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Edited by

Nirmal Kumar Bose

MAN IN INDIA

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of
Sarat Chandra Roy

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COMPETING PRODUCTIVE SYSTEMS IN INDIA

NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

Abstract : Four productive systems are competing with one another for survival in India today. These have been described in the following paper, while the results which are taking place in the superstructure of each of these systems has also been briefly described.

India is passing out of a phase of production under caste-based non-competitive hereditary guilds and is taking more and more to modern methods of production based on science and improved technology. The former was supported by a feeling of obedience and subservience of the individual to social needs, while the other is based upon freedom of enterprise and the development of individualism. Under present circumstances in India, the new productive organization is not capable of accommodating all those who want a place in it. Therefore, there is a reliance upon the old system to an appreciable extent. Consequently, rural folk and others have also retained a considerable measure of loyalty to the old system. The changes in different parts of India have, moreover, been of an unequal nature.

The political system devised in the country for modernizing society as well as the productive organization does not operate fast enough. A consequent lack of complete confidence in the political structure has also been leading to internal tensions of many kinds.

A Seminar was held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Rashtrapati Nivas, Simla, when the Editor of *Man in India* presented his views on the 11th, 12th and 13th of September 1967. These talks are printed serially. They are being published through the kind permission of Prof. Niharranjan Ray, Director of the Institute,

I

I feel happy in coming back once more to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study for I have been associated with it ever since its inauguration. Professor Ray has been very kind in inviting me to initiate the present seminar on Trends of Socio-Economic Change in India from 1871 to 1961. It has been already indicated in the letter of invitation that this is a period which is covered by the census operations, and social and economic changes can be more or less quantified over this period.

Personally, I believe that the task of interpreting the data of different censuses has not been undertaken to an appreciable extent by sociologists or economists. Much remains to be done and I do hope that seminars of the kind the Institute of Advanced Study is initiating today will go a long way in stimulating interest as well as in bringing together different workers who are in the field in different parts of India.

Our main task in the course of the next few days will be to see how much has been done and what would be the most profitable means of utilizing census data in order to describe the changes to which India has been subjected in course of the last approximately 60 years.

You will pardon me if, at this stage, while initiating the discussion, I try to place before you in a rather impressionistic manner the different trends which we, as social anthropologists, have succeeded in discovering in the course of our study of social and cultural changes in India. These are not based upon counting to any large extent. They have quite often been based on small studies undertaken in different parts of India, in which the samples are spread out rather irregularly over different portions of our stratified society. The kind of picture which anthropologists and sociologists have thus succeeded in building up will perhaps form a kind of introduction to the more accurate quantitative studies which have to be made later on by economists, demographers and other social scientists.

As we look at the whole of India, we observe that only a small fraction of the entire population is involved in industries,

while perhaps more than ten times the number is still dependent largely on agriculture and its associated small-scale household industries of the traditional kind. Looking at it broadly we find that in India there are several systems of production which exist side by side. They do not co-exist in a peaceful manner, but each of them is struggling for survival against the other. I would try to explain by means of concrete examples, for I have not perhaps succeeded in making my meaning very clear.

The Andaman Islanders form a part of the Indian population. Their total population is perhaps no more than one thousand in the Great and Little Andamans, Sentinel Is. etc. They live completely by hunting, fishing and collecting. We have friendly contacts with a few among them, and an examination of the carrying capacity of land under their system of production appears to indicate that between two and three persons can be supported per square mile by hunting and collecting, and perhaps no more.

In other parts of India, such as NEFA, two districts of Nagaland and scattered portions of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, etc., there are people who live by shifting cultivation. According to detailed surveys made by the Anthropological Survey of India, roughly between 25 and 30 persons can be supported per square mile by shifting cultivation, if the consumption of food is fixed at a little over 3000 calories per day. But in the Mizo District, one of the areas thus surveyed, the actual density of population is less than half the carrying capacity. In contrast, in the Keonjhar District of Orissa, nearly 70 people live per square mile, while their technique of production can support approximately 25 per square mile. Even this method of shifting cultivation, therefore, is under unequal stresses and strains in different parts of India. In some places there is an urgency of change, while in others the tribe can afford to wait until the saturation point is reached.

The third system of production is by means of agriculture with the plough, supplemented by household industries of various kinds. The Anthropological Survey is likely to try and determine the saturation point of population under this

system of production. We are all aware of the caste system and also of the norms under which it operates. It was a system designed to be non-competitive in character in which different communities enjoy hereditary monopoly in respect of particular occupations. Several studies carried out about the caste system have shown very clearly how all castes were divided into privileged and unprivileged classes. There was intense social stratification, the different strata being marked off from one another by ritual labels. Physical anthropologists have also tended to show that different castes might have also been marked off from one another by physical differences derived from distinct racial origins. In other words, a society based on caste was impregnated by class differences as well as by racial distinctions. Some anthropologists have looked upon caste as nothing but organized class difference. My friend, Mr. N. C. Chowdhury in his latest book entitled *The Continent of Circe* has tried to show that racial distinctnesses in the Indian population are much more important than generally thought of. But these class and racial characteristics are not everything in caste. Capitalism and a democratic society like that of USA are also subject to the septic influences of class and race. Class and race are not exclusively the characteristics of the caste system. One of the prime movers in the caste system was the design of building up a non-competitive productive organization, as we have tried to indicate a little while ago.

As I have already said, just as the Anthropological Survey of India studied shifting cultivation, it is likely to take up another project, namely, the determination of the carrying capacity of land under the non-competitive productive organization of the caste system. We do not know what results would be arrived at in different portions of India. It might be one in the Ganges delta, another in the high Himalayan mountains where castes are not as numerous as in the plains of India, and so on. It would indeed be worth while to find out how many people can be supported per square mile before they reach a saturation point under this system.

In large parts of rural India, caste's organization of production was so successful for a long time that even Muslims were drawn into this structure in a camouflaged way. There is a general idea that Indian villages and Indian economy were intensely localized even in the past. The accurate records of competent foreign observers have given us a picture of the extreme localization of caste's productive organization during perhaps the 17th and 18th centuries. But then we must remember that it was exactly during this period that Mughal rule in India was in decay and the rural people retired within the shell of an excessively localized production and exchange in order to escape from the political storms which were blowing over the land. But the tortoise-like retirement within the shell of caste did not succeed in wholly saving them from destruction. The widespread decay of inter-provincial trade as well as the shrinkage of foreign trade, which was a result of misrule, and famine carried off many people. So that even when the people took refuge, they suffered. Caste only helped them *to survive* under difficult times.

After peace came with the gradual extension of British rule and the consolidation of British authority all over India, a new or a fourth system of production entered the field. Commercial capitalism supported by political authority gradually brought about large-scale changes in the character of agriculture, trade, commerce and industry. This new development however affected different parts of India in a very unequal manner. Changes were largest in Bengal, much less in Orissa, even less perhaps in Assam and Madhya Pradesh. It would be of great interest to find out how modern trade and industry affected India's rural economy in an unequal manner in different parts of the country. In modern times, after India has been able to plan here own economic and social change, we are trying to re-build our productive organization in terms of science and advanced technology. The results in the cities and towns are attractive, and a large number of rural folk are crowding into the cities for employment.

There is a general idea that the caste system has created such a mentality among our people that they do not want to advance into modern technology fast enough. Having observed things in different parts of India among the people themselves, my personal impression has rather been that people do want a change in employment, better wages and a better life. But the rate at which our modern industries or urban occupations can absorb the rural people who come crowding into the cities for more work seems to be too slow. If there is no hospital in a village and the people resort to the use of country medicine, herbs and the like, which are suggested by some old dame, I do not think they should be described as inherently conservative. If the ship of our modern economy cannot accommodate all the passengers who want a place in it and if they take recourse to country boats for passage across the river, then they do so not because they are conservative but because that is the only alternative which is left to them. Sometimes they cannot afford the risk of taking up a new occupation. Sometimes they do not have faith in the political organization of our society which intends to bring about modernization, and therefore they cling to the caste-based industries (including a reliance upon its superstructure) so that they can survive through difficult times. It is in this manner that several systems of production have been competing with one another in our country today. It is of fascinating interest to study and observe the results of this competition.

At this stage, please permit me to close this inaugural address by drawing attention to some of the consequential changes in our society and culture which flow from the changes which are taking place in the reorganization of our methods of production. At the lowest level, shifting cultivators and hunters did not have very much of personal ownership of the means of production. Much of it was communal. Among the shifting cultivators of NEFA or Orissa, the land belongs to the community and the individual enjoys usufructuary right over it, this right being of various shades in different parts of India. With the advent of more

progressive cultivation, ideas about land-ownership are also changing. An interesting example can be cited from among the Garo of Assam who came down to the valley of the Someswari which is now in East Pakistan. Their law of inheritance was matriarchal, and when they took to plains-cultivation the landlords hesitated to settle land upon them unless they took it in the names of men instead of the names of women. Communal land is now being parcelled in certain parts of Assam and becoming converted into personal inheritable property. This is one range at which changes are taking place. As a result of this, changes are also taking place in the power structure of society. Sometimes this has led to an accentuation of class differences; occasionally resulting in an increase of tension between one tribe and another when the former happens to be more advanced than the other. Occasionally this has led some of the advanced communities to try and heal up the internal tension by an appeal to something which assumes the character of tribal 'nationalism' as opposed to the 'nationalism' of the so-called 'plains people'. But these are developments into the intricacies of which we need not proceed any further.

Coming to the caste-based society, which was attended by its own superstructure, we find that with the growth of a modern system of production, the superstructure associated with caste which was based upon the traditional worship of authority, the subordination of the individual to social demands, etc., is slowly giving place to a new kind of freedom and an intensification of individualism. Sometime this individualism shows signs of over-shooting its mark; with the result that a new society of free individuals is not yet forming fast enough.

Let me explain this before I close. In a recent social survey of the city of Calcutta, it was observed that with the modernization of the techniques of production, an adequate number of unions based upon either common interests of trade or of civic amenities, did not grow fast enough even in the city which happened to be the capital of India for more than a century. When modern institutions do not grow up at a sufficiently rapid rate, and there is a hang-over of other social identities based upon

caste, language, etc., people placed under economic strain rather resort to the old fashioned social identities if the new ones are not adequate enough to take charge of their increasing difficulties.¹

We are today living in a state of transition and consequently of intense social and economic tension. Historically viewed this is inevitable in a country which has been subjected to colonialism for long years past. But if we are to survive, we must be able to overcome the difficulties which come in our way. And one of the best ways of overcoming difficulties is to know what *the nature of the disease* is. If, in our present seminar, we are able to lay down the beginning of a more scientific and concerted attempt to study the nature of the changes taking place in the socio-economic life of India with greater precision and greater comprehension of the larger issues involved, we would undoubtedly have made a very good beginning indeed. Let me end with a note of hope that our present endeavour in the Indian Institute of Advanced Study will lead us in this direction.

II*

In the course of this morning's analysis of the trends of social change, some very interesting points were raised. I am afraid the emphasis was placed more upon the economic aspects of change rather than on changes in the social structure. Dr. Tapan-kumar Ray Chaudhuri made an observation that the models of economic change are more clearly defined than what he finds in the case of sociology. It is with regard to this question that I will try to make a few observations.

The chief question which a social anthropologist asks himself when he is concerned about change which is taking place in a particular community are : (1) How is the power structure of the society in question becoming altered ? (2) What are the changes which are taking place in the character of institutions ? and (3) What are the causes of such change ?

In regard to Hindu society one might say, after an observation of Hindu life in areas like Orissa before the year 1947, or

**Comments on 12 September 1967*

in Mysore in about the same period, that religion used to play a large part in the regulation of society. In both of these places there were either colleges of Brahmins or Mutts presided over by heads of particular religious organizations who, in their own way, ruled over society. The king in Orissan States or even in Mysore was at the apex of the power-structure of society. He was not only the ruler in the secular or political sense of the term, but he was also the final authority in regard to social matters. The king administered society through customary laws with the help of colleges of Brahmins or of the Dharmadhikaris who were supposed to be in charge of social regulation.

One of the most important things which has happened since the advent of the British and the consolidation of British rule, with its consequent formalization of civil and criminal laws, is that a large part of the disputes which occur naturally in society have been progressively taken care of by the laws established by the British. Many of the functions of the Hindu king and of the colleges of Brahmins as well as of the caste or regional panchayats, were thus transferred to the authority of the administration, that is, of the police and of law courts. Social regulation was thus secularized. Religious institutions became depleted of a large fraction of their former power and function. The residual functions of religious institutions were often not enough to engage all their potentiality of action. Religious institutions like the Mutt as in Sringeri in Mysore or Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh have, therefore, tried to retain their position of authority in society by taking on new functions like that of spreading education, revitalizing the very much formalized Hindu religion of today or even by engagement in social services of various kinds.

This is one of the things which has been happening in Hindu society ; and the amount or degree of this change can perhaps be measured by the number and kinds of cases which go to the colleges of Brahmins or Mutts for settlement, when these are contrasted with the number and kinds of cases which are brought to the courts for settlement.

We can take up another range of phenomenon in which it is possible to describe and measure social change. With the gradual decay of religious authority, a large number of voluntary institutions have been growing up in different parts of India to take charge of functions which were formerly the function of religious institutions. In the villages of India, entertainments were often afforded to the rural folk through religious dramas, recitals and the like. The stories were mostly derived from the epics which were of wide currency all over India. Entertainment and religious instruction were thus closely interlinked. In places like Orissa there used to be regular readings of scriptures like the *Bhagavata Purana* during certain months of the year. After the gradual decay of religious authority a large number of purely secular institutions have been built up for affording the necessary entertainment to people. The number and growth of such institutions over different decades or from one historical period to another might also be taken as an index of the rate and kind of change which is taking place in society.

In this connexion, we might draw attention to the fact that in a study of social life in the city of Calcutta carried out under the auspices of the Anthropological Survey of India, it was observed that when power came to the people after the British quit in 1947, political power has begun to affect the life of both our urban as well as rural folk in an almost unexpected manner. Political power has now come to all the people of India through adult franchise. But the power is not equally shared by all sections of the population, for the latter were unequally prepared to take advantage of the new access to power. Some who had already gone through the dynamics of modernization more than other communities have been able to utilize political power to the advantage of their own class much more than others who have lagged behind. But the consciousness of political power is becoming more and more widespread, and the feeling that it is distributed unequally seems to hurt very much those who do not enjoy political power to the extent that they should. There is thus a keen

competition for access to greater power or to the exercise of it for communal benefit in almost every part of our vast country.

One of the immediate results of this competition for power is that existing institutions are being utilized to a larger extent in this war for more and more power in the political sense of the term. The character of the institutions is undergoing a tremendous amount of change. Institutions primarily meant for benevolent service or even for religious or cultural functions are becoming rapidly politicalized. If in a country new social unions are not built up fast enough through identities of interest in trade, services, or the like, then old existing organizations may often be twisted in order to serve the new demands of society.

Perhaps what I have said is obscure. Let me therefore try to be a little more specific. If in a city like Calcutta, trade unions or even municipal associations of taxpayers are not built up fast enough, then in order to meet some of the needs of the people, old institutions like caste panchayats or even libraries, sports clubs, etc. may be utilized for encouraging social identities so that the people can fight for their political rights. The absence of specifically political or economic institutions may lead a people to convert some of their earlier institutions to serve new purposes ; although in earlier times the institution may have been built up in order to serve a different function altogether. Thus caste which served a certain range of functions in the past became depleted in many parts of India of its earlier purposes. In the absence of the growth of a new type of political institution, caste identities may themselves be utilized for purposes of wresting political authority from other similar groups in course of an election. This has completely altered the original function of caste associations and converted them into imitative organizations of a different kind.

All this has happened because the descent of political power through the revolution of 1947 and of its uneven distribution in different parts of India, and also among different strata of the population in a particular State, have led to the impregna-

tion of many erstwhile non-political institutions by the passion for politics.

It is in this manner that important changes have been taking place in the course of the last twenty or more years in our social life. The discussion carried out in the morning seemed to apply the lens over the map of our entire social life in certain specific areas. The emphasis was laid, as we have said, on the economic aspects of life. It is, perhaps, necessary to correct this preoccupation with economics by a corresponding study of changes in our social life, as has been outlined above.

This leads me to make another observation of a slightly different nature. The anthropologist not only tries to observe changes taking place in the economic and political life of a community but also changes taking place in the social, religious or artistic life of a people. But what is more, he does not study these different aspects of life in isolation from one another. He believes on the basis of his experience of small communities where investigations are carried out in a microscopic manner that these different aspects of life are integrally related to one another. If changes take place in one sector, change also occurs in other sectors. One of the important facts which he observes in his study of the changing social structure of a community is that economic changes are quite often attended by consequential changes in other aspects of the culture of a people. Sometimes again it is not in the level of economic life that change begins. It may begin as well in the thoughts and beliefs or values and emotions of a people. Such changes undoubtedly do not fall from the skies. They have their historical origin, either springing as a result of economic or political change or due to diffusion of certain ideas from contemporary cultures of other peoples.

It is one of the most important tasks of the social scientist to find out *in a specific case* what has been the prime mover in a specific case of change, and what have been its secondary effects.

I should place these views before an audience which has been more concerned with the economic aspects of change rather than with changes in other spheres of social life. My

justification is that the seminar is labelled as a study of the trends of change in the socio-economic life of India rather than of economic life alone.

