points out that "The congress (I) rule openly helped forward caste officers. We have just reversed this trend and are helping meritorious and deserving OBCs officers, who have suffered in the earlier regime."¹⁹ The change in political power has played a major role in influencing the policies to distribute power on equal basis with contending caste

18. India Today, Feb 28, 1995; p. 100.

19. Ibid.

groups. This changed the pattern of power relations by caste factor.

We observe a similar change in economic relations. The 'Malik' (Upper caste landlord) and 'Praja' (lower caste without any control on land) relationship has undergone significant changes in Bihar. The Malik consist of the Brahmans Rajputs, bhumi-har Brahmans and Kayasthas who controlled the means of production by and large. The power structure was also based on the capacity of the caste to control land. The land was a formidable instrument of controlling the people and communities. The malik were exacted by the prajas as their 'Sarka' (law incarnate), 'deobhagwan' (Godincarnate) and 'maibap' (parents). The prajas were subordinate to the malik for the benefit from the land and livelihood. The traditional position of the prajas corresponds to the general underdog position of peasantry. The Hindu principle of hierarchy differentiated, and still continuous to differentiate, the peasantry by setting them apart in numerous capsules of castes that are arranged neatly and vertically, one upon the others, in the social structure like high and low, superior and inferior in terms of purity and pollution, ritual status. This social hierarchy is clearly related with economic status as shown below:-

Economic status	Social Status	Occupational status
Tha Malik	Upper castes	Zamindar/landlords
The Praja	a) Upper backward or sudra b) Lower backward or sudra c) Untouchable	Tenants Landless agricultural labourers. Landless agricultural labourers.

The untouchable who have the lowest occupational status are considered as the wretched of 'Basti' in real sense. Their villages are known as 'Tolas'.²⁰ They alone constitute about 14% of the Hindu Population. The severity of the structural polarity which existed between the maliks and the untouchables can be consumed up in one sentence ; They were persona - nongotra in relation to the caste Hindu and especially to the maliks. For, their mud dwellings were on the maliks' land. The timber and straw used for the roofing of their dwellings were supplied by the maliks. Traditionally, they and their family members were brought out to that but under the cover of darkness from a distant village of another malik of a different class. The food that they consumed was also provided by the malik. In roofing, the

20. Note : Tola is a residential place meant only for the untouchables. It is separated from other places, so that, they are not polluted the whole vilalge. The inhavitant of Tala are mostly chamar (residing in chamar Tola), mushar (in mushar Tola) and Dusadh (in Dusadh Patti).

malik received the entire labour of that family. The relation of super and subordination between a chamar and a malik could not be broken either by the letter or anyone else on his behalf except by the malik who had the right to throwout the chamars at his wish from his 'abadi land'.²¹

This pattern of relationship between the malik and the praja underwent changes due to agrarian modernization, the redistribution of land in favour of many rather than its concentration in the hands of few. The pattern of socio-economic relationship among various caste groups in Bihar related mainly to agriculture. The dominant mode of agricultural which had almost completely collapsed by 1857. The permanent settlement of 1793 had brought in a new form of landlordism and a durable stratified systems of zamindrs, tenant - landlords, tenants and subtenants with agricultural labourers being mostly at the bottom.²²

The Table II shows that as a result of redistribution of land and agrarian reforms the number of land-holdings has increased inversely.

21. Rao, M.S.A., *Socialo Movements and social Transformation : A study of Two Backward Classes Movements in India*, 1979 p 110, Delhi : Macmillan company.

22. Pradhan, H. Prasad : "Caste and Class in Bihar" Economic and Political Weekly vol. 15 (7 & 8), Annual 1979, p. 481.

On size of holding. This reflects a significant change. Table IV shows that uppercaste group consisting of the big landowner, middle landowner and small landowner but very few landless labourer. Backward castes are consisting of few middle landowner and big landowners but they have a large number of small and landless labourer. This table also shows that most of the scheduled castes are small landowner and landless labourer.