III*

Today we have had a very exciting session when various participants discussed questions relating to rural life in India. Dr. Indra Deva raised a question relating to what should be our unit in the study of changing rural society. Dr. A. M. Shah tried to indicate that the study of the changing character and function of the family should be a useful point to start with. Dr. H. R. Ghoshal gave us a wide perspective when he tried to analyse the various changes which he had observed in course of his study of rural life in India, as well as of the changes brought about in it by various administrative measures. A very large number of participants have made significant contributions in course of the stimulating discussion which we have had ever since the morning session which began at 9.30 A.M. My purpose will be not to summarize or repeat any of the points which have been made, but I will try to limit my comments to two points which were raised in the morning and the afternoon session.

There was much discussion as to what kind of materials we should use for rebuilding the history of the past, so that we could indicate the lines of social change or development which have been taking place in course of the last hundred years and more. As our study is specifically limited to the years between 1871 and 1961, let me suggest at this stage that a very important source of studying changes in family structure, property relationship, etc., may be derived from a study of the cases which have been brought up in the High Courts for decision in different parts of the country. A large part of India is under the Mitakshara Law while some portions of the east and north-east are subject to the Law of Dayabhaga. If one studies the conflicts which have been brought into the High Courts for decision and which relate to a

**Comments on 13 September 1967*

large extent to the division of property, to the validity of adoption or marriage, to the rights of inheritance and transfer, etc. over a period of, say, 100 years, then a very valuable amount of material will be available to us for the study of change to which society has been subjected in India during that period.

Prof. Niharranjan Ray has suggested that epigraphical materials as well as the secular literature of the past like the *Kamasastra*, or dramas written either in Sanskrit or vernacular and belonging to a fairly old period may be utilized for similar purposes. I find myself in complete agreement with him on this point. I may also be permitted to indicate that the *Smritis* do not merely describe the norms of Hindu society but also, in many places, describe the deviations which occur in particular regions or in particular communities. A careful study of Mahamahopadhyaya Kane's *History of Dharmasastras* will prove abundantly that the *Smritis*, which have been written in different ages and which have also been re-interpreted again and again at different periods of time contain abundant material for the study of social change. Raghunandan's efforts of reforming Hindu society in the 16th century, if rightly interpreted, will throw light not only on what he wanted to make of Hindu society, but also on what Hindu society was like in his time. That period or the period of the earlier *Smritis* are beyond the scope of our present discussion. Yet, by a judicious examination of trends in the past we may gain some insight into the changes which have been taking place in India in the more immediate present.

This is point number one. The other point to which I should make a special reference is the one raised by Dr. Tapankumar Ray Chaudhuri. In course of the discussion Dr. Ray Chaudhuri made a statement that handicrafts have not declined on account of British commercial expansion in India. He has referred to some detailed and very significant studies of the textile industry which have tended to show that from the 18th to the 20th century there was not only no decline in that craft but it either remained at a stationary level or even expanded to a certain extent.

If we look at the textile industry, or any other industry of a similar nature, as an abstraction, the picture which Dr. Ray Chaudhuri has drawn may appear to be substantially correct. It will lead us to the conclusion that there has been no movement, that is, there was stagnation in the art in question. But as a social anthropologist I beg to draw your attention to a fact of great significance to us. The productive organization of caste was built upon the theory that every caste should enjoy a guaranteed monopoly in a particular craft. Nobody should disregard that monopoly. Caste tried to build up a non-competitive economic system in which different castes, by their federation, took care of the economic functions of society. In a region like western Orissa, where the norms of caste have not been eroded to the same extent as in West Bengal, we observe that there are at least three different castes of WEAVERS who produce different patterns of cloth and who also practise slightly different techniques in the production of their wares. They refused to poach upon each other's preserve even in the year 1958-60 when a co-operative society tempted them by orders to produce a particular pattern which was regarded as the monopoly of one particular caste. But in Bengal, where the traditions of caste have been eroded to a large extent, in a village in the district of Hooghly where there are nearly 1200 looms working even now, the people who earn by way of weaving do not merely belong to the WEAVER caste but some of them are even widows who belong to the Brahmin caste. They make their living by means of this craft. Bata's Shoe Factory today employs nearly 12,000 workers of whom 10,000 are from Bengal. The workers are divided into skilled, semi-skilled and un-skilled categories. Among the skilled workers, we find that 43% are formed by Brahmins, Kayasthas and Vaidyas, although these three together form no more than approximately 10% of the Hindu population of Bengal. Thus, Brahmins in Bengal have taken to weaving, the manufacture of shoes in a factory, or even running a shop for hair-cutting and shaving where shaving and hair-dressing are done by the Brahmin proprietor himself. So that although quantitatively there may be an appa-

rent stagnation in the economic enterprise of the people, yet the people who exercise these arts and crafts may have come not from specific castes but from many castes in contrast to the position we find in a district like Sambalpur in Orissa.

What I am suggesting is that even when the machine of production seems to remain stagnant, there are clear indications that the working forces who run these machines have become very much altered in the State of Bengal in contrast to what has happened in Orissa, for example. This would signify very clearly that the norms or value systems and loyalties held in order to give the caste system permanency have been considerably eroded in Bengal, while it has not been so in some of the neighbouring States of India. Is this not also a sign of change? Does it also not indicate that the men who take to occupations other than those prescribed by their caste traditions are becoming loosened from their traditional moorings and are now fit to take a place in other occupations which may be available?

Today when a new system of production based upon science and technology, and upon freedom of choice by the individual is being built up in India, even the loosening of traditional ties is a sign of progress. If there is substantial alteration in the character of the working forces, then we need not throw up our hands in despair and say that no change is taking place in the economic sphere. The economic structure and social organization as well as value systems are so closely interlinked with one another that we must cast our eyes widely over the entire horizon in order to ascertain whether a society is stagnant or not stagnant.

This is a submission which I am forced to make in answer to Dr. Ray Chaudhuri's observation that, from the quantitative point of view, the history of handicrafts in India has shown hardly any movement in the progressive direction at all.

At this point there is one suggestion which I may be permitted to make to social scientists interested in the quantitative aspects of change. In every part of India, and also in every community, changes are taking place in the occupations

by which individuals make their living. It would be useful for everyone who undertakes sample surveys to find out, how many of the earning members of the community in question are taking up either caste-based occupations, or non-caste occupations. Carpentry, weaving, fishing etc. are caste-based occupations, while the teacher's or engineer's work or jobs like rickshaw-pulling, work on roads or plantations have no connexion or original association with caste.

It would also be worth while to count the number of men in each such occupation today who have come from various castes, which had traditionally assigned occupations. A third line of enquiry would be to find out how the present generation interviewed makes its living, and how their fathers and grandfathers also did so. It is my suggestion that if we could compare data on these points gathered from various parts of India, we would be in a better position to present a comparative picture of what is happening to the economic and social life of India.

REFERENCE

- ¹ See Bose, Nirmal Kumar : *Calcutta 1964 : A Social Survey*, 1968, Lalvari Publishing House, Bombay.

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

A. K. DASGUPTA

Abstract. The author examines the problem of language from several points of view. He is of opinion that education, even in science, is best imparted through the mother tongue up to the highest university stage. English has to be learnt for special purposes, and by those who need it. He suggests an original method of recruitment for public services ; a method which is frequently in use in commercial firms. The author then suggests that nationalism in India can best be promoted, not by the use of a common language, but by closer economic and political co-ordination than what is in evidence today. With such co-operation, the problem of language can be relegated to its right place in India's national life.

Introduction

OUR language problem, as it stands today, has two aspects. One relates to the medium of instruction and examination in schools and universities and the other concerns the choice of a national language. The first is a problem of education, while the second is essentially political.

It looks as if the second aspect of the problem is assuming greater importance in our country since independence ; most of the controversies on the language issue for the last twenty years or so have centred on the need for a link language in the context of national integration. As an educationist, I am naturally more interested in the choice of medium of instruction and examination. I shall therefore confine myself primarily to this aspect of the problem, even though I feel that in the process of the solution of this problem one can, if one is rational, find a clue to the solution of the other problem, too.

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Mother tongue, the only suitable medium

From my long experience as a university teacher, I feel convinced that the medium of instruction at all stages of a student's education should be his mother tongue,—a language in which he has spoken naturally and spontaneously and through which he has seen and felt the world since his childhood. I have a feeling that the inability of our students in general to think coherently and to apply their education usefully is to be explained largely in terms of the struggle that they have to go through in order to learn synonyms of familiar objects in a foreign language. I have indeed had experience of our educated young men losing the ordinary sense of discrimination in the course of their education, so that they often fare worse than a thoroughly illiterate person. I cannot explain this except in terms of the undue pressure that a foreign language brings to bear upon brains which are not capable of assimilating it. Language, far from being a help to expression, as it should be, becomes thus a hindrance. Discrimination, which is the basis of understanding, gets crippled under the weight of unfamiliar words and expressions.

In one of his addresses given in a different context, Tagore once asked: 'How can a train run its course if the steam that its engine carries is spent up just in the process of whistling?' The same consideration applies to our brains. If too much of it is used for learning a foreign language, very little is left for acquisition of knowledge. In fact, when a matter is put before a student in his own language—mother tongue as we call it,—it automatically takes a form which the student can visualize in concrete terms. It therefore opens the way to a fuller expression of his mind. A foreign language works as an obstruction to this natural process.

This is a matter on which there should be general agreement among educationists. Unfortunately, in our country, it has taken years of struggle for the public to have given assent to it. Now it appears it is going to be an accepted policy of the Government. It is indeed a happy augury that the Education Commission has accepted in principle the

introduction of regional languages as medium of instruction and examination up to the university stage and that the Government has considered the recommendation favourably, thanks to the initiative taken by our Union Education Minister. Yet, there are many among us who would not view this change-over from English to regional languages with favour. Well-known educationists, some of them Vice-Chancellors of universities, have argued in favour of the retention of English in its present form in our university education. The strongest opposition comes, so far as my own experience with acquaintances is concerned, from teachers of science. 'Whatever one might say about the Arts subjects,' my scientist friend will say, 'in science and technology the need for English as medium of instruction is indispensable.' Now this is a paradox. For, as I look at it, in the teaching of science and technology, the need for the use of language should be only marginal. Language is hardly any barrier to the understanding of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. If you have the necessary mathematical equipment and understanding of physical concepts, you can pick up the little German that you need easily to be able to follow Einstein. Not so in the case, for example, of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Yet, I have yet to meet a teacher of science or technology who would be ready to dispense with English in their teaching,—except of course the redoubtable S. N. Bose, whose lone fight for the use of regional language for the study of science over the last more than thirty years stands out as a conspicuous chapter in the language controversy of our country. I remember having read a paper by Bose on *Vignaner Sankat* (Crisis of Science), published about forty years ago in the first issue of *Parichaya*, then a Quarterly from Calcutta, in which not a single word was used other than Bengali. And, let me add, Bose, besides being a great theoretical physicist, is a linguist, equally at home with English, German and French.

Objections answered

There is indeed a large section of our intelligentsia who still feel that English is essential as medium of instruction in

our colleges and universities, if not at the school stage. There are broadly two arguments which they offer in favour of the retention of English. Firstly, we do not have suitable text-books in our regional languages for the students to follow ; introduction of regional languages therefore would limit the range of our knowledge. Secondly, the medium of instruction being different, there would not be adequate mobility of teachers as between States, so that the standard of teaching as well as of examinations would be different in different States. Those regions whose language is more developed will have a continuing edge over others.

These seems to be weighty arguments. It is very true indeed that we do not have a sufficient number of books and periodicals of quality in any branch of knowledge in any of our regional languages which would be appropriate for reference at higher stages of learning. In my own subject, Economics, I do not know of any book written in my own language, Bengali,—supposed to be one of the richer among the Indian languages, which I can recommend to my post-graduate students. There must be many Indian languages whose performance is even more inadequate. Further, the introduction of regional languages, which will amount for all practical purposes to debarring scholars of one State teaching and taking part in examinations in university centres located in other States, will necessarily result in the creation of an imbalance in the progress of study in different States.

Yet, if one has to have a sense of proportion, one must realize that even as it is we do not have perfect mobility of talents in our country, far less anything like a uniformity in the standard of teaching and examination in the various university centres in our country. One of the strange paradoxes in our thinking on this question, as perhaps on others as well, is that an innovation is not accepted unless it can be shown to be perfect. We very often forget that the system that is proposed to be replaced is not perfect either. As it is, it so happens, even within the same State, thanks to the proliferation of universities, standards have become severely uneven. It is unlikely that this unevenness will be accentuated

by the introduction of regional languages. And if, as we argue here, it improves the level in absolute terms, we may expect even the weaker university centres to be a shade better than what they are at the moment.

The fact is that reliable text-books written by Indians are not available in English either. In any case, whatever the medium of instruction may be, we have to depend for quite a considerable time on books written by foreigners. Absence of text-books for higher education in regional languages is thus no argument against the use of regional languages as medium of instruction; rather it is an argument in favour of the continuance of the use of books written in an international language. The two can go together, as they do even in more advanced countries whose native language happens not to be an international language. Teachers of science and technology seem to be worried about technical terms, appropriate synonyms of which are difficult to get. But why should technical terms be regionalized at all? They are international and may remain as such. In fact retention of technical terms in their original form has an advantage in that it will facilitate a scholar's passage from his regional text to an international text.

It is often argued in favour of the continuance of the use of English as medium of instruction and examination that it is within this system that India produced in the past outstanding scholars in various fields. Very true. We do have instances of internationally known Indian philosophers and scientists who have had their education through the medium of English. Now, for exceptionally brilliant men a foreign language is no bar to the acquisition of knowledge. If our Indian scholars have succeeded in making contributions to knowledge in various fields, their success has been in spite of English as the medium of instruction and not because of it. The problem of medium of instruction has indeed assumed significance in view of the increasing democratization of higher education. Even as it is, our experience is that in those centres where option is given to examinees to write either in English or in a regional

language, the top boys prefer to write in English. For them language is no obstacle, and it is clear that they would do as well if they wrote in their own mother tongue.

My contention thus is that English which is the international language most acceptable to this country in view of our traditional association with it, should continue as a subsidiary study right at the school stage; but the regional language should form the medium of instruction and examination up to the post-graduate stage. In so far as reliable text-books are/or will be available, they will naturally be used by students. But at the post-graduate stage students will have to depend mainly upon books written in English. Those of our boys who are relatively bright and intend to go in for higher education will from their school stage start acquiring knowledge of English, so as to be able at a later stage to read books written in that language, after they have had already acquired the basic knowledge of their respective subjects through the medium of their own regional language. For this, an intensive study of the English language and literature is not necessary, unless one's field of specialization is itself language and literature. If it is general education that a student seeks and he is not called upon to pick up jobs which involve inter-State or international communication, he may very well do without English altogether. For specialization at the post-graduate stage, English will be indispensable, and quite a few who will have specialized in their respective fields will be available for general purpose jobs too; everywhere and at all times it is only a small proportion of those who go in for specialized studies devote themselves to the cultivation of their special fields of knowledge—the majority turn out in the end to be generalists any way.

The problem of All-India services

A rather important question arises, once we adopt regional languages as a medium of instruction and examination as a universal rule, concerning the mode in which examinations are to be held for the Central Government jobs such as are

conducted by the Union Public Service Commission. It is learnt that this august body has decided to allow candidates to take examinations in all the fifteen regional languages, besides English. It does look as if the decision of the UPSC is only a logical conclusion of our acceptance of regional language as medium of university examinations. And if indeed examinations of the university type are to be held at all costs for all-India services, the decision is surely inevitable. But why must we have this kind of stereotyped examination for choosing candidates for all-India services? Why must we persist in every sphere with the system that we have inherited from our past rulers? It is surely puzzling that we should not have thought in terms of changing the entire mode of selecting candidates when examinations on an all-India basis were found to be complicated in view of the introduction of regional languages. For after all the system of examination that the UPSC has been following all these years is only a repetition of what the universities are supposed to be doing.

The argument that is often put forward in favour of having an all-India examination is that the standard of examination varies in different regions and in different universities, and that therefore in judging the relative merits of candidates we cannot entirely rely on the university records that they carry. The answer to this is that differences in standard are inevitable even in all-India examinations. After all even in an all-India examination we cannot escape differences that arise in view of the variety of subjects that the candidates choose. The method by which we try to make the standards in various subjects uniform in all-India examinations is indeed such as would suggest abolition of written papers altogether. If an intelligent, not necessarily scholarly, answer in literature or philosophy is to be rewarded by say 80-90% marks so as for the candidate to compete fairly with his rival in mathematics, then this general intelligence test would itself be sufficient to determine the relative merits of candidates, in whatever manner the intelligence is tested. I would suggest a drastic revision of the system of choosing candidates for all-India services by abolishing examinations altogether and by introducing a

general test such as is followed by private firms in our country. I am pretty clear that in those jobs where scholarship of a specialist character is not needed for good performance, examinations of the university-type are not only not necessary, they are altogether inferior as a means of selection as compared with personality tests.

The need for an inter-State link language

So far we have considered the language problem from the educationist's point of view. We have tried to examine what should be the medium of instruction and examination in our schools, colleges and universities, and how far it is possible for us to rely on only a regional language. Our answer has been that up to the undergraduate level where the purpose of education is to develop the student's faculty of understanding in a general way the regional language alone would do. But for higher education involving specialization, one international language, which naturally means English in the context of our country, is essential. Even at the post-graduate level a student will think in his regional language, write in his regional language and debate in his regional language. Yet, for keeping abreast of current developments in his special field, he will have to turn to books and journals written in English and possibly in one or two other foreign languages too. This does not mean that a student will necessarily shut his eyes to regional languages other than his own. A Bengali may indeed learn Hindi or Gujarati or Tamil, if he is interested in such regional literatures. Perhaps he will. But that will be optional and will not form a necessary part of his academic activity.

What are we to say then about a national language? It is argued that whatever the requirements on educational grounds may be, it is necessary that we should have a common language to form the basis of national integration. And it is suggested that since a larger number of Indians speak Hindi than any other single regional language, Hindi should be chosen as the medium for inter-State communication. This consideration is at the back of the oft-repeated three-language formula. If a

boy has to learn his subjects through his mother tongue and if he has to know English for international communication and Hindi for inter-State communication, then in those areas where Hindi is not the spoken language it is inevitable that he must know three languages. Further, since there is to be a balance (balance of disability) as regards the linguistic burden thrown on our boys of different States, a Hindi-speaking boy has also to be absorbed in the three-language formula, which means that some regional language, whatever it is, has to be learnt by him other than English and Hindi.

Now, whatever the merits of the three-language formula may be on political grounds—I have a suspicion that the persistent demand for Hindi on the part of the Hindi-speaking people and opposition to it on the part particularly of the South has been a factor conducive rather to national disintegration—it does not stand on logical grounds. If we have an international language in our curriculum, what is the need, one may surely ask, for another language for inter-State communication? The latter obviously is covered by the former, while the reverse may not be true. The three-language formula indeed reminds me of a story that is associated with Newton, the great mathematician. We are told that he had a nursery for rats in his house. For passing these rats out of and into it, he made two holes—one big and one small. The big hole was meant for the bigger rats and the small hole for the smaller rats. The mathematician just failed to comprehend, obviously in view of his more absorbing preoccupations, that while a big rat could not pass through a small hole, a small rat could very well pass through a big hole.

The problem of national integration

It will be argued,—and I have found Hindi enthusiasts among my friends arguing—that while English would be suitable for international communication, it would not be so for inter-State communication except for the few who have the ability to acquire knowledge in English. And since in a democratic society the opportunity for inter-State communication must be thrown open to the general mass of population,

English, it is argued, cannot be recommended as medium of inter-State communication. The argument has a mass appeal. But it is just a facile argument to drown opposition to the three-language formula ; it has hardly any substance. Who are the people, one may ask, who would be handicapped by our two-language formula ? Are not those that will be so handicapped 'irrelevant' to our universe of discourse ? Considering the limited possibility of mobility of population as between States, one feels certain that it is only the educated people who will be called upon to do jobs involving the needs for inter-State communication. The number of such people will, let us hope, increase in the course of time as a result of the democratization of education. And if this pressure continues, we are sure to have enough educated people with knowledge of English for the purpose of inter-State communication and transfer of ideas.

My position in this respect is that we should face the fact that India is a multilingual nation, and that its boundary has been demarcated on political grounds, not on linguistic grounds. If accidentally we had a common language all over the country, it would be very good indeed. Language does happen to be a factor unifying a group of people. But the language that unifies is the language that the people speak in the natural course and not a language that is imposed from outside. I would never think of having English as a common language for India in the context of national integration. If I bring in English, it is as a by-product of higher education, serving, as if incidentally, as a means of inter-State communication—which is all that is needed for sustaining our federal framework.

For creating a sense of oneness in our people, which is what national integration implies, we need more than a statutory acknowledgement of Hindi (or any *one* language) as a national language. We have seen that this may work the other way. I feel indeed that this constant reminder that we must recognize a 'common culture' or that we must not think in parochial terms, where facts are otherwise, tends to create

a mental framework in people which is just the opposite of what we need for national integration.

We may get on with fifteen or sixteen national languages, as indeed we have, and yet feel that we are citizens of the same nation. Let us not mince matters. Let us recognize that the urgency for this spirit is felt only in emergencies, such as we had during the Indo-Chinese and Indo-Pakistan conflicts. And for rousing the national spirit in such emergencies, what we need is the machinery of nation-wide propaganda (in regional languages of course). We have seen that, properly executed, propaganda does yield result. But for sustaining the spirit in normal times, the propaganda machinery must be backed up by governmental policies which provide an assurance of democracy, equality and economic progress within the political boundary,—norms which people have a spontaneous urge to preserve and for which they are prepared to fight. Given an adequate effort towards the activation of these norms, language and religion—the two potentially separatist forces in our country—may indeed be brought down to a subordinate position in the context of national integration.

FUNCTIONS OF CASTE IN MODERN INDIA

AJIT KUMAR DANDA

DIPALI GHOSH DANDA*

(*Received on 4 August 1967*)

Abstract. In this essay the authors have tried to analyse the impact of recent changes on different functions of caste in modern India with special reference to economic, political, social and religious roles. In their analysis the degrees of interaction that include co-operation, competition and conflict have been used as analytical tools.

The authors observe that in contemporary India the economic role of caste is undergoing more rapid change than the others and the political role is getting comparatively more prominence. The social and religious roles have been enumerated as least affected by change. They suggest that the study of the effect of changes in various roles of caste upon one another could contribute to this analysis considerably.

IN modern India 'the institution of caste has found new fields of activity' (Srinivas, 1962 : 15). In order to understand the various functions of this immensely important institution of India it is necessary, first of all, to know what is meant by caste and what are the various roles it plays in the economic, political, social, and religious systems of India. There have been many attempts to define caste. But as the emphases of scholars have been concentrated on one or another of the various functions of this complex institution, none of the definitions is fully satisfactory. In recent years some scholars have attempted to define caste structurally (Bohannon, 1963 : 169). But no satisfactory result has yet been obtained. As Leach observes :

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In the writings of anthropologists and sociologists the word 'caste' is used in two different senses. As an ethnographic category it refers exclusively to a system of social organization peculiar to Hindu India, but as a sociological category it may denote almost any kind of class structure of exceptional rigidity (1962 : 1).

Leach does not personally believe in the latter usage of the term. According to him, caste denotes a particular species of structural organization indissolubly linked with Pan-Indian civilization (1962 : 5). Dumont and Pocock also have the same point of view (1957 : 7.22). But as the nature of caste and the intensity of its function varies from area to area, it is difficult to make any overall generalization. Majumdar and Madan observe :

Caste sanctions and strictures still govern social, religious and economic activities of an average Indian in the villages and, to a decreasing extent, in the towns and the cities (1960 : 322).

Our personal view is that the complexity of the problem is much greater than Majumdar and Madan have observed, because the various roles played by the caste system cannot be fully understood on the basis of rural-urban dichotomy. The various functions of caste find different intensity of expression in different regions and thus vary from the ideal type. Both economic (division of labour on the basis of caste) and political functions of caste are generally less intense in cities than in villages. However, the social and ritual distinctions based on caste continue to be widespread in urban areas.

The purpose of introducing questions of definition and regional differences in the nature of caste is to emphasize the complexity of the institution. It leads us to another question regarding the function of caste—whether any overall generalization is possible and, if it is so, on what basis. Kolenda, on the basis of her analysis of caste studies made by four different scholars (Wiser : 1936, Gould : 1958, Beidelman : 1959, and Leach : 1962) suggests :

Castes can be seen as classes—using Weber's term, social categories of persons sharing similar relation-

ships to property, income and market, the basic division being the propertied and propertyless. Castes can be seen as 'status groups', communities sharing a given degree of social honor, style of life, usually endogamous. Castes within and among themselves may also be seen as 'parties', organizations influencing community action, their will contending with that of other parties in establishing programs for the community or attaining personal power goals. Lastly, we may add that castes have to be seen as strata, since these groups are ranked in hierarchies (1962 : 29).

In spite of immense regional variations, we will attempt to give a generalized picture of the four views of caste, viz economic, political, social, and religious, citing examples from time to time from regional studies of contemporary Indian society. As all these four views have a common denominator, i.e., interactions (co-operation, competition, and conflict), the degree of co-operation, competition, and conflict will be used as analytical tools.

Economic role of caste

Ideally, caste, being the basis of division of labour, integrates the society on the basis of organic solidarity. It 'provides free training and education to its members in the skills in which it is traditionally proficient' (Majumdar and Madan, 1960 : 237). Thus the members of different castes are ascribed different economic positions. The co-operation and mutual interdependence of these various castes integrate the society organically.

Regarding the economic role of caste, there are two different types of co-operation. These are intercaste and intracaste. When various castes co-operate with one another on the basis of division of labour, we call it intercaste co-operation. This system is closest to the ideal type, and here the emphasis is on production. Intracaste co-operation is largely found in the dealings of the members of a particular caste with their customers. If, for example, the customer of a BARBER does not fulfil his obligation, the whole BARBER caste will co-operate to exert pressure on the customer. A number of such cases have been reported by social scientists working in India.

If members of a professional caste want to raise their payment for service, they co-operate, and the decision is made by the caste panchayat (assembly). As Opler and Singh observe in an eastern Uttar Pradesh village :

The purjan-jajman tie is supported by the influence and action of regional caste assemblies ; the interest of Senapur villagers are defended by the caste assemblies to which they belong. If a purjan complains to his caste assembly that he has been ignored or mistreated by his hereditary customer, the assembly may very well forbid other members of the caste to render service to the offender. In a society where many specific tasks can be performed only by particular functional groups or castes, such a ruling brings the most powerful landowner quickly to terms (1948 : 495).

In short, we can say that the intracaste co-operation fulfils two different functions. It protects the existing interests of the caste members, on the one hand, and aspires for better interest, on the other.

The above examples, however, indicate two different kinds of unity of castes. Srinivas calls them 'horizontal unity' and 'vertical unity' (1952 : 31-32). When different castes co-operate economically it is called vertical unity. When members of the same caste co-operate, it is called horizontal unity.

In a caste society in which one's economic position is ascribed at birth, there is little incentive for competition. The Hindu doctrine of *karma*, which is based on the belief that one's status in life is determined by one's actions in the previous incarnations, further aggravates the situation. It provides a justification for his present disabilities and teaches him to accept present conditions. As Be'teille points out, 'In Hindu society, caste divisions play a part both in actual social interactions and in the ideal scheme of values. Members of different castes are, up to a point, expected to behave differently and to have different values and ideals' (1965 : 45).

Another factor reinforcing the ideal type is that 'higher caste status is associated with landownership or superior rights on the soil...' (Majumdar and Madan, 1960 : 230). So the

impoverished masses have very little to do but to accept the condition to which they are born. Bailey's observation in Orissa also agrees with this. He writes :

Certainly in Bisipara, and probably in village communities elsewhere, the ranking system of caste-groups was validated not only by ritual and social usage, but also by differential control over the productive resources... There was a high degree of coincidence between politico-economic rank and the ritual ranking of caste (1957 : 266).

However, since Independence, the traditional systems in different areas are undergoing change at different rates. In a Tanjore village of South India Be'teille observes that, 'Traditional economic relationships based upon status are giving place to relationships of a more contractual nature in which the cash nexus plays an important part. ... The village has become in a multitude of ways part of a much wider economic system' (1965 : 140).

Similar changes in economic relationships have been observed in Orissa by Bailey. But this did not result in any social mobility within the caste hierarchy. As Bailey observes :
In seeking to improve his position in the ritual system of rank in his own community, the rich man cannot throw off his poorer caste-fellows : he must carry them along with him. There are clear reasons for this. The new economy has done nothing to break down caste endogamy (1957 : 270).

There are several factors involved here. Though the different development programmes have opened up many new economic opportunities, the benefits of such programmes have been enjoyed by individuals, not groups. But in a caste society, mobility is a group phenomenon. Even at the group level mobility in the ranking system does not lie solely within the aspirant's caste-group and in its solidarity. It lies also in the solidarity of higher caste-groups, for these close their ranks against rich men of lower caste (Bailey, 1957 : 270-271).

The problem can be looked at from a different point of view as well. In the changing economic system of India, economic

mobility is a local phenomenon. One can make a fortune according to one's ability to exploit the locally available opportunities. But scaling the social ladder is pan-cultural.

We have, so far, emphasized the economic role of caste only. But the problem can be fully understood only after a discussion of the political, social and religious roles of the institution.

Political role of caste

There are two classical traditions of authority in India. One is brahminical or sacred, by virtue of which the members of the Brahmin caste enjoy certain political privileges. The other is the *rajdharma* of the Kshatriya caste. Both these traditions stem from the Hindu view of life and imply ascribed status. Naturally they are in conflict with the new Panchayati Raj system introduced by the Indian Government, a system which emphasizes achieved status. As Berreman observes, 'the contemporary rural community in India is simply not structured for democratic, equalitarian self-administration' (1963 : 93). In addition, parliamentary institutions presuppose single-interest relationships and thus are not well adapted to the traditional Indian situation. The caste society indicates multi-dimensional relationships. However, in order to gain a clear understanding of the political role of caste in contemporary India, the different arenas of politics should be taken into consideration. The village and the constituency, as for example, will be discussed here.

The major roles in the Indian political scene are played by the 'dominant caste'. According to Bailey, there are two different types of dominant castes, the traditional and the modern (1960 : 257-263). The representatives of the traditional dominant caste are the elites from the upper stratum of the caste hierarchy. The modern dominant caste is based on numerical strength. At the constituency level members of the traditional caste are more active, and at the village level the members of the modern dominant caste are more active. According to Bailey, in Orissa 'there are several political systems...the actors pick and choose between them' (1960 : 271).

It has usually been found that at the village level the appeal for votes follows caste lines, and this has been quite effective. At the constituency level, on the other hand, the candidate needs a greater degree of interaction with other castes and co-operation from them. The identification with one caste may forfeit the support of others.

Election alliances among castes on more or less the same level of the social hierarchy may be formed. This was observed by Be'teille in Madras (1965 : 156). A similar phenomenon was observed in Jhabiran, a western Uttar Pradesh village where all the artisan castes grouped together to fight the village election. A broader alliance was observed by Bailey in Orissa, where economic moves brought all Hindu castes together to fight against the Konds (a tribal group). '...the struggle for control over resources can now be carried on by larger groups and must take place in a larger political arena. Konds and Oriyas, who in the Kond hills formerly were cultural categories, are now becoming political groups' (1960 : 270-271).

One interesting observation made by Bailey in this context is the multi-dimensional relationships among castes. '...the same set of people interact with one another in politics, in ritual, in making a living, and so forth' (1963 : 220). Parliamentary institutions, however, presuppose a complex society that can work in single-interest relationships. In Orissa the effective means of obtaining votes must be to develop a multi-dimensional relationship with the villagers. However, such a relationship presupposes division of loyalty. At the national level, the members of India's ruling Congress party had to face many such problems. When their loyalty to the Untouchables made them enact a law prohibiting discrimination, they had to face opposition from the 'clean' castes, as this law endangered their right to protect their ritual purity.

Social role of caste

It has already been mentioned that Hindus occupy an ascribed social status in the caste hierarchy by virtue of their birth, and ordinarily these statuses are associated with certain prescribed occupations. But 'it must be pointed out here that caste status is not the function of an occupation ; instead it is

the ritual purity or impurity of a caste occupation which determines the status, which a caste is to enjoy' (Majumdar and Madan, 1960 : 223).

Membership in a caste imposes two main restrictions on a person. One has to marry within one's own caste, and one must not accept cooked food from a lower caste. So we find that when the economic division of labour integrates different castes with one another, the rules of endogamy and commensality separate them. Thus, in a way, the economic functions of a caste promote intercaste co-operation, and the social functions of a caste promote intracaste co-operation.

There have been several attempts to evaluate the social distance between castes. We think Majumdar and Madan simplify the situation too much when they say :

The caste basis of such social distance is the fear, among higher castes, of pollution which results from proximity to, or contact with, the lower castes. ... The social distance observed in Madras has been accounted for by the *mana* concept which makes avoidance compulsory to escape the evil consequences of superior *mana* (1960 : 231-232).

They further add that the status of a caste depends upon the degree of purity of blood and the extent of isolation maintained by it (1960 : 236). When they talk about the co-operation of different castes in order to maintain social hierarchy, they reflect an upper caste bias. In fact, there is constant conflict among castes of different social positions.

As has already been pointed out, the castes of a lower social position constantly try to improve their social status. Although, according to Senart, '... under certain conditions mobility in the system of ritual ranking is possible' (1930 : 75), the problem is not so simple. In such a situation an aspirant caste is usually subject to two types of pressure. On the one hand, the upper caste groups rarely grant a position desired by a lower caste; on the other hand, the caste member of former parallel social position never recognizes the superior position of the aspirant caste. As a

result, we find more competition and conflict than co-operation. In contemporary India, this intercaste competition and conflict sometimes promote intracaste co-operation. As Be'teille points out, 'In their general styles of living the different categories of Brahmins have more in common today than they had in the past' (1965 : 79).

Religious role of caste

So far as the religious role of caste is concerned, we find a restricted degree of intercaste co-operation. This exists in the sense that the Brahmins are required to perform religious functions only at the house of a member of the clean castes. The degree of ritual co-operation of a Brahmin decreases with the diminishing social position of the other castes.

Ideally, one's right to perform a religious ceremony is subject to the ritual position occupied by birth. Utterance of *gayatri* (a sacred formula) is the absolute right of a Brahmin. In contemporary India we find little deviation from this ideal type. As Majumdar and Madan (1960 : 236) pointed out, the ritual status of a person depends on the degree of purity of blood one can maintain and the extent of ritual isolation from pollution. Naturally, even in eating habits the ritual sanction is still a regulating force. In most regions of India, the Brahmins are vegetarians.