TABLE III
PATTERNS OF LANDHOLDINGS IN BIHAR

Size of holding acres	Number of holding (%)	Area (%)
0-2.5	72.6	23.2
2.5 - 10	21.4	36.9
10 - 25	5.2	26.9
25 and above	0.8	13.2

Source : It is base on agricultural census of Bihar (1976-77), as calculated by the Government of Bihar, Directorate of Statistics and Evaluation 1981, Patna Secretariat Press, 1985, P. 70;

TABLE IV
PATTERNS OF LANDOWNERSHIP BY CASTE IN BIHAR

Caste groups	Bigland owners (over 10 acres)	Middle land owner (2.5-10 acres)	Small (0-.25 acres)	Landless labour
Twice-born castes	80	231	217	32
Backward castes Castes	18	89	457	392
Scheduled Castes	0	7	203	477

Source : Based on a survey of 2,531 household in Bihar conducted in the early 1980s under the auspices of the world Employment Programme of the 120.

The zamidars, the tenant landlords, cultivators, and big peasants were mostly upper caste Hindus. The most of the tenant castes were upper backwards like yadavas, kurmis and koeris. The agricultural labourer castes were lower backward castes and untouchables. They are basically landless labourer some yadavas, kurmis and koeries whose holding were to small to provide subsistence also worked as agricultural labourers. More frequently, untouchable castes such as chaamars, musahars, Doshads etc, performed for wages in kind. These castes were distributed more or less evenly throughout the state except for parts of Gaya and Palamu district where they accounted for nearly one third of the population.

Upper caste households among all size groups showed an overwhelming preference for leasing out or cultivating their lands with hired workers over working their holding themselves or with the help of family labour. The Bhumihars and Rajpats emulated the Brahmans in hiring ploughmen as a means of enhancing their social prestige. The Brahminical life style also provided the authoritative social model for the few laandholders of sudra rank. Although among low caste Hindu leasing out occurred mainly among larger owners. Ojha found the practice of leasing out land among the backward class and scheduled caste families was really amazing especially when they themselves formed the agricultural labour group in the village. Apart from many other factors, leasing out land seemed to provide social prestige in villages to families of backward class groups. 23-

The Zamindars were also shrewed in manipulating the ritual gulf between tenants of twice born and shudra rank to deprive the peasantry of the natural source of leadership from the most assertive sections among its ranks. Few tenants in Bihar were Brahmans or Kayasthas, about 10% were

23. Ojha, G. Land Problems and Land Reforms, 1972 Sultan Chand & Sons, New Delhi.

bhumihar but a significant proportion were Rajputs.²⁴ The bulk of cultivating tenants cultivatory came from among the ahirs, kurmis and koeris. In the villages a clear distinction was made in the treatment of high caste and low caste tenants that subordinated the economic definition of their ranking of that ritual status. Tenants of high and low castes were referred to by different generic names, lived in separate quarters of the villages and were granted unequal terms of tenure. Commonly high-caste tenants were assessed at a lesser rate, or received remission of part of the rent. Moreover, cultivators of high caste were not required to do beggar or unpaid labour as the landlords field. Although they were expected to send their own field labourers for such work. Low caste ryots customarily performed begar and were much more sub-servient. A local proverb bluntly summed up the differences in the ways that landlords treated their clients according to caste.

"Kayastha does what you want on payment a Brahman on being fed paddy and betal on being wanted but a low-caste man on being kicked."²⁵

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24. Roy, Ramashny, Caste and political recruitment in Bihar in Rajni Kothari (ed) caste in India politics, 1970, pp 228-255, Orient longman, New Delhi.
25. Grierson, George A. Bihar Pearant Life, 1885 (Reprinted P.326, Cosmo Publications, Delhi.1975).

Amongst the Hindu landowners in Bihar in the early twentieth century, there were rarely found members of castes other than the Brahmins, Bhumihars and Rajputs. Even as late as in 1951 about 80 per cent of all landowners in Bihar were from these three castes. ²⁶There were some mublims, some Kayasthas but only a negligible number from the lower and middle castes. The four richer casts- Brahmins, Rajputs, Bhumihars and Kayasthas enjoyed a better social status than the rest of the Hindu casts in the traditional Hindu social system. Thus, the caste hierarchy was on the whole, compitable with the economic hierarchy.