It is interesting to note here that ritual ranking, like social status, is attached to groups, not individuals. An individual can evade the ritual sanctions of his caste by becoming a *sannyasi* (ascetic). But this will not elevate the ritual rank of his caste. In contemporary India, there are many instances of group effort to elevate the ritual position of a caste. This process has been called 'sanskritization' (Srinivas, 1956 : 481-496).

By sanskritization, Srinivas means the process of taking over, as far as possible, the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the brahminical way of life by a low caste. This process was found operating among the Kamar (BLACKSMITH) of Jhabiran who started wearing the sacred

thread and gave up the practice of eating non-vegetarian food in order to elevate their ritual position.

In the sanskritization process we find two contradictory forces at work. At the intracaste level it is the force of co-operation, and at the intercaste level it is the force of competition. The intercaste competition sometimes leads to conflict. So in the religious domain of caste also we find the interplay of all three ways of interaction, namely, co-operation, competition and conflict.

In this discussion it has been attempted to treat the different aspects of caste separately. But as a function of the same institution of caste, the economic, political, social and religious roles are, in practice, inseparable.

However, in order to understand the various functions of caste, one has to study the roles of all these categories in an integrated way.

It has been found in the discussion that in contemporary India the economic role of caste is undergoing more rapid change than the others and the political role is getting comparatively more prominence. Probably the social and religious roles of caste are least affected by change. To gain a clear idea of this dynamic aspect of caste, it will be useful to study the effects of change in these various roles of caste on one another.

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ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE DULE BEHARAS OF MIDNAPUR

TARASISH MUKHOPADHYAY

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Abstract : The author has described the changing occupations of a very poor rural caste in West Bengal, called the Dule.

Introduction

THIS study concerns the nature of occupations among the Dule-Beharas in eastern Midnapur, West Bengal. Risley (1891 : 1 : 259) notes, 'Dulia a subcaste of Bagdis in Bengal, who are fishermen, palki-bearers and general labourers.' But the Dules of Midnapur villages claimed to be a sub-caste of the Beharas. The word Behara generally means a group of people who carry the palanquin and *duli* or open litter. The Beharas are divided into four groups, namely, Dule-Behara, Hari-Behara, Pan-Behara and Oriya-Behara. Except the Oriya-Beharas, the other three groups live in that locality. Among all these groups palanquin-bearing is their mainstay, with day-labour and other occupations as subsidiary.

All the four groups of Beharas are endogamous. They follow their own customs and rigid social norms. None of them partakes of cooked food, water and toddy from a different group of Beharas, and the members of each such group refuse to accept cooked food from castes which are not served by them. The Dules are considered as *jal-achal*, i.e. 'clean' castes never accept cooked food or water from them. It is equally significant that a number of local castes (clean or unclean) refuse to smoke with them in the same hubble-bubble or share the fag end of a country-made cigarette (*bidi*) which has been smoked by a Dule. Even today, the local Brahmins,

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Nabasakha (nine clean castes) and the Mahishyas (the numerically dominant agricultural caste) refuse to sit with the Dules on the same mat or bench. Due to their low status and poverty the Dules consider themselves as a separate social group from others of the village. They live completely isolated in their own ward and do not have anything to do with village problems. They have their own caste panchayat localized in the village. This is separate from the village panchayat.

For investigation I selected two multi-caste villages, namely, Tarangakhali and Palanda which are located 78 kilometers south-west of Calcutta. In these villages, the settlement area includes a number of wards, occupied by different castes. The particular ward occupied exclusively by the Dule-Beharas is known as Dule-para. This ward is located precisely between the arbitrary revenue boundaries of the two afore-mentioned villages. According to village rules, the Dule-Beharas living within the boundaries of a particular village maintain certain obligatory relationships with the village concerned. But outside these obligations, the Dule-Beharas consider themselves as one group rather than as members of the respective villages.

The ward where the Dule-Beharas live is formed by 49 families. It has a total population of 231 : 121 males and 110 females. The average size of a family is 4.7. They hold only 2.182 acres of land of which the homestead land is 2.026 acres and cultivated land is 0.156 acre. Excluding their homestead land, they are practically landless.

Economic life

Traditionally, the Dule-Beharas of the two villages are PALANQUIN-BEARERS. Out of a total of 49 families, 36 are presently engaged in it, while the remaining 13 families are pursuing non-traditional occupations such as *bidi*-binding (1), service in a rice-mill (1), maidservant's work (1), fishing (1), day-labour (5), begging (2), living by the sale of property from time to time (1) and in one family, the head of the household has no regular source of income at all. Moreover, these 49

families also depend on a number of other subsidiary occupations. For instance, in each household, the women help the family substantially through fishing.

Table 1 explains the nature of occupational changes in different generations.

Palanquin : Previously, palanquins and *dulis* or open litters with only a cover on top were commonly used by the villagers. Now, it is only at the time of marriage that a palanquin is used to send the newly wed bride to her husband's home. However, a different transportation may be used if she is married at a distant place. About 22 years ago, 40 palanquins were in use for carrying persons and, in fact, it was the only available means of transport. During my field investigation in 1964, I noticed only 5 palanquins and a single *duli*. These five palanquins are owned by five different families and the single *duli* is under the joint ownership of two persons. According to my informants, approximately 25 years ago, a new palanquin cost Rs. 48 while it is now not less than Rs. 150.

There is no fixed set of persons for carrying a palanquin. The palanquin is carried by four person, two in front and two behind. The owner selects bearers as and when a call is received. The four bearers share the money equally. The owner of the palanquin gets an equal share in addition to a sum for owning the palanquin. So, in fact, it is divided into five and the bearers are paid by the owner accordingly. On special occasions, the palanquin bearers are entitled to receive payments in kind like rice, vegetables, pulses, oil, salt and spices in addition to cash. In such cases, the owner has no special advantage. People below the age of 20 are not allowed to carry a palanquin. They therefore try to help the family in other ways. It is interesting to note that in no case do they carry their own castemen even if one would like to be carried by them. Thus a kind of taboo is maintained with the palanquin. The Dules consider that with the improvement of roads and transporation facilities, cycle rickshaws and bus-services are partly responsible for their suffering.

Collecting : During harvest, both men and women go in search of paddy from rat-holes in the fields. The Dules are skilled in finding grains from rat-holes by means of special techniques. For collecting paddy, they go in a group to distant villages, even ten miles away. In 1963, out of a total of 49 families, 37 families actually participated in that operation. They collected a total of about 43 maunds ($82\frac{1}{2}$ lbs \times 43) of paddy. The cost of this amount was not less than Rs. 700 according to local market rates. They, however, consumed the paddy entirely themselves.

During the rains, from June through August, and in the spring, from February to the middle of April, the Dule women and children move around villages in search of snails, locally known as *genra*. This is a primary raw material used for preparing lime. This lime is most commonly used for whitewashing, though it has other uses too. The Dules, however, only sell the outer shells and the flesh inside is used for rearing ducks. It is not customary for the Dules to prepare lime themselves. They sell the raw material directly to certain other low castes like the Hari and the Keora, who are especially skilled in that trade. The local Mahishyas—**AGRICULTURISTS** sometimes work as middlemen in this transaction. The lime-makers have a special kiln, where they burn these shells and get lime. The cost of one and a half maund of shell fluctuates between Rs. 1.25 and Rs. 3, according to the availability of snails in a particular year or the demand for lime in general. In 1963, 36 Dule families earned Rs. 624 by selling snail-shells.

Poultry : Rearing young ducks is a subsidiary occupation for Dule women. The local Muslims provide them with young ducks on agreement that the Dules would return 50% of them afterwards. The Dules sell these ducks in the neighbouring weekly and bi-weekly markets. A pair of ducks may cost about Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 4.25, according to weight and quality. In 1963, 28 families earned Rs. 300 by selling them. The other families were busy in other pursuits.

Fishing : Fishing in village canals or shallow ponds and ditches is an important daily pursuit of Dule women.

Women from different 'unclean' families participate jointly in the catch every day. Before starting for fishing, the women wear clothes in a different way to protect themselves. One or two adult men who are not occupied for the day accompany them. While the women are off fishing, the young children from different households are taken care of by an elderly woman. On most of the days, they start by at about 12 noon and return home at 6 p. m. They use small hand-nets and a kind of fish-trap. This fish-trap is made of basketry. Considering their poverty, villagers sympathetically allow them to fish in their unused tanks or ditches. Sometimes a portion of the catch is shared between the owner and the Dules. Here it may be mentioned that members of the fishing caste as well as other members of the lower castes are also employed for fishing by the owner on the definite agreement that they would return 50% of the total catch. According to the Dules, they can expect a better catch in the rainy season than in summer. During summer, sometimes they cannot find fish at all. In that locality, fish is comparatively cheaper during the rainy season than in other seasons of the year. It is rather difficult for them to approximate the total amount they earn throughout the year round from fishing with high degree of accuracy,

All these striking features of their economic life show an unstable economic condition and as such we can find a definite reflection in their daily budget.

Table 1 explains the occupations followed by the Dules in course of three generations

| Occupation of the first ascending generation | | Occupation of the egos' generation | | Occupation of the first descending generation | | Occupation of other members living in the family | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| Main Nos. | Subsidiary Nos. | Main Nos. | Subsidiary Nos. | Main Nos. | Subsidiary Nos. | Main Nos. | Subsidiary Nos. |
| Palanquin bearer | 46 Fishing Day labour and fishing Day labour | 36 Palanquin bearer Bidi-binding Service in a rice mill | 7 Day labour and fishing 6 Day labour | 1 Palanquin bearer Fishing Day labour | 1 Bidi-binding Nil | 30 Fishing and collecting snail by wife Same by wife and mother Same by mother Same by wife and daughter Day labour for agriculture | 1 Palanquin bearer and <i>bidi</i> -binder Making rope of jute and hemp fibres Nil |
| Fish business | 2 Agriculture Sorcerer | 5 Agriculture and fishing 1 day labour 1 Maid servant | 1 Agriculture and fishing 14 Fishing 1 Service | 1 Service 2 Bidi-binding 2 Collecting snail | 1 Bidi-binding 2 Bidi-binding 2 Collecting snail | 3 Same by wife and mother 1 Same by mother 1 Day labour for agriculture | 47 Nil |
| Sorcerer (<i>gunin</i>) | 1 Fishing and agriculture Nil | 5 Day labour 1 Selling property 2 Begging Nil | 2 Palanquin bearer and fishing 5 Agricultural labour 1 Fishing and <i>bidi</i> -binding 1 Midwifery and priesthood Nil | 2 Maid servant 2 Maid servant 1 Carrying the palanquin by one son and the other a <i>bidi</i> binder | 1 Maid servant 1 Carrying the palanquin by one son and the other a <i>bidi</i> binder | 1 Day labour for agriculture Nil Nil Nil | 1 1 13 13 |
| Total | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 | 49 |

OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES IN TWO VILLAGES IN BENGAL

P. K. BHOWMICK

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Abstract. The author has analysed the changes taking place among three Scheduled communities in two villages in Midnapur, West Bengal. It shows the impact which the Government's welfare schemes have had upon the population concerned.

Introduction

FOR a long time past India has been able to maintain the age-old caste-bound traditional occupational patterns. These occupations were very specific and hierarchical in nature. Caste-bound occupations are generally non-competitive in their character. India too, in the past, afforded for a long time to the individuals, sufficient quantity of land, which was used for home-stead as well as for agricultural purposes. Due to variegated occupational patterns, which were inter-dependent and inextricably interlaced in their social setting, there was very little scope for one to encroach upon the fields of others, thereby causing any sort of interactional tension. So inter-relationship amongst the various groups of people was more or less smooth and harmonious. But in course of time, the spread of Western education, employment facilities offered to them by the ruling power in new types of jobs, without reference to caste, division of clientele in case of service occupations, pressure of population, changes in material life and technology, etc. have all dealt a serious blow to the existing social and economic life of the people. Again, after Independence, various developmental activities required the utilization of vast stretches of land for construction of roads, railways buildings, and other projects, which directly affected

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the existing land-resources of the people, and in its train, have brought about acute land problems to the country as a whole.

Against such a background it is our duty to assess the various phases of change in the existing social patterns everywhere which are taking place day by day. This paper mainly depicts changes in the occupational patterns of the Bagdi (Scheduled Caste), the Lodhas (Denotified community) and the Mundas (Scheduled Tribe). This sample survey was conducted at Andhariabhera and Daharpur villages in Narayangarh P. S. in the district of Midnapur. Details of family and population with the number of working men, as noted in the survey, are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Family, population and working men

| Sl. No. | Caste tribe | Village | Family | Population | | | Working men |
|---------|-------------|---------------|--------|------------|-----|-------|-------------|
| | | | | M. | F. | Total | |
| 1 | Bagdi | Andhariabhera | 30 | 72 | 81 | 153 | 36 |
| 2 | Lodha | Daharpur | 49 | 109 | 119 | 228 | 57 |
| 3 | Munda | do. | 84 | 237 | 249 | 486 | 146 |

Nature of occupations

To find out the base-line regarding the nature of occupational patterns, an estimate has been made by asking the individuals about the nature of occupations of their fathers' generation. The data obtained have been given in Table 2.

After Independence, many kinds of changes in the social and economic sphere have taken place in different parts of the country. But in this particular place, very little change was noticed in the traditional ways of living of the people.

The influence of Block Development activities seems to have spread amongst them round about 1950. This gave these people an opportunity of making certain essential changes in their normal ways of living. Besides, a welfare centre was started in this area for work amongst the Lodhas of Daharpur, even when the Lodhas were considered as a 'Criminal Tribe'. Activities of the welfare centre, along with other welfare activities made amongst them, backed by the developmental activities of the Block Development Office have changed many aspects of the economic life, of these people. Rehabilitation of some families through the welfare organizations of this area in the form of land purchase, industrial enterprise and establishment of a grain-*gola* (grain bank) and a model agricultural farm, etc. have considerably changed the prevailing agricultural techniques which, in course of time, have toned up and stabilized agricultural wage-earners into typical agriculturists.

TABLE 2

Occupational patterns in the Fathers' generation

| Sl. No. | Caste ^a tribe | Occupation | |
|---------|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| | | Primary | Secondary |
| 1 | Bagdi | (i) Paddy cultivation (ii) Agricultural labour | (i) Day labour |
| 2 | Lodha | (i) Day labour (ii) Fishing and hunting (iii) Collection of fuel from jungles | |
| 3 | Munda | (i) Paddy cultivation (ii) Agricultural labour | (i) Fishing (i) Hunting |

It may be said in this connexion that the Bagdis have been living in this village for a long time, and this is an area of Bagdi-concentration. This particular village is solely occupied by the Bagdis.

The Lodhas have been living in this village for more than three generations, i. e. for about 75 years. Casual migration from one village to another, and desertion due to fear of the Police for their alleged criminal activities, are very common amongst them. The Mundas are now living in six hamlets of this village and these have been named after six large silted tanks, the banks of which have been used for settlement. The Mundas began to migrate to this village, i. e. the easternmost tract of the district, some time about 35 years ago for the first time, in small kin-groups, in search of cultivable land from the western part of the district which is adjacent to Bihar.

Patterns of occupation

(1) **Paddy cultivation** : Paddy is the only crop which is raised by the people here. The cultivation of paddy mainly depends on the nature of the soil or type of land, irrigation facilities, technique or skill of the cultivator, nature of seeds, investment of capital, etc. The Bagdis and the Mundas are not skilled agriculturists ; most of them are not conversant with scientific methods of agriculture. The land which is available here per family is of variable quality and size. They practise paddy cultivation by broadcasting in the month of June, if the rain has been favourable. In rare cases, they prepare nursing beds and later transplant these in the prepared fields. Normally very little manuring is done, and if this is done at all, it is of a poor standard. In rare cases, they grow vegetables or greens, which consist of a few chillies, brinjals or pumpkins. A few people, specially among Bagdis and Mundas, have their own land for paddy cultivation, and a few others depend on the lands of others, i. e. work as sharecroppers, where the expenditure is borne by the cultivator while the labourer gets half of the yield as his wages.

(2) **Agricultural labour :** Labourers are employed during the agricultural season by other castes and community groups in the village or in the neighbourhood when the former are paid in cash or in kind, either on a daily or seasonal basis. It may be said in this connexion that they are not skilled agriculturists when compared with other agricultural castes of this region. Employment is available, as a good number of non-cultivating landholding communities like Brahmins, Kayasthas and Sadgops, who own most of the cultivable land of the locality, do not till the lands themselves.

(3) **Day labour :** A day labourer may find work in the construction of roads, railway tracks, hut-building and doing other odd jobs casually available in the area. The nature of payment in such cases is in cash, which varies remarkably in different cases. In many cases, heavy tiffin consisting of fried rice is supplied to them at about 9 A.M. in addition.

(4) **Fishing and hunting :** Fishing and hunting are the important avocations of the Lodhas, who take to these specially just after the cultivation season is over. Most of them engage in these activities and catch fishes of different kinds in the paddy fields after harvest, and during summer months they catch tortoises, fishes, etc. from the silted tanks of the neighbourhood. This is done by the Mundas also. The Lodhas hawk about and sell the catch in the locality for cash.

(5) **Collection of fuel :** This is generally practised by the Lodhas who go to the neighbouring jungles and collect firewood for sale in the locality for cash.

Possession of land or availability of cultivable land has a direct impact on the nature of employment, especially during the cultivation season. The following table gives an approximate picture in respect of their land-holdings.

TABLE 3

Land-holding (Approximate)

| Sl. No. | Caste or tribe | No. of family | Land cultivated (in acres) | | Remarks |
|---------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|----------------|--|
| | | | Owned | Share-cropping | |
| 1 | Bagdi | 80 | 35 | 14 | |
| 2 | Lodha | 49 | 12 | 4 | 45 acres of land have been purchased recently through the Government Rehabilitation Project. |
| 3 | Munda | 84 | 31 | 92 | |

In this connexion it may be said that 14 Bagdi families of this villages are landless. They have only homestead land. 3 families have less than one acre of their own and 5 families have more than 4 acres. Others have very little land. But almost all of them cultivate a small piece of Govt. possessed *Khas* land, temporarily on lease, and lands of others by mutual agreement as sharecroppers. Only 3 Lodha families have cultivable land of their own. It is to be noted that these owners rarely cultivate land themselves but prefer to make these over on lease to others for sharecropping, due to the general dislike of cultivation and paucity of capital. Rather they prefer to be employed as day-labourers, in which case there is no risk of financial loss at all.

Very recently, after the implementation of the rehabilitation scheme in 1959, about 45 acres of cultivable land have been purchased and distributed to the Lodha families through a Multipurpose Co-operative Society. Besides, a good quantity of *Khas* (Railway spare land) was made available and was cultivated by a few families. In this case, the expenses were borne for a few years by the Government and a grain-bank was started here to offer paddy on loan.

The *Khas* lands which were thorny and full of thickets and jungles, were cleared by the Mundas and about 52 families are now in possession of these lands. A good many of them have also been enjoying the right of cultivation like the Lodhas. Besides, almost all the Munda families are sharecroppers serving others.

Recent changes

Recent changes in the occupational patterns are distinctly noticeable, because a few agricultural labourers or seasonal cultivators have become typical agriculturists, practising agriculture throughout the year, either for paddy or for vegetable gardening. This is due to the fact that the planned welfare programme that has been adopted here, has been able to give new occupations to a few families. Besides, the establishment of the grain-bank has helped all the tribals (Santals, Mundas and Lodhas) to get paddy on loan at a nominal interest. This is paid back by them after harvest. Such grant of loan is a part and parcel of the welfare scheme of the Government. Interest in gardening and fishing is now increasing among the Bagdis and most of them are getting assistance from the Village Level Worker, either in the form of improved seeds or manure. Various types of agricultural loans on easy terms are now available to them from the Block Office; and this has compelled the unauthorised usurers or money-lenders to withdraw from the village. But the ills are not yet totally removed. Table 4 depicts the details of the trends of change in occupational patterns surveyed recently (1967).

TABLE 4

Trends of occupational change

| Sl. No. | Caste or tribe | No. of families | Working men | Primary | Secondary |
|---------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|--|--|
| 1 | Bagdi | 30 | 36 | (1) Teacher-1 (2) Tailoring-1 Full-time agriculture-3 (3) Single crop cultivation and agricultural labour-31 | (1) Day labour-30 (2) Full-time agriculture and single crop cultivation-6 |
| 2 | Lodha | 49 | 57 | (1) Managerial-1 (2) Weaving-2 (3) Mat-making-1 (4) Agriculturist-8 (5) Single crop cultivation and full-time agriculture-43 (6) Domestic servant-2 | (1) Weaving-2 (2) Tailoring-2 (3) Carpentry-3 (4) Mat-making-8 (5) Single crop cultivation and day-labour-42 |
| 3 | Munda | 84 | 146 | (1) Full-time agriculturist-18 (2) Railway gang-coolies-24 (3) Single crop cultivation and day-labour-104 | (1) Single crop Cultivation-24 (2) Day labour etc.-122 |

It is evident from the above table that changes in occupational patterns have been due to the following reasons :

(i) Spread of education which has enabled 1 Bagdi to become a school-teacher and 1 Lodha, the manager of the co-operative society and the grain-bank. (ii) Industrial enterprises, as an item of planned rehabilitation programme,

have enabled a few persons to be employed in tailoring, weaving and mat-making as their primary occupation, and some others, as their secondary occupation. (iii) The model agricultural farm in the colony has provided encouragement to them in farming activities. The Block Development Office staff again have trained up a few persons in improved methods, so that they can work all through the year. It is noteworthy that the Bagdis, the Lodhas and the Mundas sell their agricultural products in the market and the locality throughout the year now, instead of occasionally, as they used to do in the past. These agriculturists are now accustomed to the use of fertilizers, pumping-sets, improved seeds and plants. (iv) Laying of double line in the railway track of the South-Eastern Railway here has provided employment to 18 Mundas, who have been working on this project for a long time on monthly wages. Yet a good number of them do not have any opportunity of employment. So they remain idle except in the cultivating season under compulsion, when opportunities for employment are largely expanded.

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A STUDY OF SOCIAL ATTITUDES AMONG THE GARO

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Abstract. In this article the social attitudes of the Garo have been described under the broad categories of sex, social gradations, grief, anger, social structure of values, dreams, supernatural world, mechanism of social control, personality types and suicide. In each, the normal social attitudes and their deviations have been discussed. No psychological interpretation has been attempted in this article.

VARIOUS attempts have been made from time to time to give a psychological orientation to ethnographic material. Psychologically pregnant interpretations have been sought in an otherwise barren ground of ethnographic data. On the other hand, psychologists have drawn upon ethnographic material to test their concepts. Kardinar's *The Individual and His Society* is a good example of this type of study. All these point to the fact that social anthropology and psychology are coming closer and closer and greater collaboration between these two disciplines is expected to reveal facts which will be of interest to both the disciplines. It is a good sign that more and more ethnographic studies with psychological orientation are coming up. But a word of caution is necessary about such studies. A cursory study is sufficient for an experienced ethnographer to write an account of, say, the kinship structure or the clan organization of a tribe. But deep and intimate observation is necessary for a study of the workings of the mind of a people, or to account for the deviations from the generally accepted social norms.

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The present study is the result of more than a decade of intensive work among the Garo in the Garo Hills District of Assam. The junior author had closest relations with the Garo as he continuously stayed among them for the whole period. Thus he had opportunity of studying the people at close quarters. The senior author joined him very frequently in the investigations. As will be evident from the text, the nature of the subject demands that no stereotyped methodology of investigation need be adopted. The data presented here are mainly the result of direct observation. Further, the data presented here came out in the course of investigations not primarily projected for this study. Here the authors have attempted to describe the general attitudes of the people to different social situations, and the common deviations from the normal patterns, and the people's social attitudes towards such deviations. We have not attempted to give any psychological interpretation of the phenomena. The material, however, has been presented in such a form as to make it amenable to psychological treatment by experts.

In the present study, attitudes have been presented under certain broad headings of different universal phenomena. We want to impress at this point that these broad heads should not be regarded as exhaustive. We have recorded attitudes which have mainly interested us, which may be due to the fact of their characteristic divergence from the attitudes towards similar phenomena in our own society. Besides this, we have tried to be as objective as possible in our investigation.

Sex

From early childhood Garo boys and girls are not taught to think of sex as something to be abhorred or despised. Elderly people talk about sex as freely in the presence of small children as when they speak about sunshine or rain. A petulant boy is calmed by holding out the threat that he would be castrated. Elderly people rebuke a man or a woman by referring to the penis or the vagina respectively or by reference to the anus. But beyond this, sex is not given free play. Children are trained to be ashamed of their private parts and not to expose

the genitalia from the age of 3 or 4. The genitalia of children are never played with by adults. Masturbation is unknown to Garo males and females.¹ When the authors suggested the idea of masturbation to a group of Garo adolescents they rejected it as idiotic. Homosexuality is also unknown to both males and females.² A group of Garo adolescents were much amused when we told them about homosexuality; they rejected the idea as impracticable. We however found a few instances of adults indulging in sexual intercourse with goats and cows. Such acts are socially disapproved as abhorrent; but in the cases recorded by us the involved persons were neither punished nor socially censured. Public denunciation on such sex aberrations is not a deterrent factor; it is taken as an abnormal sex behaviour which deserves no serious attention. In such cases we could not find any belief that the involved persons would be supernaturally punished. Though adults freely talk about sex in the presence of children, they are never allowed to get an opportunity of witnessing sexual intercourse or sexual play.³ Though adolescent boys and girls are not given any standardized sex instruction, they become quite familiar with sex matters, such as copulation, as sex is freely talked about by adults. However, children are not known to indulge in heterosexual intercourse or sexual play till they are physically grown up.⁴

Among the villagers who rarely come in contact with the plains people, grown up unmarried girls feel no shyness in keeping their breasts uncovered. However, among people who have come in closer contact with the plains people, unmarried girls never expose their breasts in public. But grown-up married women, even where they have come in close contact with the plains people, show no hesitation in keeping the breasts uncovered. But this does not mean that touching of the breasts is not regarded as an erotic advance. Touching or fondling the breast of a woman by a male other than the husband is regarded as an offence, and there is a prescribed amount of compensation for such transgression.⁵

There are practically no preliminaries to the sexual act. The partners do not bite or kiss each other. Kissing is not considered as amatory and infants are often kissed by adults. The male may occasionally fondle the breasts of the female as a preliminary to sexual intercourse. In sexual intercourse the male usually takes the initiative. However, we recorded a few instances where elderly women with young husbands used to take the initiative.

Exclusive sexual right over each other is regarded as the prerogative of a married couple. Thus, adultery is considered as a breach of this privilege and the offender is to pay a compensation to the aggrieved partner.⁶ Not only the commission of the sexual act, but any sexual advance is considered as tantamount to this breach of privilege. This idea of sexual relationship between married couples has given rise to the fact that sexual relations between unmarried youths are not regarded with the same seriousness as in the case of adultery. Young people quite often indulge in sexual intercourse which may or may not culminate in a permanent union. Such occurrences are not looked upon as very serious until pregnancy follows and the illegitimate child (known in Garo language as *de-burung*, the child of the jungle) becomes a liability to the parents or the guardians of the woman involved. No great social stigma is attached to a woman having a *de-burung*, and she is normally accepted as a wife. Sexual intercourse between unmarried men and women, though socially disapproved, is not regarded as a social offence nor as a sin to be punished by supernatural agencies.⁷ An illegitimate child does not suffer from social stigma throughout life, provided the physiological parents belong to marriageable clan groups.⁸

Garos have a clear idea about the relationship between sexual intercourse and conception. The woman is described as a bag (*dokra*) where the man deposits his seeds (*bitchil*). In fact, the semen is termed as *bitchil*. Associated with the idea of conception is the belief that women conceive only after having sexual intercourse several times. Women carry on usual domestic activities during menstruation.⁹ Menstrual blood is not regarded

as repugnant and there is no hard and fast rule regarding abstinence from copulation during periods of women. No special ceremony is performed when a girl starts menstruating. Young girls are occasionally married before puberty, and in such cases husbands copulate with them before the attainment of puberty. It is, however, believed that girls before puberty cannot retain the seeds deposited by the male. There is no taboo against sexual act with girls who have yet to attain puberty.

Incest is severely condemned in Garo society. Persons involved in incestuous relations are compared to inferior animals. Severity of condemnation, however, varies in proportion to the closeness of blood relationship of the involved persons. Persons marrying within the *chatchi* group are ridiculed as *bakdong* (marrying a kin) and such relations, though socially thought of as improper are not regarded as very great aberrations.¹⁰ Persons marrying within the clan (*ma'chong*) are known as *ma'dong* (marrying the mother) and such relationship is universally condemned and regarded as a serious aberration. *Bakdong* couples are to be very frequently found nowadays, as the rule of *chatchi*-exogamy is very rapidly losing ground. We came across a significant number of *ma'dong* couples also all over the Garo Hills, and though the persons involved were found to be objects of constant ridicule, they lived as normal citizens of the village and did not have to suffer any social disadvantage. Incestuous relation within the nuclear family is thought to be repugnant, and people even hesitate to discuss such matters. However, during the course of our investigation, we came across a case of sexual relation between a brother and a sister. The affair was commonly known in the village as the woman gave birth to a child as a result; but the matter was never openly discussed and the persons involved were neither ridiculed nor were they ostracized. Afterwards, both the male and the female got married to different partners and continued to live in the village. Depiction of incestuous relation between members of the nuclear family (such as, father-daughter, mother-son, brother-sister) is markedly absent in Garo folk-

lore. The only type of incest depicted in Garo folk-lore is maternal uncle-niece incest. This type of incest is, however, not quite unthinkable to a Garo, because it falls within the *ma'dong* category. Incest is not subject to supernatural punishment.

In conclusion it can be remarked that the social attitude towards sex among the Garo is not an unrestrained one, at the same time sex is not regarded as abhorring. Young people get ample opportunity to learn about sex before they grow up. When they are physically capable of sexual activity they get ample opportunity of experimentation before finally selecting a permanent partner through marriage. However, premarital sexual experience is never unrestricted and so it never amounts to total premarital sexual freedom. Due to the availability of adequate opportunity for heterosexual relations, masturbation, homosexuality and such other sexual aberrations are quite unknown to the Garo.

Social gradations

Individuals are classed into the following general categories: *meapa* (a married man, usually having children), *mechikma* (a married woman, usually having children), *pante* (bachelor), *metra* (spinster), *randi* (widow or widower) and *bi'sa* (children). The *meapa* ranks highest in social position. Next comes the category of *mechikma*, followed by the other categories. However, commonly, besides *meapa* all the other categories are classed together as *mechik-bi'sa-desa* to which is assigned a lower social position. Though the Garo society shows characteristics of a typical matrilineal social organization, the inferior position of women in this society is very remarkable. We have discussed this matter at length in a separate paper, and so will no longer take up this matter. Though physically handicapped persons (such as the lame, blind, and feeble-minded) are not recognized as a separate category, still they occupy the lowest position in society. The same position is also assigned to very old people who have become disabled. People freely indulge in amusement at the cost of physically deformed persons. Most of them are given no personal

names ; they are addressed by referring to their particular deformities. Thus, a blind man will be addressed as *gana* or *mikgri* (blind), a lame man as *kora* (lame), a dumb person as *boba* (dumb), a person hard of hearing as *nagok* (deaf), and a feeble-minded person as *jada* or *jara* (idiot). Even when a personal name is assigned to such a person, the term indicating the physical deformity is always affixed to the personal name. The loving parents, too, willingly give a name indicative of the physical deformity of their offspring. A boy whose name was Gaman was feeble-minded, so he was addressed as *Gaman Jada* even by his parents ; a blind man named Nasin was addressed as *Nasin Gana*. The disabled persons also apparently do not object to the constant reference to their deformities. Physically handicapped persons are hardly considered as objects of pity. They remain as liabilities to parents or kinsmen.

Grief

Expression of grief never takes any visible violent form. They never mutilate the body or subject themselves to wailing in order to express grief. When we talked to them about expression of grief by wailing or by mutilating the body, they laughed at the strange idea. However, ceremonial wailing is prevalent among some sub-tribes of the Garo. Such wailing strictly follows the ceremonial form and is merely considered as a formality. When someone dies in a household, the day-to-day activities, such as cooking of meals, goes on uninterrupted. The usual hospitality is shown to callers by offering meals, drinks, and the like. No outward expression of grief can be noticed among the members of the household or among members of the closest kin-group. We rarely found members of the household of a deceased person weeping or fasting. On the death of a mother, a son living in a distant village came with a spear and *millam* (two-edged Garo war sword) in hand. He brought presents of a gong, rice-beer, and meat of a sacrificed bull. He yelled as he forcefully struck two blows on the gateway of the dwelling house with his *millam*, thus briefly expressing sorrow at his mother's loss. Soon after, he started

sharing drinks and behaving as if nothing had happened. In some cases, the female relations were observed expressing ceremonial grief at the moment of laying the corpse on the funeral pyre. The people who assemble for cremation (or burial, in the case of Christians) also hardly express grief at the loss of a person. They talk, laugh, drink and discuss day-to-day affairs as if nothing serious had happened.

Anger

Anger gives rise to violent expressions and may frequently entail physical violence. A man shouts at the person with whom he is angry. Words, which when uttered in ordinary pitch mean nothing, become angry words when uttered in high pitch. The highest degree of anger is indicated when the adversary is compared to lower animals, such as dogs and pigs. When one is angry with another, the genitalia or the anus of the adversary is frequently referred to. An angry man commonly speaks like this: '*Na'a mai kisangholko dakna mangen?*' 'What anus can you do me?' or '*Na'a mai sikolko angna dakaha?*' 'What vagina have you done for me?' But an individual never resorts to the exposure or mention of his or her own private parts to express anger.

The forms of expression of anger as stated above are not regarded as impolite or unsocial. People gather around and hear the exchange of hot words with rapt attention without attempting to stop the involved persons. However, when one or both the parties resort to physical violence, the bystanders consider it to be their duty to stop them. Fears of violent death or serious injury involving the inhabitants of the whole village at the hands of the police persuade the neighbours to intervene and to stop the violent proceedings. Here also the intervention seems to be directed more by fear of immediate police punishment than by a sense of duty of preventing the neighbours from quarrelling violently.