The agrarian reforms importantly the tenancy acts, zamindari abolition act and others caused unrest in the economic and social domain of Bihar. The caste movement in the twenties amongst the Yadavas and Kurmis - the present days ' backward castes' have a special significance. Occupationally these castes were mostly tenants even as late as in 1951 two thirds of the tenants in Bihar came from the backward castes mainly Yadavs, Kurmis and Koeries. Previoulsy the Zamindar-tenant economic relation was in accordance with the upper caste-backward caste social relations. By the end of the last century, once the tenancy acts were

26. Roy Ramashray, Caste and political Recruitment in Bihar," op. cit.

passed recognizing the rights of tenants vis-a-vis the Zamindars, the latter turned more hostile to the cause of the tenants. A large number of zamindars turned absentee and were interested only in the realisation of rests.

The zamindari abolition act was passed almost immediately after independence. Some of the big zamindars lost their possession and their tenants new become the landowner. The Government of independent India took several measures for the improvement of agriculture. Through these some of the hard working intermediate caste i.e. backwards caste tenant landowners prospered and became rich peasants. The flight of muslim zamindars from central Bihar to Pakistan at the time of the partition resulted in some backward caste tenants becoming de facto landowners. After independence, "ceiling legislation" was passed and led to pressure on traditional landowners to sell their excess lands to new groups who could afford to buy many of whom especially in central Bihar, belonged to backward castes. One seasoned observer of Bihar estimated that as much as 10 per cent of the States agricultural land may have been transferred from the twice born zamindars to backward castes. As an indicator it may be noted that for the first time, in 1967, Yadavas became the most numerous single castes in the Bihar legislative Assembly. Thus in today's Bihar along with the

Brahmin Rajput and Bhumihars there are several yadavs, kurmi and koeri landowners to. Some members of the backward castes have gained accesses to land, many more have not. Growth in population and division of holdings through inheritance have created a trend whereby a large proportion of the backward castes are not middle peasants, but rather small landowner and landless labourers. Similar pressures have made many among the twice-born castes middle and small landowners rather than big landowners.

Many of the landless poor from the scheduled castes and other lower castes remain tied to landowning members of the higher castes in a complex web of pre-commercial relationship harshest impact on members of the scheduled casts, who suffer from economic and social deprivation. But during the few years ago some of the land has been given to the backward casts and to skill fewer scheduled castes person either on lease of bataiya²⁷ (sharing) or sold to them. The higher castes manage to get some kind of job, therefore, let out their land preferably to backwardcastes on bataiya. The higher castes give their land on bataiya, magadi, manjay or rehan. In this way, they get their income without exerting

27. Bataiya word comes from Hindi word Batwara. After cultivation grain is distributed in proportion of 50:50 between the cultivator and the landowner. The cultivator will use the land and cultivate it. He remains a tenant at will.

a bit. Since, there is scarcity of employment in rural areas, a landlord can easily get cheap labour for work in his fields. Most of the scheduled casts are employed in landlord's fields in farm bonded agricultural labourers. Landlords do not give him minimum wages which is fixed by the Government of India. But none dares to protest against the landlords. If they (agricultural labourers) protest against exploitations of low wages, there will be trouble leading to some blood shed. Heads will be chopped off.

After the introduction of land ceiling Acts some lands were seized from the landlords and distributed among the landless people. Most of the scheduled caste;s in Bihar were given some land. But a large number of scheduled caste people have not been able to occupy those pices of land. The landlords continue to claim and occupy those lands. In this way, the new landowners (SCs) in Bihar cannot plough their land as owners.

After the abolition of Bonded labour system, one can still find bonded labourers in Bihar. The poor agricultural labourers service with whatever little they can get. It is found that agricultural labourers ask for some loan from landlord for their daughter's marriage or for some other social obligation. In lieu of a small sum of money, the

landlord actually purchase their person or the whole family to work in their field.

Thus the patterns of ownership of land has been changed landowners (rich peasant) owner cultivators, tenants and share croppers and landless labourers.

There have been caste rivalries and caste tension in the Bihar. Since long there was a distinct qualitative increase in their tempo following independence. And now we are in a phase which can be aptly described as the phase of 'caste riots'. It must also be noted that the present phase is very different then earlier phase. Today what is happening is mainly the outcome of a contradiction that exists between the uppercaste Hindus us backward caste and backward caste vs scheduled caste. Earlier the contradiction was mainly within the upper caste Hindu. The primary victim are members of the poor scheduled castes and who may have dared to challenge the age-old pattern of domination. The Killer often are members of the landowning castes or their hires things or the police or some combination of these group. As the killings have continued private castes armies ²⁸have

28. Armies or senas generally are identified with specific castes. The Lorik Sena belongs to the Yadavas the Bhomi Sena to the Kurmis, the Bramnishi Sena to the Bhumihars, the Kurmis, the Bramrishis Sena to the Brumihars, the Kurwar sena to the Rajputs and the Lal Sena (or Red Army) to the landless labourers.

proliferated. The rise of "warlordism" has generated new types of violence that do not follow the established patterns. Examples of the Forward Caste killing the backward or middle castes of the backward castes killing the forward castes and of politicized scheduled castes occasionally killing members of both the forward and the backward caste can all be found. The aggressor and the victims by caste are shown as below:

**TABLE V
CASTE VIOLENCE IN BIHAR**

Aggressor			
	Place	caste	Economic Status
1.	Bajitpur	Bhumihar	Landlord
2.	Belchi	Kurmi	Landlord
3.	Benlapur	Kurmi	Landlord
4.	Bishrampur	Kurmi	Landlord
5.	Chandadano	Kurmi	Landlord
6.	Dharampuri	Brahmin	Landlord
7.	Dohija	Yadav	All class
8.	Gopalpur	Kurmi	Landlord
9.	Jarpa	Bhumihar	Landlord
10.	Kalia	Kurmi	Landlord
11.	Khijuria	Brahmin	Landlord
12.	Parasbigha	Bhumihar	Landlord
13.	Pipra	Kurmi	Landlord
14.	Pathada	Yadav	Landlord
15.	Pupri	Kurmi	Landlord

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Caste	Economic Status	Issues
Harijan	Agricultural labourers and share croppers	Wages, share cropper right over land
All caste	Poor Peasants, agricultural labourers and share croppers	Social oppression
Harijan	Agricultural labourers	wages
Harijan	Agricultural labourer, sharecroppers	wage, sharecroppers right
Harijan	Agricultural labourers	wage
Harijan	Agricultural labourers sharecroppers	wage and sharecropper right
Bhumihar	Poor peasants and one big landlord	Retaliation
Harijan	Agricultural labourer	wage
Yadav	Poor peasants and sharecropper	land dispute wage
Harijan	Sharecroppers	Sharecroppers right
Yadav	Sharecroppers	"
Harijan	Agricultural labourers	wage
Harijan	Agricultural labourers	wage
Harijan	Agricultural labourers	wage and possession overland.

Source : Social stratification (ed) by Dipankar Gupta

1992, PP 385-86.

Apart from the above mentioned caste violence, another caste violence happened in the Dalilchak and Baghaura village²⁹ in Aurangabad district. 43 members of seven Rajput families were burnt alive by backward class members in a caste feud. It was in retaliation. It was a most brutal revenge for the Yadavas who had lost seven members at the chotaki chechani village. Another revenge of violence can be referred with regard to Bara Village.³⁰ 39 members of the Bhumihar castes were chopped by all marginal farmers, or landless labourers. It was also in retaliation. It was most brutal revenge for the Harijan who had lost eight members.

The main causes which precipitated violence were wages, proper share of crops and land disputes. A neo-tendency is the emergence of a radical militant consciousness among the scheduled castes and backward castes landless labourers. This violence was also because of the continuing hold of the traditional structures of caste, a semi-feudal and backward economy and the growth predominance of the ascendant peasant backward middle castes in the politics of this State.