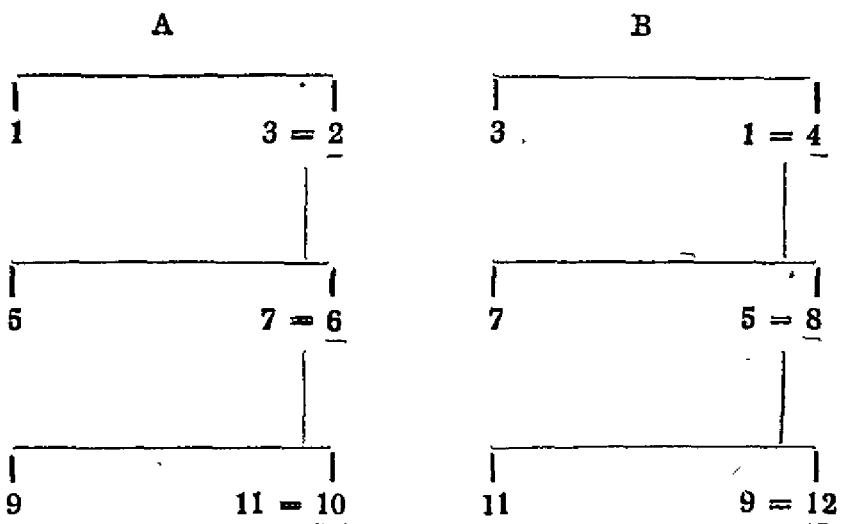
Social structure and values

The highest social value is attached to tangible property. A man who acquires property and leads the life of the

members of the household to prosperity is regarded as a worthy man. Such a person commands respect and power. On the other hand, a man who leads the household to poverty is regarded as worthless and is despised by all. In the villages which we visited, we commanded respect not because of our connexion with the highest educational institution in the State, but because of our camp equipments—cameras, transistor radios, leather shoes and flash-lights! An energetic bachelor who is expert in the traditional crafts is sought for as a husband or as a son-in-law, because he would be capable of acquiring property. On the other hand, an idle man is of no use as a marriage partner.

The principle of reciprocity gets a very high place in the Garo social structure of values. To them all action, whether good or bad, must be reciprocated by similar action. A person receiving a gift must reciprocate with a similar gift as soon as possible. If somebody visits a household and is offered a hearty meal and drinks, he is expected to reciprocate in a similar way. This is why a man who has been given a warm hospitality in a household expresses thus '*Gro dalgipa ongjok*', 'I have incurred a great debt'.

This principle of reciprocity colours the marital alliance between two households. A little elaboration is necessary about this matter. In Garo society, the MBD type of cross-cousin marriage is insisted upon in the case of the sons-in-law who come to reside in the households of the parents-in-law (such sons-in-law are termed *nokrom*).



B. N. Households A and B are those of a brother and a sister. Succession is matrilineal and marriages are exogamous.

In the above diagram the marital alliance between the two households A and B has been shown. Here, to facilitate understanding, individuals have been represented by numerals (females being indicated by underlined numerals), and for the sake of simplicity each couple is supposed to have two offsprings only, one male and one female. It will be seen that in the first generation 3 has come to household A as a *nokrom* from household B. In the second generation 3=2's son goes to household B by marrying his MBD 8. So a male comes from household B to household A in the first generation and in the second generation reciprocally a male returns from household A to household B. Similarly in the third generation, 9 returns to household B, i.e. to the household from which his father came in the second generation. This type of marital alliance between two households is very common, and is known as *paping-deping* (father and son changing households). The principle underlying this arrangement is the principle of reciprocity, i.e. a male has come from a certain household, so another male should return to that household in the next generation. The entire social organization of the Garo is coloured by the principle of reciprocity. In a later section we shall examine how co-operation in the village is ensured by the principle of reciprocity. When somebody dies and an intimate friend or relation (cognate or affine) kills a cow in honour of the dead, he is entitled to take away a gong possessed by the dead person's household. But reciprocally, when somebody in the household of the person taking away the gong dies then anybody from the first household can kill a cow and get back the gong.

Dreams

Garos dream of events of everyday occurrence: a man meeting a tiger, a bear or an elephant in the forest; people going to market; trying to ford a stream and failing to do so due to high currents—these are some of the commonest themes of dreams. Dreams forecast future events in actual life. In this respect dreams are symbolical and it is supposed that the opposite of the event dreamt of will happen in

actual life. When one laughs heartily in a dream one is expected to experience sorrow in actual life. If one dreams of somebody dying in the household, then some person not related to the dreamer will die. Some associations of dream objects to objects of actual life appear arbitrary ; for example, a stream in a dream symbolises litigation ; a snake in a dream symbolises enemy ; an arum in a dream symbolizes a female infant. Sex dreams (such as having incestuous or adulterous relations) are very rare. A person living in a far-off place appears before a near relation in a dream and indicates his or her condition of mind by dream symbols.

The most interesting feature of Garo dreams is their recognition of a sphere where dreams mingle with the happenings in the living world. Some particular persons are capable of turning into animals, such as tigers, snakes and elephants in their dreams. Their souls (*janggi*) run away as such animals and cause mischief to fellow human beings. Persons who turn into tigers, snakes and elephants are known respectively as *matchapilgipa*, *chipupilgipa* and *mongmapilgipa* respectively. A *matchapilgipa* habitually dreams of tigers mauling domestic animals or human beings, and whenever he dreams like this, simultaneously some domestic animal or some human being gets killed by a tiger. Such persons are feared by other people as they can cause harm in their tiger-form. In ordinary life such persons are found to be neither eccentric nor with any uncommon psychic traits. They take pride in their ability to turn into animals and openly talk about their exploits in dreams. No social stigma is attached to such persons.

Supernatural world

The supernatural world of the Garo consists of supernatural beings (*mite*) and spirits of dead persons (*me'mang*).¹⁸ The Garo do not attribute any form to both of these two categories of beings. However, some supernatural beings are considered as males while others are females (however, in Garo language it is possible to speak about them without mentioning their sex). Both these two categories of supernatural beings act and

behave like human beings. When offended they take revenge by causing harm to the offending human beings. The supernatural beings (*mite*) cause illness, failure of crops, cause damage to houses by lightning and similar other calamities. The behaviour of supernatural beings can be made to comply with the wishes of human beings by performance of appropriate rites which consist mainly of sacrifices. The common term for illness is *mite chika* (biting by a spirit). Besides the sex attribute of a few supernatural beings nothing is known about them. The clan organization which pervades all aspects of the society of the living has no meaning in the supernatural world. Magico-religious rites among the Garo are not fraught with functions and such functions are not fraught with too many taboos. Professional shamans, or any other kind of professional intermediaries between human beings and supernaturals are absent among the Garo. Any person who is conversant with the technicalities of magico-religious rites can perform them. However, magico-religious rites performed for the well-being of the community in general are performed by the village priest (*kamal*) who is supposed to be well acquainted with the procedure of such rites. There may be several such specialists in the village. Usually after the death of the seniormost the next senior man steps in. The office of the *kamal* is in no way hereditary. He does not enjoy any special privilege in the village community.

The spirits of the dead form a separate category in the supernatural world. An individual, after death, turns into a spirit (*me'mang*) and leads an ethereal existence, though the spirit occasionally shows itself to particular persons in the shape of the dead person. A spirit remembers its friends and kinsmen and occasionally appears before them. It sometimes instructs them about domestic affairs by appearing in dreams. The *me'mang* possesses no supernatural powers, though they cause fear in the minds of the living and are hence avoided.

The idea of sympathetic magic employed to cause harm to enemies very vaguely exists among the Garo. But causing harm to one's enemies by clandestine application of medicine (known as *sam kalaka*) is very common. Anybody knowing

the medicines (or the sympathetic magic) tries to bring about the intended harm. The idea of witches is totally absent among the Garo. However, some villages have a characteristically evil reputation as applicators of clandestine medicine, and people from other villages always hesitate to accept food or drink in these villages without being assured that they are not mixed with secret medicines.

Mechanism of social control

Children are not specially taught to show obedience to elders. Children obstinately refusing to obey their parents or other elders are very frequently met with. If a child does not want to comply with an order of an elder, it simply replies, 'gongja' 'I am not inclined'. Parents and elders do not think it necessary to force them to obey by means of physical punishment. Punishing a child is thought of in the same way as punishing an adult, and thus punishing a child by one of the parents may lead to violent opposition from the other parent or his/her kins.

The Garo do not recognize any wrong against the community in general.¹⁴ All wrongs are considered to be wrongs against particular individuals, and the aggrieved individual or his/her kins claim a compensation according to established usage. The village chief acts only as an intermediary in such disputes. He has no coercive authority. There is no measure to compel a villager to comply with the general norms of village co-operation. An individual who habitually fails to co-operate with other villagers becomes an object of derision and his behaviour is openly criticized; but nobody has the authority to inflict punishment for non-compliance. The whole village organization works on the principle of reciprocity. If a villager does not co-operate in the construction of the house of a fellow villager, he cannot expect that other villagers would co-operate with him when his own house is being built.

Personality types

Garos recognize the following personality types :

- (1) *Sontol* ; One who conforms to the social norms.

Such a person is praised as *songmung nokmung nanggrimgipa* (one who co-operates with fellow villagers). Such an individual does not show anger and so he or she is described as *kasingipa mande* (a cool man).

(2) *Gananggijagipa*: One who does not conform to social norms. Such a person is criticised as *kumong-nanggrimgijagipa* (non-co-operative). Such an individual becomes angry on the slightest pretext and as such he or she is described as *ka'ting* (hot tempered).

(3) *Aratgipa*: One who neglects his household duties. Such a person is chided as irresponsible and worthless, and is never entrusted with any responsible work.

(4) *Do'bak*: A man of vascillating character is known as *do'bak* which literally means 'a bat'. Similarly a man who speaks much but works little is known as *do'bret* (a sparrow).

(5) *Kisang namgijagipa*: One who habitually indulges in illicit sexual relations is indicated by this term, which literally means 'a man with bad buttocks'. However, a bachelor who develops affairs with several girls is not considered to be a person belonging to this category, because sexual adventures of bachelors are not viewed with contempt or seriousness. A married man, who habitually indulges in extra-marital sexual relations, is considered an irresponsible person and failing in conjugal fidelity.

(6) *Jak namgijagipa*: A man known to be a habitual thief is denoted by this term, which literally means 'a man with a bad hand'.

The attitude towards feeble-minded persons (*jada*) has already been described in a previous section. Though there is a term to indicate gluttonous persons (*chabetbonggipa* or *kalbong*) it is not commonly used to indicate the personality trait of a single individual. But there are terms to indicate addiction to particular things by particular individuals, such as *chu-nalgipa* (one who is addicted to tobacco), etc. Though these terms partially indicate personality traits of particular individuals, no social approval or disapproval is associated with the terms. Similarly there are terms to indicate miserliness (*rubea*), generosity (*jaksrama*), timidity (*kapong*);

but these are rather descriptions of particular behaviours in particular situations and cannot be regarded as distinct personality types.

A man commanding respect from fellow men is supposed to possess *mikkim* (power to wield authority) which is thought to be the attribute of some selected persons only. There is no particular sign which indicates that a person possesses *mikkim*; it is only through his/her overpowering quality to command respect that he/she is known to possess *mikkim*.

Suicide

Among the Garo suicide is very rare, though we cannot say that it is entirely absent. The usual method of suicide, which is the only method recorded by us, is by hanging. In the few stray instances recorded by us, both men and women were involved, and the cause in all were frustration in love. In Garo society suicide is taken in the most matter-of-fact way. No dreadful fear is expressed towards suicide, nor is there any positive social sanction for it. We came across the case of a woman who attempted to commit suicide, but was saved due to timely intervention of fellow villagers. Afterwards she could continue normal life in the same village without becoming an object of ridicule or criticism. However, suicide is naturally considered in the category of unnatural death, and, as in the case of unnatural death, the usual death ceremonies are denied to a person who committed suicide.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹Dr. Sinha states that he noticed certain types of infantile masturbation among the Garo. But he asserts that active indulgence in masturbation to derive sexual discharge by some artificial means is *rather less common*. (The italics are ours). (See Tarunchandra, Sinha, *The Psyche of the Garos*, Memoir No. 12, Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, 1966, p. 42.) In the areas of the Garo Hills covered by us we found total absence of the slightest idea about masturbation.

²Dr. Sinha remarks about homosexuality among the Garo thus: 'Homosexuality in the sense of anal intercourse is not commonly known to them. I have recently come to know that nowadays, the residents of the *nokpante* indulge in homosexuality.' (Sinha, *op. cit.* p. 42, p. 97.) Our investigations sharply contradict the second part of his remarks. In *nokpante* life we never knew them to indulge in homosexuality nor heard them ever talk about anything suggestive of homosexuality. Abnormal sex behaviour is markedly

absent among the Garo because of the fact that they get ample opportunities of indulging in heterosexual activities during their *nokpante* life.

⁸We disagree with Dr. Sinha's presumption that as small children sleep with the parents they get opportunity to witness the primal scene : (Sinha, *op. cit.* p. 41.) We found Garos very particular about privacy at the time of copulation. Only very young children who are yet to understand such activities are allowed to sleep with parents. They never indulge in sexual intercourse or sex play even in the presence of infants (or even domestic animals) who are awake. Moreover, when children attain the age of 4 or 5 they are never allowed to sleep with the parents. We often heard women talking about the sexual passion of their husbands with such taunting remarks as, '*bi' sa-desani tusianaba sengnapja*' ('he cannot wait even until the children sleep').

⁹Dr. Sinha's remarks about heterosexual activities of the Garo generally conform to our findings. (Sinha, *op. cit.* pp. 43-44.)

¹⁰Majumdar, D. N., 'A study of legal concepts among the Garo', *Journal of the Assam Science Society*, Vol. 9, 1966. pp. 40-47.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²On the other hand, illogically enough, a betrayed husband is believed to emaciate to face death if his wife illicitly gratifies her sex desires.

¹³There is no supernatural punishment for an illegitimate child born of *bakdong* or even *madong* union.

¹⁴Dr. Sinha observes that women do not go out of the village during their menstrual periods ; (Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 104.) We could not find any trace of such a practice.

¹⁵Goswami, M. C., and Majumdar, D. N., 'The 'Mahari' among the Garo', *Journal of the University of Gauhati*, Vol. XV, No. 2 : Science, 1964, pp. 214-222.

¹⁶Goswami, M. C. and Majumdar, D. N., 'A study of women's position among the Garo of Assam', *Man in India*, Vol. 45, No. 1, January-March, 1965, pp. 27-36.

¹⁷In a few rare instances, however, we found a bereaved person crying while describing the day-to-day activities of the deceased. Also, in a few instances we found immediate family members abstaining from taking food for a couple of days or so, out of grief.

¹⁸Dr. Sinha found the following three categories of supernatural beings :

1. Bhut or Deo, i.e., Ghost
2. Mimang, i.e., Spirit of the dead
3. Metti, i.e., Spirits which they usually worship. (Sinha *op. cit.* p. 23.)

Our investigations show that they recognize only the second and the third categories. We however found a supernatural being known as *but* which is regarded as one of the spirits causing illness in children and hence it is propitiated when some child in the house falls ill. They however mentioned *but* also when we enquired about the particular names of their *mite*.

¹⁹Majumdar, D. N., *op. cit.*

EDUCATION AND CHANGES IN SOCIAL VALUES

SACHCHIDANANDA

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I

Abstract : This paper seeks to analyse the changes in social values, consequent upon the progress of education among the women of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. Attention has been focussed on the modernizing influence of education. Although social changes are the result of the working of multiple factors, care has been taken to isolate changes in such areas which may primarily be attributed to education.

FOR a long time education was regarded as a stabilizer or perpetuator of social norms and values. It was an essentially conservative and culture-transmitting institution. In recent times, however, the educational system has experienced a complete transvaluation. It has been regarded as an agent of change. It has been characterized as the 'key that unlocks the door to modernization' (Harbinson and Myers 1964 : 181). 'The educational system now tends to be viewed as the master determinant of all aspects of change' (Coleman 1965 : 3). While the claim of education to be the prime-mover of growth has been questioned (Hurd and Johnson 1967 : 60), it cannot be denied that education is one of the sure roads to economic progress. In developing countries education has acquired high priority because of its determinative role in regard to political elite stands and the stratification system in general. It has a definite role in generating the contemporary 'weltanschauung' and the resultant modernization of culture.

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Elementary Indian education, however, did not bring about any radical innovation of values. Its role corresponded to Durkheim's view of education as the systematic socialization of the younger generation. It stressed traditional values and strengthened prevailing customs and beliefs. The authoritarian pattern continued and the growth of rationality was inhibited. Only at high school, college and university levels new values made inroads into the consciousness of students. For a long time such education was confined to the upper and middle classes and that also in cities and urban centres. 'The basic norms and cultural themes at this level fundamentally differ from tradition. They introduce students to the values of liberalism and to the rationalistic world view of modern western culture (Singh 1967 : 71).' As higher education was alien to the ethos of Indian culture it led to value conflicts and aspiration-tensions. Margaret Cormack (1960 : 232) has shown how the modern Indian university student has moved from security in family to security in self. Formerly the student was tradition-directed. Now he has become other-directed without passing through the intermediate inner-directed stage. A recent study has brought out the fact that the Indian student's commitment to democratic values is weak and wavering (Singh 1964 : 61). This is due to the fact that its necessary concomitants, a liberal value system and a high sense of freedom and responsibility are not sufficiently strong.

Higher education is one of the important agents of modernization. Modernization is a process of change from the traditional to certain desired types of technology and associated forms of social structure, value-orientations, motivations and norms. It is not the acquisition of some isolated traits but involves a great deal of value change. There are several models of modernization : West European—American, Soviet and the Japanese. Each is a product of historical forces working in the different regions. It is important for us to examine some of the essential attributes of modernization. There are a number of sociological analyses of these attributes. These have been provided by Lerner (1962, 1963), Almond and Coleman (1960), McClelland (1951), Ithiet de Sola Pool (1963).

and Wilbert Moore (1963-a & b). Dube (1967) has listed them as follows :—

- (i) Empathy
- (ii) Mobility
- (iii) High participation
- (iv) Interest articulation
- (v) Interest aggregation
- (vi) Institutionalized political competition
- (vii) Achievement orientation
- (viii) Rational ends—means calculation
- (ix) New attitudes to wealth, work, savings, risk-taking etc.
- (x) Faith in the desirability and possibility of change
- (xi) Social, economic and political discipline
- (xii) Capacity to put off immediate satisfactions for higher satisfaction in the longer run.