29. Hindustan Times, 31 May, 1987, New Delhi.

30. Blitz. 29 Feb 1992, Bombay.

The relative backwardness in the fields of economy and education and an inferior position in the local caste hierarchy, the other backward casts and scheduled castes remained underdeveloped in the field of politics also. They had no place even in an unwritten informal village council of elders during the zamindari days. In the later part of the British rule when parliamentary and state assembly elections were held, the door of politics was opened but only for the socially who dominants. For the parliamentary election only those persons who were entitled to vote used to pay at least Rs.180 per annum as tax; to the government in case they were not matriculate. Similarly, persons paying Rs.100 or more as annual ten or those who were matriculate could vote for the State Assembly. The persons paying more than Rs.1000 as land revenue to the government were entitled to contest the elections. There was none from the lower castes who could fulfill such requirements. Similarly, the door of council of elders was opened only for the upper castes. There was no such organization on class pattern among the tenants and the agricultural labourers. This dominance of the uppercastes in socio-economic and political life led to the emergence of various social evil,

such as beggary and physical torture and sexual exploitations of the low castes

Changing patterns of economic relationship have now affected the backward class politics in relation to social structure of villages in Bihar. The old informal caste panchayat has been replaced by statutory Panchayat System. The new democratic procedure for election brought about significant changes in the traditional political structure but the changes are not so radical. During zamindari days the high caste zamindars were all in all in the village panchayat. Today only their elites participate in decision making. The growing differences among the leaders of the upper caste have given rise to vertical division among them which facilitated upper caste alliance with the scheduled castes and the backward. For instance in

"The struggle for leadership between members of higher castes, the lower castes stand to gain in some ways. The leaders of higher castes approach the lower caste members for vote and in the process the lower castes gain in status terms and sometimes monetary also".³¹ Further, Sachchidanand observes in his study of a monghyer village that the

31. Yadav, JS "Vitalizing the village", Seminar, 1970 May

internal contradictions between different factions of Bhumihar with regard to sitting as well as contesting candidates for the post of Mukhiya, their candidates were defeated and a candidate from the lower caste from the neighbouring village was elected and yadav became the Deputy Mukhiya. Now the backwards and the Scheduled castes are directly interested in village politics and trying to win Panchayat election. The adoption of democratic system, the traditional village politics has changed in a number of ways. It has not only brought consciousness among the deprived sections but also given them an opportunity to take part in political activities from the village level onwards. Such changes may be observed from the year 1970 to 1990. Today, the backward castes are politically more conscious than what they were a decade ago. There has been a constant increase in the number of supporters of Lok Dal which is considered as a party of the backwards. Now the Lok Dal is replaced by Janata Dal as representative of the backward classes and minorities. The increasing political awareness and affiliation among the backwards has increased their network with leaders at Block, District and State levels.

The adoption of a democratic set up has weakened the position of higher castes. They have now yielded to the

younger generation of backward castes and regions. The young men have quickly learned the art of mobilising peoples support by various complex means and modern media. Thus, the entire village population composed of different castes is activated by them and geared up to political awakening.

In Bihar caste and politics have been mixed in such a strong and often explosive combination for a long time. The Vidan Sabha is a natural place to look for an evidence of a change in the role of the uppercaste and the backward caste. Table VI gives a castewise break-up of the general seats in the Bihar legislative assembly from the period 1962-95. We observe in the table the upper caste domination in politics during the early years where most of the MLAs from non-reserved seats belonged to mainly the four upper castes people. This pattern was maintained in 1967 and 1969 elections till the period of emergency. The total of 54.9 per cent of the MLAs for the general seats came from the forward castes.³²

32. Blair, Hary: "Rising Kulaks and Backward classes in Bihar", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol 15(2) Jan 1980 P.67.

Table VI
CASTE REPRESENTATION IN VIDHAN SABHA, BIHAR (1962-1995)
(Figure are in percentage)

Caste Groups	1962	1967	1969	1975	1977	185	1990	1995	State population
<u>Upper Castes</u>									
Brahman	17.2	13.2	12.3	18.3	7.6	-	-	4.50	4.6
Bumihar	12.6	14.8	14.8	14.7	14.8	-	-	9.96	2.8
Rajput	23.6	22.2	23.5	19.8	21.7	-	-	9.02	4.8
Kayastha	5.4	4.9	3.3	2.0	4.4	-	-	2.05	1.2
Total	59.0	55.1	53.9	54.8	48.6	52.00	43.75	22.53	12.7
<u>Upper Backward Caste</u>									
Bania	3.3	5.3	6.2	4.6	3.2	-	-	6.15	0.6
Yadav	11.7	15.2	18.5	11.7	20.5	-	17.50	3.43	0.7
Kurmi	7.1	5.3	3.3	5.6	4.8	-	5.00	6.15	3.5
Koeri	6.7	5.8	4.1	5.6	6.4	-	3.35	11.48	4.0
Total	28.8	32.6	32.6	27.5	34.9	23.50	25.83	58.21	18.8
<u>Lower Backward Castes</u>									
Total	1.7	2.9	2.5	2.0	3.6	24.44	21.66	6.96	31.2
<u>Backward caste</u>									
Total	30.5	34.5	34.6	29.5	38.5	47.94	47.49	65.17	50.0
<u>Muslims</u>									
Muslims	8.8	7.4	7.8	13.2	10.0	-	7.91	9.43	12.2
<u>Bengali & Other</u>									
Bengali & Other	1.7	2.9	3.7	2.5	2.8	-	0.83	2.04	2.4

Note : Scheduled castes and Tribes are not included as they are represented proportional to their population through reserved seat.

Source : 1. Figures from 1962-1977 from Harry W. Blair, op. cit., 1980
2. Figures from 1985 and 1990 from Rastriya Sahara, April 15, 1995, New Delhi.
3. Figure for 1995, Hindustan, April 23, 1995; patna.

The 1977 election has showed a noticeable decline in the uppercaste representation from 59 per cent in 1962 to 48 per cent in 1977. There is a sharp decline in the representation of Brahmins - from 18.3 per cent in 1975 to only 7.6 per cent in 1977 (Table VI). Although the other forward castes gained a bit and their collective share Bhumihar, Rajput and Kayastha went up from 36.5 to 40 per cent and again it (Upper castes) increased 52 per cent in 1985 but from 1990 there has been decline in the forward castes representation due to polarization of votes. There is drastic change occurred in 1995 election due to polarization of votes of the muslims, scheduled castes and backward castes. The forward castes representation is now only 22.53 per cent. Gradually in general, the representation of all the forward castes groups as shown in Table VI has declined. Clearly to this, the representation of the backwards has consistently increased.

The power pattern of change is reflected in the caste representation in ruling parties in Bihar, See Table VII.

TABLE VII
CASTE REPRESENTATION IN RULING PARTIES IN
BIHAR : 1962 TO 1995
(Figures are in Percentage)

Caste Groups	1962	1967	1969	1975	1977	1995 State population	
Upper Castes							
Brahman	14.1	8.6	11.8	16.0	2.8	2.26	4.6
Bumihar	13.6	11.1	10.5	9.3	12.0	3.01	2.8
Rajput	14.1	24.1	19.1	14.4	19.4	10.53	4.1
Kayastha	6.0	3.1	2.6	1.5	5.1	0.00	1.2
Total	47.8	46.9	44.0	41.2	39.3	15.78	12.7
Upper Backward Caste							
Bania	2.7	3.1	3.3	4.1	2.8	4.51	0.6
Yadav	8.2	14.8	15.1	9.3	14.3	49.62	10.7
Kurmi	6.5	1.2	3.3	4.6	2.3	3.01	3.5
Koeri	6.5	6.8	3.9	4.1	4.1	11.27	4.0
Total	23.9	25.9	25.6	22.1	23.5	66.17	18.8
Lower Backward Castes							
Total	0.5	3.1	1.3	1.5	2.3	8.27	31.2
Total Backward caste							
Total	24.4	29.0	26.9	23.6	25.8	74.44	50.0
Muslims							
Total	8.2	4.9	8.6	10.3	6.5	9.77	12.2
Bengali & Other							
Total	1.1	3.1	0.0	0.5	2.3	0.75	2.4
Scheduled caste							
Total	17.4	11.7	12.5	15.5	18.0	-	14.5
Scheduled Tribe							
Total	1.1	4.3	7.9	8.8	8.3	-	8.9

Note : Scheduled castes & Scheduled Tribes are not included because of not availability of data.