Empathy makes one put himself in others' situations. It promotes social and territorial mobility and encourages participation in widely divergent roles. In traditional society, roles are ascriptive and diffuse. In modern society people tend to form groups according to their own interest orientation. These groups, organized into institutions, indulge in severe political competition for gaining power. The need for achievement is the most distinguishing feature of modernization. The last five attributes involve attitudes, values and motivations. The promotion of a rational approach to human life and its problems is the keynote of modernization.

The Indian social scene is changing fast. Old social values are being altered or even given up. New modern values are taking their place. Education is contributing a great deal to this process. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse this phenomenon with reference to three important sections of the community, viz. women, tribals and the scheduled castes. All the three sections were for a long time neglected and under-privileged. It is only recently that efforts have been made to give them a square deal through various methods. Many agencies of modernization are working in these social fields.

So only such-value changes will be discussed as can be traced to the influence of formal education.

II

Education of women has a direct bearing on the social values connected with family and marriage and affects their perception of roles and social attitudes. So strong is this belief that the image of an educated woman sometimes evokes suspicion, distrust and even hostility in certain quarters. The desirable level of education for a bride differs from rural to urban areas and even within urban areas from one class to the other. Even now a master's-degree-holder is not generally acceptable in most families. Among middle class families, however, the desire for a higher standard of living and the consequent acceptance of women's employment has created a positive attitude towards women's education.

Old values connected with marriage of a girl before she reached puberty have been given up even in orthodox Brahman circles. Education has helped to raise the age of marriage. With the break-up of the joint family and need for dependence on oneself rather than on relatives, the need for education of girls has gained a further justification. Thus by the time a girl is married she has definite expectations from her marriage. At an advanced age the adjustment to the husband and his family becomes more difficult than when girls were married off at an early age.

If men alone are exposed to western influence and women are uneducated, the former acquire values different from traditional ones. This leads to development of two sets of values, one inside the home and another outside. Interdining with other castes may be accepted outside the home while inside the caste taboos may be retained. Men often accept free social intercourse between men and women in professional circles but are rigid regarding segregation between the sexes at home.

An educated daughter-in-law may heighten inter-generational conflict. The closer alignment between husband and the wife makes a united front against the traditional values

represented by the mother-in-law. The latter may feel sore at the loss of status and may give rise to emotional isolation and even hostility when traditional values of deference and obedience to her are threatened. The decision-making process in the family may be affected by the changed values of an educated woman. In a recent study Gore (1962) has noted that the higher the education of spouses, the greater was the likelihood of their holding that the husband's relationship to his wife was as close or closer than the relationship between the husband and his mother. Spending of money as well as allocation and disposal of other family resources, more than ever before, is done in consultation with the wife.

In families where education was confined to men, men and women lived in two distinct worlds without any communication between the two. This isolation has been broken with the spread of education among women. The couple now speak in the same idiom and share each other's interests. Education makes for close companionship, characterized by greater reciprocity in sharing experiences and feelings. Failure to fulfil these expectations on the part of either partner may lead to frustration and resentment in the other.

Education has changed the outlook of girls and given them new ideas and aspirations. It has made them less particular about pollution rules and rituals. In olden days, the daughter always remained with the mother and learnt the performance of rituals. Now she is either at school or doing home-work when rituals are being performed. Educated women have thus ceased to be the strong backbone of family traditions and caste customs (Rose 1961 : 232). Small households in big cities lack the old women who have the know-how and the leisure for these things. Elite households have become the articulators of the values of a highly competitive educational and employment system. Getting children admitted to good schools, supervising their curricular and extracurricular activities and worrying about their future careers absorb the energies of educated mothers.

Eileen Rose (1961 : 215) has admirably summarized changes among women in an urban setting as follows :

Choosing their own husbands, marrying out of caste, not sitting out for monthly periods, going to Christian schools, having men friends, breaking caste rules such as eating meat, eating at the house of people belonging to other castes, attending mixed parties, marrying after puberty, using electrical appliances for cooking, eating in hotels, wearing modern six-yard sari, wearing lip-stick and divorcing husbands.

It is not that the value changes and their manifestations as analysed above have always been smooth. In many cases there are significant value conflicts and role contradictions which produce emotional disturbances of a serious nature. Some of these are discussed here.

If on account of her high academic achievement, a woman lands in an executive job, she is in a difficulty. Men subordinate in the administrative hierarchy resent her authority. As a woman she has to be feminine, soft and kind. As an officer she has to be a strict disciplinarian which may involve harshness. Even the legitimate exercise of power makes her vulnerable to the charge of arrogance. The ideal housewife must conform to the traditional values of hard work, self-effacement and sacrifice her own interests to that of the family etc. Her education makes it hard for her to keep up to these values, in much of which she does not believe. It has made her more individualistic, competitive and less willing to make adjustments to the interests of the family. Secondly, she must be good at cooking, keep the house in order, make it attractive, bring up her children well and entertain guests. As an educated person she must take an interest in the wider social life outside the home. She must be an enlightened companion to her husband. Non-fulfilment of these two roles to her own satisfaction leads to feelings of dissatisfaction and anxiety.

III

A few years ago, we made a study of the impact of education on an Oraon village in Chotanagpur. The village had a teachers' training school as well as a middle school for

the last twenty years. These schools were run by the government and were therefore secular in character. It was revealed that enormous changes had taken place both at the material and ideological level. A number of changes which had a direct bearing on Oraon social values may be outlined here.

In most tribal cultures, songs and dances are the breath of life. This is characterized by the Munda proverb '*Sen ge susun, kaji ge durang*' meaning 'To walk is to dance, to speak is to sing'. The love of dance is deeply entrenched in tribal life. Among the Oraon, training in song and dance was imparted from childhood in the youth dormitory, locally known as the *Dhumkuria*. Every evening boys and girls gather in the village dancing ground called the *akhra* in front of the dormitory. Villagers were proud of the *Dhumkuria* and their dance. It was found that in that village and in its neighbourhood, the *Dhumkuria* had disappeared. The *akhra* was in a dilapidated condition and dances were infrequent. People were ashamed to admit the existence of the *Dhumkuria* at any time. The school teachers had come to regard the *Dhumkuria* as a place of licentious mixing between the sexes. Moreover the students had to do home-work in the evening when they were expected to go to the *Dhumkuria*. So in villages where schools had sprung up, the *Dhumkuria* was on the way out (Sachchidananda 1966 : 71). The pride which the Oraon felt in his dance was no longer there as dance was also decried by the teachers. Thus the social value of dances went down.

Pre-martial mixing between boys and girls was common in all tribal societies in Chotanagpur. Boys and girls met in the field and the forest without any shame. Virginity was never essential for a bride. Due to the influence of the school and the inculcation of Hindu ideals virginity has acquired a value.

People were losing faith in the native pharmacopoeia as well as in the cure by magic. They had taken to allopathic medicine and would get a doctor from a town six miles away, if a serious case demanded it. The local medicine man had also moved with changing times and included among his

medicines certain patent drugs. People no longer regarded children as the gift of God and some of those who were in close contact with the school were interested in family planning too.

Education had also shaken people's faith in the *Panchayat* and *Parha* which were the traditional mechanisms for the administration of justice at the village and neighbourhood level. In this village whose head was an office-bearer in the traditional *Parha* organization, people did not know the name of all the other villages which are included in that *Parha*. No meeting had taken place during living memory. People had become more individualistic and self-centred. Old tribal institutions had been devalued.

Education merges with the whole process of modernization encouraging movement from rural areas where under-employment is rife to towns where unemployment is more highly visible (Hurd and Johnson 1967 : 67). This phenomenon was also evident in this village. In olden days all the brothers were content to work upon the land. Now only one brother looks after agriculture while the educated brother goes to town to earn a livelihood. So the profession of agriculture is left only for those who cannot get a job elsewhere. The traditional tribal love for land is also waning as it is no longer a lasting source of subsistence. The educated persons have also developed a distaste for agriculture and prefer to get even a petty job elsewhere rather than stick to it.

Among the non-Christian tribals, girl's education is lagging far behind boy's education. This has created an emotional imbalance between couples, one of whom is educated and the other is unlettered. Cases of desertion of uneducated wives have come to light. As it is easy to get educated girls among the Christians, many educated non-Christian tribals have become converts.

Education has acquired a great value among the tribals. They have come to realize its importance. Everywhere there is a cry for more and more schools. This is more evident among the tribes who have been somewhat acculturated. In Bhil areas in Rajasthan, there is a rush for opening of

schools and people's participation for this is available in a large measure. In traditional societies there is no popular demand for education. Children are employed in household chores, in grazing cattle and in agricultural activities. The very fact that this demand has come up is a pointer to the modernizing trends in such societies. It also points to the fact that they are now willing to put off immediate satisfactions for higher satisfaction in the longer run.

Mobility of diverse kinds is evident in tribal areas as a result of education. Formerly the tribal was content to live on the land and the forest. Agriculture and forest-based activities were his chief occupation. With the growth of education, tribals are now leaving for jobs outside their immediate neighbourhood. Even in remote tribal areas, we come across people who have gone to work in distant lands. Spatial mobility is generally accompanied by occupational mobility. With the continuing increase of the pressure on land, educated tribals are finding new avenues of employment. Both men and women now go out into the wide world to take up any employment suited to their qualifications. Besides opportunities for alternative employment, education also bestows prestige. The educated person in tribal societies gains in popular esteem, people flock to him for advice and he rises in social status. He enters the category of the elite. Thus education is one of the avenues to leadership. So education is instrumental in promoting spatial, occupational as well as vertical mobility, which is an important modernizing influence.

Educated tribals are now no longer satisfied with playing their ascribed roles. With the help of their newly-acquired education, they want to compete with others and then to achieve the status they crave for. They are no longer fatalistic but are prepared to fight for their rights. They are ready to take risks to fulfil their rising aspirations. Hereditary village headmen are fast losing their importance to educated young men.

Education has also created in them group consciousness. As they feel that all tribals are one so far as their interests are concerned, they are making efforts to articulate their interests,

claims and demands for political action. These are manifested in the formation of institutional groups such as political parties or factions within national parties, ethnic, religious or regional groups, associational interest groups like trade unions, student forums and anomic interest groups such as organization of riots, demonstrations, etc.

A large number of tribal students live in hostels. They are completely cut off from the socializing influence of the home. They are changed at a much faster rate than others. They imbibe the values of their teachers who are generally non-tribals. Lack of knowledge and sympathy for tribal cultures makes them deride tribal manners and customs. The result is that the child is more and more alienated from his culture and his own kin. 'Instead of appearing as a natural function of village, the school was something apart from and even hostile to tribal tradition. There was nothing in the schools to foster a boy's pride in the institutions of his culture. He was ashamed of belonging to so-called primitive community' (Elwin 1957 : 69). Elwin calls this process of the disappearance of tribal values, detribalization. Thus education has been one of the factors of detribalization.

IV

The scheduled castes number more than 65 millions and comprise 15% of the total population of the country. Although included among Hindus, they were always regarded as exterior castes whose social interaction with the caste Hindus was extremely limited. They were confined to a number of unclean professions and their touch and in some cases their shadow was also polluting. For centuries they were suppressed and suffered from a number of social disabilities, chief among which was the stigma of untouchability. Although untouchability has been abolished by law, old attitudes and values still obtain in many sectors of society. Education has helped the Harijans in two ways. It has helped them overcome their inferiority complex and improve their economic position. It has made the caste Hindus conscious

of the wrong they had done to this community for ages. Education has struck at the root of untouchability as also of the taboo against interdining and intermarriage between various castes, high or low. Secular values, dissatisfaction with ascribed roles, achievement-orientation, interest aggregation, rationality and social mobility, actively promoted by modern education, have gone a long way towards betterment of the condition of the Harijans.

Acquisition of education makes it possible for the scheduled castes to give up their defiling professions and take up other jobs which require some educational or professional proficiency. These jobs have higher social standing as well as fetch higher incomes. Thus such Harijans move up in the social hierarchy and enter the class system. They live in two worlds. For selection of mates and life-crisis rituals, the caste is the unit of interaction. For everything else they move with the class they belong to. It is thus apparent that upward social mobility operated with reference to the individual Harijans rather than with the caste to which they belonged.

Education and better income has made it possible for many Harijans to 'pass' in many situations. They succeed in hiding their caste identity. By doing so they achieve their desire for 'becoming something else, something higher' (Isaacs 1965 : 144). As income rises it is also possible to leave a caste-bound location and get a house in a higher caste area. There are, however, serious limits to passing such as marriage or death. So in some cases 'semi-passing' is practised. In all situations where self-advancement, comfort and convenience dictate it, a Harijan passes as a member of some higher caste. He gives up his caste surname and way of life and does not come into so close a contact with other people that his real identity may be disclosed.

A large number of facilities exist for scheduled caste children who want to get educated. Those who have succeeded in getting education have rising levels of aspiration. A look at the live registers of employment exchange (Chauhan 1967 : 244) revealed that out of 36,650 applicants, 20,281

wanted to become clerks and a tenth of that number aspired to be teachers. Among the graduates, 50% wanted to be office assistants. It is not possible to fill many higher posts in the reserved quota as duly qualified people are not available. We find some doctors, lawyers, university teachers, businessmen and legislators from among the scheduled castes, but their numbers are not commensurate with their population. In Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, where education has made great strides among them, the results are far more encouraging.

Education has created a gulf between educated Harijan children and their unlettered fathers. This has led to problems of adjustment between father and son. Another level of adjustment is between an educated husband and uneducated wife. This is a general problem of wide magnitude in all communities. In such communities where the gap is very wide and child marriage is common, there is a number of cases of desertion and divorce. The disparity between education of parents and children would not be present in the third generation and that between couples would disappear with the spread of education among girls.

An educated elite has emerged among the Harijans. It can provide a reference group for the rest of the community and can become an agent of further change among them. Unfortunately it is not so. The elite want to forget their past, their 'low' origin and everything connected with their caste. There is wide gap between them and the rest of the community. The Harijan elite moves more closely with caste Hindus than with others. 'We educated form a separate group', 'We cannot really bring all of them up' (Isaacs 1965 : 129). These statements of a Harijan elite portray the situation.

Education has led to the formation of political groups among the scheduled castes. These have been fighting for more rights and privileges. In the national parties also such groups are active. Large as their numbers are, the scheduled castes are beginning to become a political force. Their educated leaders see to it that every Harijan who approaches them gets his due.

The western system of education brought equalitarian ideas and modern scientific rationality among the caste Hindus. These ideas acted as the guiding stars for the fight for equality of opportunity. They challenged traditional values which put a premium on ascribed status and condemned the Harijans to servitude. The ideological foundations of caste system were shaken and a rational basis was sought for. Social equality and the proclamation against discrimination on the basis of caste or creed and ultimately the abolition of untouchability and the practice of untouchability being made a legal offence all flowed out of the new ideas. Imbued with rationality and the concept of equalitarianism, caste Hindus could better appreciate the efforts of Dayanand Saraswati and Mahatma Gandhi to ameliorate the lot of the scheduled castes.

The spread of education has thus led to a remarkable change in our values. By and large, the authoritarian values have been replaced by democratic values. Educated young men and women view everything they are confronted with in a critical way. Nothing is taken for granted. We have adopted democracy as a political creed. It can be nurtured only with a democratic way of life. Qualities of tolerance, the readiness to see the other man's point of view or a state of empathy have to be fostered through education. These values have been slow to come up. Excessive emphasis on science and technology in modern education has led to a decline in moral and spiritual values which in turn is responsible for the present strains and strifes in the modern Indian social scene. Although modernization makes available a variety of alternative models of behaviour, it is essential that education should help us choose those that stem from the spirit and suit the conditions in which we are placed. The explosion of knowledge brought about by modern education has created a larger number of entirely new social values which did not exist in the past. The changes in values engendered by new education among women, tribals and scheduled castes almost amount to a revolution.

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FARMERS' RESPONSE TO IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN CACHAR DISTRICT (ASSAM)

PADMA DHAR SAIKIA

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Abstract. This paper is based on a study jointly conducted by the author with one of his colleagues in Cachar District, Assam, in April-May, 1965.¹ The study was designed to focus attention on various problems faced by farmers while adopting improved agricultural techniques recommended under the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (Package Programme). Certain aspects of technological change and its diffusion were studied by interviewing 100 farmers.

Introduction

CACHAR District is situated in the south-western part of Assam, bordering East Pakistan. It has an area of 70,000 square kilometres and a population of 12.8 lacs. The average rainfall is higher than in the other plains districts of Assam. The intensity of flood and other natural calamities is somewhat lower than in other districts. The major crops grown in the district are winter and autumn paddy, sugarcane, potato, chillies and vegetables. The Muslim farmers keep poultry as a subsidiary source of income, and several districts of Assam depend upon the supply of eggs and poultry from this district. The rural leadership is, by and large, well organized and the enlightened section of the population plays an important role in agricultural development.

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¹ The author is grateful to the authorities of the Agro-Economic Research Centre, Jorhat, for permission to use the data. The opinion expressed is, of course, personal.

The Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) was inaugurated in Cachar District in 1962-63. The IADP Administration takes steps to provide adequate and timely supply of fertilizers, pesticides, improved implements and credit, dissemination of information about improved practices, while extension education and arrangement for marketing are also taken in hand. It was initially started in 4 Development Blocks covering 520 villages and 1,793 cultivating families.

Respondents

Altogether 100 farmers were interviewed in 20 villages of 5 Development Blocks. The villages were selected purposefully with a view to representing different communities and size-groups of land-ownership. Community-wise distribution of farmers are Bengali Muslim 14, Manipuri Muslim 3, Bengali Hindu 19, Manipuri Hindu 51, Bihari Hindu settlers 4 and Bodo Scheduled Tribe 9. As the enlightened farmers were selected for interview, their educational standard is fairly satisfactory. Out of the 100 farmers interviewed, 88 are literate and of them 42 have passed the matriculation standard.

The average size of land-holding of the respondents is 5.73 acres. But a few respondents have somewhat bigger land-holdings, the major part of which is cultivable waste land. The average farm size is 4.45 acres only. As the general farm size is very small, the land-hungry farmers take land on lease at a very high rent. Out of the 100 respondents, 34 have taken 70.34 acres of land on lease and 12 have leased out 70.34 acres. The tenant farmers have to pay very high rent in either cash or kind. Sharecropping on a 50 : 50 basis is very common.

Technological change and diffusion

The method of agriculture in this part of the country is very primitive and there is ample scope of improvement. Any change in agricultural methods can easily be identified and felt. The different aspects of technological change and diffusion are discussed in the following sections.

Awareness of the farmers : Out of the 100 respondents, 99 are aware of the IADP and the general awareness is found to be satisfactory. The farmers believe that the IADP, if properly implemented, would bring about a rapid change in their agriculture.

Improved agricultural implements : The IADP has introduced mould-board iron ploughs, water-lifting pumps, weeders, sprayers and dusters. The farmers could procure mould-board (M. B.) ploughs and weeders for their personal use. The other agricultural implements are kept with the village level workers (v. L. W.) and are made available to the farmers free of cost. Out of the 100 respondents, 25 have purchased 29 M. B. iron ploughs and only 5 have purchased 8 weeders. The majority of the respondents, however, feel that the M. B. plough cannot replace their traditional plough. They feel that the M. B. iron plough is heavy and not suitable for weak and small bullocks. Such an improved plough is not designed according to local needs and requires certain important modifications.

The necessity of regular water supply, especially by improved methods, is known to all the enlightened farmers. Water-lifting pumps are purchased by panchayats and are hired out to farmers. Some of the farmers showed willingness to purchase such pumps individually, if made available at subsidized rates. The farmers expressed extreme dissatisfaction as the majority of the water pumps provided under the IADP have gone out of order. No mechanic is sent to the villages for repairing them. At the time of investigation, the president of an Anchalik Panchayat told us that all the 30 water-lifting pumping sets were out of order. He also stated that the fuel consumption of these sets is very high and thus uneconomic. Distribution of improved implements and machinery, without looking into its practical utility will not help in the improvement of agriculture and crop production.

The farmers are of opinion that their autumn paddy could be improved greatly if they plough the hard soil with small tractors during the dry season. Most of them

showed their eagerness to procure small land-tillers. But small tractors or land-tillers have not been made available to them.

Use of chemical fertilizers : The IDAP has successfully introduced chemical fertilizers among the farmers. Out of the 100 respondents interviewed, 80 used 68.5 quintals of chemical fertilizers during the year 1964. Most of the non-users are tenant farmers. Only a few respondents were found to be reluctant to use fertilizers for various reasons. But while the farmers showed keen interest, the IDAP authorities could not avail of the opportunity to the fullest extent. The use of fertilizers needs sufficient and regular water supply. But the farmers depend upon the mercy of nature. Even the more enlightened farmers are disheartened to find that the steps taken for irrigation are inadequate. The pumping sets supplied are very few in number and are generally defective. Moreover, as there is no soil-testing laboratory the farmers have to use fertilizers without prior soil analysis.

Use of improved seeds : Out of the 100 respondents, 57 used improved seeds in 1964. Only 6 respondents were found to be ignorant about the supply of improved seeds. It seems that the supply and distribution of improved seeds is not always timely and satisfactory. It is observed that improvement of the local seeds has not yet been taken into consideration. On the whole, the awareness that the use of improved seeds is a part of progressive farming is gradually spreading.

Crop-protection measures : Out of 100 respondents interviewed, 83 have taken some sort of crop-protection measure during 1964. Only 15 tenant farmers were apathetic towards the use of insecticides. The farmers, however, suffered from the short supply and inferior quality of the spraying instruments.

Agricultural information service : Agricultural information is another important aspect of agricultural development, and this service seems to be functioning satisfactorily. Leaflets and guide-books are distributed regularly and documentary films relating to improved agricultural practices are shown to the farmers. It is observed that the farmers take keen interest in improved agricultural practices shown on the screen; and this medium of information is found to be very effective.

Certain burning problems

Unless some of major problems of the farmers are tackled simultaneously with the execution of the IDAP schemes, change in agriculture in Cachar District is bound to be slow. The average size of a farm of the respondents interviewed is only 4.45 acres and the average size of farms of 65 of the respondents is below 4 acres. The figures reflect the general condition of the whole district. In such a situation, it can easily be presumed that the majority of farmers cannot pursue agriculture on an economic footing. To take up agriculture as an industry, a farmer must have an economic size of land-holding. At the moment, however, the under-employed farmers can put their leisure time in labour-intensive improved agricultural methods.

The big landowners extract very high rents from the tenants. The situation is gradually worsening. The landlords try to evict and replace tenants each year, so that the latter cannot claim occupancy rights. The tenant farmers are, therefore, the most frustrated lot in the rural community. The response to improved agricultural practices by tenant farmers is very negligible in Cachar.

The present price policy of the Assam Government is also not very congenial to agricultural development. Assam Government is the monopoly purchaser of paddy in the State; and that is why the farmers are bound to sell their paddy at a price fixed by the Government, which is much lower than the open market price. This is considered unfair and unjust by the farmers. Procurement at a low price, without calculating the cost of production, amounts to exploitation; and this may inhibit agricultural improvement.

Farmers' response to improved agricultural practices for the State as a whole is not very encouraging. The present study, however, revealed that the farmers are prepared for technological change in agriculture. There is no reason to believe that our farmers prefer to remain traditional. The staff of the IADP are working very sincerely to make the project a success. Most of the Village Level Workers and Agricultural Demonstrators have attained key-positions in the villages. However, to make the programme successful, the problems of the farmers must be tackled with imagination. At this transitional phase the farmers expect some guidance in practical of development.

BOOK REVIEWS

On the Slippery Slope in Nagaland. By D. R. Mankekar. Pp. 202, 5 plates, sketch map. 1967. Manaktalas, Bombay. Rs. 22.00.

The political problem of the 'Hostiles' of Nagaland has been harassing the Indian nation today more than, perhaps, the problem of Kashmir or that of provincialism which has been much in evidence in some parts of our country now. Yet, very little accurate information is available anywhere about this vital question relating to the North-eastern frontier of India. Academic circles have usually shunned an objective study of such questions as these, not because interest and a sense of social responsibility are lacking, but perhaps more because academic people do not frequently have an access to the sources of information which alone can help them in an objective, non-partisan enquiry.

It is all the more remarkable on that account that the present author, who is a distinguished journalist, has been able to present a dispassionate analysis of the political situation in a vital corner of India; although emphasis has been laid on the military, rather than on other aspects of the problem. In a series of eleven chapters, to which are added five appendices, he has described the underlying causes, as well as events, which have progressively led to a situation which may lead to very disturbing consequences in the political future of the Republic. Evidently, the author has had access to many sources of accurate information; while he has also had the perseverance to maintain a detailed record of all significant events and statements which have appeared in contemporary newspapers. This was, moreover, supplemented by personal interviews with the actors in the drama in the villages and towns of Nagaland. The result has been that a most educative account has been built up which not only diagnoses the malady, but also suggests a way out. The book ought to be in the hands of all those who are interested in the 'Tribal question,' as well as in the preservation of the political and economic integrity of the Indian Republic.

The style of writing is journalistic; but it does not obscure the

scholarly care which the author has been able to bestow upon his task.

It is only frank and truthful studies of this kind, which can also be extended to other fields of our political life, which will help us in finding a way out of the tangle of problems facing the Republic today.

N. K. Bose

Prithibir Katha. *By Dr. Mannohan Das. Pp. 383 with glossary of technical terms, bibliography and 2 indexes at the end. Orient Book Company: Calcutta, 1967. Rs. 12 only.*

The book entitled 'The Story of the Earth', written in the Bengali language, is divided into 19 chapters. The broad subjects covered are the origin and evolution of the earth, the evolution of plant and animal life, and lastly the evolution of man.

The language has a genuine literary flavour; it is fluent and never becomes pedantic in spite of the care and accuracy with which the author has tried to present a very large amount of information. The illustrations are also well drawn and add substantially to its value. With our increasing interest in science and technology and when we are planning to give the highest education in the universities in the mother tongue, the book will undoubtedly fulfil a very useful purpose. It is also likely to be popular with the general reader.

N. K. Bose

Red Man's Religion. *By Ruth M. Underhill. Pp. x+301; illustrations, 34; maps 4. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London. 1965.*

Written by the celebrated author of *Red Man's America*, the book is divided into twenty-three sections covering a very wide range of topics. It traces the history of several Red Indian beliefs and practices and maps their contemporary spatial distribution. It evokes their sympathetic understanding by placing them in the proper human setting.

Written in a non-technical style, the book may profitably be used even by professional students of human culture. The reproduction of paintings adds to its value.

Dineshwar Prasad

Congress and Congressmen in the Pre-Gandhian Era : 1885-1917. By *Bimanbehari Majumdar and Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar*, 1967. Pp. iv + 527. Calcutta : Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay. Rs. 35.00.

The book first deals with the history of the Indian National Congress and of its various activities. This is followed by an account of congressmen and their particulars and a classified list of all the Resolutions passed from the year 1885 to 1917.

In the first fourteen chapters the authors have given a critical account of the phases through which the Congress passed, along with separate descriptions of those who wielded power within the institution ; the activities in which it participated in order to form public opinion, and also the nature of the economic or judicial reforms which it demanded.

A list of all the resolutions passed is given in the third part of the book in an alphabetical arrangement. This will prove to be of considerable value to students of the political history of modern India. Readers will also be thankful to the authors for having taken great pains to cull from contemporary sources the names of all those who participated in the debates of the Congress from year to year.

The critical statements of the authors regarding the primary interests of those who took a leading part in the growth of the Congress will also be appreciated by readers for their fairness and objectivity.

In all, the authors have produced a book which will prove to be of abiding value.

N. K. Bose

Aboriginal Man in Australia ; Essays in Honour of Emeritus Professor A. P. Elkin. Edited by *Ronald M. Berndt & Catherine H. Berndt*. Angus and Robertson Ltd. 1965. Pp. xviii + 491.

Professor R. M. Berndt and Dr. Catherine H. Berndt deserve all our appreciation for preparing this volume ; firstly because it has been prepared as a token of respect for the outstanding Australian anthropologist, Professor A. P. Elkin and secondly because it is perhaps for the first time that the broad panorama of Australian aboriginal life has been tackled intensively by a number of Australian anthropologists. The coverage is much wider and more diverse than would have been possible if only one or two authors had been responsible for its production.

The book opens with a long chapter by the editors who discuss many roles of Prof. Elkin as a man and an anthropologist, which are inseparable. In the other fourteen chapters, divided into four parts, the distinguished Australian contributors highlight the various aspects of aboriginal Australia. In the first part an up-to-date and comprehensive outline of the present knowledge relating to the physical make-up of the Australian aborigines (Dr. N. W. G. Macintosh) and then an overall survey of their archaeological background (Dr. F. D. Mc Carthy) and lastly a discussion on Australian aboriginal linguistics (Dr. A. Capell) have been presented.

In the second group of essays on social and cultural topics some selected topics like culture, social structure and environment in aboriginal Central Australia (Dr. Strehlow), marriage among the Ljalbivi of Central Australia (Dr. Meggitt), law and order (Dr. Berndt), religion and totemism (Dr. Stanner) and women and 'secret life' (Mrs. Berndt) have found fuller treatment.

The third part deals with the ethno-musicological research into Australian aboriginal music. Its author, Mr. T. A. Jones, deserves our special appreciation for presenting a model for the study of aboriginal music, so far neglected by scholars.

The fourth group of papers deals with the changing pattern of aboriginal culture in Australia. The first paper written by Dr. Marie Reay deals with the background of Aryan impact. This paper reviews the works of earlier scholars on this problem, the long tradition of relation between Black and White. The next paper by Dr. J. H. Bell discusses the history of the emergence of part-aborigines in New South Wales. This paper clearly brings out the devastating effect of contact between the aborigines and European settlers. The next paper by Dr. Ruth A. Fink may be considered along with the earlier paper on the 'part-aborigines' as it deals with the contemporary situation of change among them. In the last paper by Dr. Paul Hasluck we get an idea about the administration related to the welfare of the Australian aborigines. Writing in an analytical manner the various policies and laws have been reviewed critically and the shortcomings of the policy of assimilation have been brought into special prominence.

Thus the book presents an integrated and analytical picture of the traditional and changing life of aboriginal man in Australia. It also gives us an idea about the research activities of Australian anthropologists.

L. P. Vidyarthi

Anthropology Today ; Selections. Edited by Sol Tax, Phoenix Books. The University of Chicago Press : 1965. Pp. 481. \$2.95

This book is an abridged and paper-bound edition of the earlier volume, *Anthropology Today*, an encyclopedic account edited by A. L. Kroeber in 1962. The present selection is designed to increase in two ways the usefulness of the work ; firstly the price is greatly reduced and secondly, it omits articles now outdated by the march of science and events. Moreover, this volume will go a long way to serve the graduate students in anthropology, professional anthropologists as well as serious minded men interested in the science of man.

As the earlier edition has been amply reviewed and as the materials included here are not new, the reviewer refrains from making critical comments. However, in such a volume one feels the absence of a full-length review article on the history of social and cultural anthropology.

L. P. Vidyarthi

Dispur, A Study in Rural Change in Assam. By Dr. P. C. Goswami M. A. B. L. Ph. D. (London). Published by the Agro-Economic Research Centre For North East India, Jorhat, Assam. 1967. Pp. viii + 131, one Map, appendix. Rs. 8.

This well-produced handy volume embodies a report on the socio-economic survey of a village in Kamrup District in Assam and successfully brings out the changes caused by the impact of urbanization between the first point survey of 1955 and re-survey of 1961. It shows how a tribal village situated in the periphery of a rapidly growing city (Gauhati) experiences changes in basic demographic factors, occupational structure, in levels of inputs and outputs, in economic condition of households and in the opinion and attitude of the people.

The book consists of eight chapters and an appendix. The treatment is refreshingly lucid and explanations are clear. The data have been presented in a systematic and readable manner. The village map further adds to the value of the book.

B. Chakraborty

Inscriptions du Cambodge—éditées et traduites par G. Coedès Vol. VIII. Pp. 258. Paris : Ecole Française d' Extrême Orient. 1966.

With this volume VIII, G. Coedé's brings his work on the Inscriptions of Cambodia to a close. This series is part of the collection of texts and documents on Indo-China. In the present book the author lists all the inscriptions that have been catalogued and published, adding summary epigraphical details in parallel columns. In brief, it is a multiple table of contents indispensable for the use of the seven-volumed opus. F. E.

Mélanges Sur Nguyen Du – Réunis à l'occasion du bi-centenaire de sa naissance (1765), publiés sous la direction de Maurice Durand. Pp. 322. Paris : Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient. 1966.

This commemorative volume, published under the direction of the late Maurice Durand on the occasion of the bi-centenary of the birth of *Nguyen Du* (1765) will interest experts in Vietnamese literature. It is a collection of essays by more than a dozen authors – Vietnamese and French – dealing with problems anent the great work of *Nguyen Du*, viz. *Kim Van Kiêu*. It belongs to the literary genre known as *Truyen*, which is a long poem, a sort of novel or story in verse. Such literary compositions are numerous in Vietnam ; but by far the best known is the *Kim Van Kieu*, which has appeared in many editions. The popularity of this poetic masterpiece is due to the artistry of *Nguyen Du* who was born in 1765 at Nghe-Tinh, and died in 1820.

The essays in the present volume study various literary and historical points concerning *Nguyen Du*'s outstanding poetic work, a contribution that will be appreciated by the specialists of Vietnamese literature. F. E.

La Grammaire De Panini – Texte sanskrit, traduction française avec extraits des commentaires, par Louis Renou. – 2 vols. Pp. 414 & 490. Paris : Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient – 1966.

One of the last works of the late Professor Louis Renou, the renowned Indologist, must have been this new, revised and enlarged edition of his earlier work : *The Grammar of Panini*. The author still signed the Preface in January 1966. The present edition, printed in Madras for the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient of Paris, is in several ways an improvement on the first edition (1948-54), especially in that it prints also the original Sanskrit text of the Sutras, thus facilitating the study of the grammar. In brief, the book gives the Sanskrit text of the Sutras, the French translation, with extracts from various ancient commentaries on Panini's Sutras.

The meticulous scholarship of Professor Louis Renou is well known and the present publication is the ripe fruit of it. Vol. II closes with a useful alphabetical index to the Sutras. F. E.