Source : 1. Figure From 1977 from Harry W. Blair,, op. cit.,
2. Figure 1995, 'Hindustan' April, 1995, Patna.

It shows that the Brahmans were the looses to a great extent. They were(along with the Rajputs) the principal element in the Congress headed by Pandit Binodan and Jha were somewhat less well represented in the united front and Congress coalitions alliance of the late 1960s.³³ Brahmans recovered their position in the ruling party and become the major contingent in the Congress party headed by Brahman Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra during the emergency. In fact, the proportion of Brahmans in the Janata Party was even less than their percentage of population as whole. It was the first time that they suffered such a political loss but other forward castes like the Rajputs, Bhumiars and Kayasthas improved their representation significantly. In 1995 in Janata Dal Government headed by Laloo Prasad the forward castes come down drastically. There is not a single representative of Kayastha.

Further, the evidence of change from forward to backward class representation is seen at the ministerial level in 1995 as shown in Table VIII. It seems that the backward castes are approaching a majority in their representation in politics. They have (both upper backwards and lower backward) 52 per cent representative at the ministerial level.

33. Ibid., p.68.

TABLE VIII
CASTE BACKGROUND OF CABINET MINISTERS UNDER DIFFERENT
CHIEF MINISTERSHIP IN BIHAR : 1962 - 1995
 (Figures are in percentage)

Caste group	B.N.	K.B.	M.P.	D.P.	Kedar	Abdul	Jagnath	Karpuri	Ramsunder	Jagnath	Chandra 3indeswari ¹	Laloo ²	Laloo ³	
	Jha	Sahay	Sinha	Rai	Pandey	Ghafoor	Mishra	Thakur	Das	Mishra	Shekhar Dubey	Prasad	Pd.	
	1962	1963	1967	1970	1972	1973	1975	1977	1979	1980	1983	1985	1990	1995
Upper castes	58	40	67	33	38	38	40	29	50	44	44	62	28.57	16
Upper Backward	8	20	20	20	23	23	20	38	20	12	18	25	37.14	48
Lower Backward	0	0	7	0	0	5	0	4	0	6	6	12	4.28	4.1
Muslims	8	20	7	13	15	10	13	13	15	19	19	0	18.57	12
& Bengali														
Scheduled castes & Scheduled Tribes	25	20	0	33	23	24	27	17	15	19	12	0	11.42	20

Source :

1. From 1962 to 1985 taken from Dominance and state power (ed) M.S.A. Rao
2. Telegraph, 8th Dec. 1990.
3. The Hindustan Times, April 17, 1995.

CHAPTER - IV

CONCLUSION

The present study is a systematic analysis of the changing patterns of caste relationship in perspective of socio-economics and political aspects. It has been analysed that how the caste plays a significant role in socio-economic and political aspects of the life. Keeping this view in mind we have adopted two approaches that is dialectical and functional. In other words dialectical approach in dealing with caste relationship and functional approach is dealing with class relationship - while reviewing literature. In most of the studies the phenomena of caste relationship has not been adequately interrelated in the social, economic and political domains and the changes in the normative principles of social stratification have not been adequately examined. On the basis of this framework we formulated the following points in the form of hypothesis in the first chapter.

The Indian society based on the principle of hierarchy could have "harmonic" relations. The inequality based on the ideas of purity-pollution, superiority - inferiority and high and low rank always created a situation of mutual distrust, disharmonious relations occasionally occurring between the patron and the clients. As a result of such a tense situations, spatial mobility, ostracization and

changes in the traditional callings occurred occasionally and intermittently. Cultural modernization was associated with the upper sections of the society. Therefore, the system was "closed" mobility, was possible only in certain situations and in certain directions. However, mobility avenues were not available for all sections of society. Certain restrictions were a part of the system of stratification itself. In view of these observations, it has been proposed to examine the directions of mobility from cumulative to dispersed, from cumulative to cumulative, from dispersed to cumulative and dispersed to dispersed. This also calls for examination of the nature of stratification from "organic" to "segmentary" as observed by Bailey.

In second chapter we have discussed the traditional patterns of relationship in the Indian society. There was a harmony among various castes. We have tried to show that how far the caste ideology function in each and every aspect of life. This ideology create a 'social environment' from where people get socialization. This guided their behavioral pattern of relationship among the various communities.

The third chapter centers around caste and socio-political and agrarian relationship along with few instances of caste violence.

Bihar was multistandard dominance by the upper castes like Brahmans, Bhumihar, Rajputs and Kayastha. Before independence changes among the castes occurred within the model of varna through sanskritization on the basis of brahmanical view. Recent changes occurred apart from this model of varna, but brahmanical view goes side by side among the various castes of the varna. The whole society has been divided into four social categories i.e. Forward castes, Backward castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In agrarian society class may be divided into three categories; landlord, tenant and laborer. Landlord consisted of the Brahmans, Bhumihars, Rajputs and Kayasthas who controlled the means of production by and large. Tenant consisted of the upper backwards like Yadavas, Kurmis and Koeries. Landless agricultural labourer consisted of lower backward castes and scheduled castes. Previously the Zamindar tenant economic relation was in accordance with the upper caste backward caste social relations. By the end of the last century, once the tenancy act was passed recognising the rights of tenants vis-a-vis the Zamindars, the latter turned more hostile to the cause of the tenants. Due to zamindari abolition and tenancy act, tenants became new landowner and in central Bihar tenants became the de

facto landlord during the partition. Thus the upper backward caste became the class of landlord. The pattern of relationship between the malik and praja underwent changes due to agrarian modernization, redistribution of land in favour of many rather than its concentration in the hands of few and democratic values.

We have also discussed the caste violence between backward castes vs forward castes forward castes vs scheduled castes and backward castes vs scheduled castes. We found that such type of rivalries and caste tensions occurred due to challenging the age old patterns of caste relationship by backward castes and scheduled castes. We also found that the most of atrocities on scheduled caste committed by kurmies of the upper backward caste. They are guided by the caste ideology and their tenant's behavioral pattern are just like the twice-born castes. That's why we called them the 'neotwice born' caste. There are several landlords among the muslims but not single violence has taken place in Bihar. This clearly shows that behind the caste violence is notion of superiority and inferiority, high and low which is prevailing in Indian society in the ideological form and religiously sanctioned by only Hindu scriptures.

In political sphere, the adoption of democratic system, the traditional village politics has changed in a number of ways. It has not only brought consciousness among the deprived sections but also given them an opportunity to take part in political activities from the village level onward. The increasing political awareness and affiliation among the backwards and scheduled caste has increased their network with leaders at Block, District and State levels. The adoption of a democratic set up has weakened the position of higher castes. We discussed that upper caste domination at assembly level, in ruling party and ministerial level has drastically changed. We found that backward caste domination is increased at the assembly level, in ruling party and ministerial level. Among the backward caste, yadavas got the lions share of domination at every level. This change has occurred due to polarization of backward castes, muslims and scheduled castes.

Finally, the analysis of the changes in the relationship has been made at two levels, namely:

- i) Cultural and structural changes.
- ii) Comparison of pre-independence caste, class and power structure with the post-independence relationship.

The process of cultural changes created "structural strains" and structural changes bring about changes in true cultural styles, idioms and life-ways. The relationship has been noted between these two processes and factors of change. The comparison between pre-independence and post-independence phenomena of caste, class and power not only explains the role of structural and cultural factors, it also explains changes in the normative basis of the traditional relationship and "legitimation" of the new system of stratification envisaged through land reforms, Panchayati Raj institutions and welfare measures, etc. The categorization and classifications have lost their meanings, new vocabulary has come to exist. An understanding of colloquial and native categorizes and concepts has facilitated our understanding and analysis.

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