which may be false and irrelevant for our society. This methodological individualism also tends to alienate the behavioural sciences, particularly sociology and social anthropology, from history; and by distorting the construction of concepts and categories it also vitiates our understanding of problems. In my opinion greater use of history as a resource for understanding the various problems of our society may provide a sounder path by which Indian social science can bring about realistic correspondence of its theory and methodology with the Indian reality and the issues of its identity.

NOTES

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INDIAN SOCIOLOGY: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT PROBLEMS

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I

Conceived as a distinct scientific discipline sociology in India, as in most countries of the world, is a 20th century phenomenon. Also, as in all societies, sociology in India has tried to answer questions relevant to the discipline, though in the particular context of the Indian society. In this manner it is contributing to universal sociological knowledge from the bottom upwards, as it were, instead of presuming a universal view from the findings and generalizations appropriate to one particular society or to a set of similar societies (e.g. the "American" society or the "Western" societies). However, Indian sociology—and for that matter sociology anywhere—has currently reached a critical point in its development which, I believe, is the source of its present problems.

The critical point is in-between any two stages of development which a scientific discipline may have to pass through in the course of answering four fundamental questions in regard to the phenomena it deals with: *what is it, how is it, why is it, and what will it be*? The first two questions refer to the *descriptive* stage since the answer to "what is it?" is an enumeration of the properties of the phenomena under reference, and the answer to "how is it?" is a classification and analysis of the phenomena in terms of their inner articulation, variation, and interrelation. Subsequently, the third question refers to the *explanatory* stage since the answer to "why is it?" will denote the causality of the phenomena; and, lastly, the fourth question refers to the *diagnostic* stage since, following from the answers to the first three questions, the answer to "what will be" will, on the basis of probability, denote the structure, function and process of the contemporary phenomena in a dynamic perspective.

As it was for virtually all countries in the world up to the middle of the present century, it was adequate for India too until its independence in 1947 to learn about *what* the societal phenomena are,

how they occur, and *why* they occur. The central aim was to have an objective understanding of the society *as it had developed*, and *as it was* at the most proximal point in time, in terms of the description of the societal phenomena and their explanation on the basis of the empirical findings and in the light of the theory which gave the best possible fit to the description. The situation, however, changed in the later half of the present century. Pursuant to the stage reached by sociology and the *social* demand on the discipline, it is no more sufficient merely to describe and explain the societal phenomena: it is necessary now to diagnose "what will it be?" about the societal phenomena and thus about the society itself.

This is evident from the crucial issues we face in the world at large. We are not to rest content with the knowledge of *what*, *how*, and *why* of the Black movement in the U.S.A., of the student's upsurge in France, Germany and Japan, of the youth revolt and the "nonconformism" of the Hippies throughout the world, and of many such phenomena. Our task is to diagnose, objectively and by means of the best possible consolidation of our current knowledge, "what will it be?" in respect of each one of them. This question is also in-built to the issues, like, the motivation of the people in the "developing" societies to "change", the "social" need for family planning and the presumed inaction of the people in many parts of the world including the United States [cf. Lee 1960], and so on. Similarly, the question is obvious with reference to the tension between north and south Korea, east and west Germany, north and south Vietnam, Israel and the U.A.R., India and Pakistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, etc. This is why sociology everywhere today is oriented towards social dynamics and is geared to the problems of social change, social development, nation-building, and so on. In respect of these and similar problems, Indian sociology also will have to find out "what will it be?" in line with its consistent effort to answer the "Indian question".

The answer to the question "what will it be?" is *implied* in many descriptive and explanatory studies [e.g. Benedict 1947; Banfield 1958]. But, in order that the answer is not esoteric, subjective, or partial, the orientation and methodology of scientific discipline at the diagnostic stage has to be different from those at the descriptive and explanatory stages. This point I am unable to discuss in this brief communication (see, Mukherjee, R. 1972); anyhow it refers to sociology at large and not to Indian sociology alone. Therefore, I

shall only indicate the need for Indian sociology to move over to the diagnostic stage from the currently reached critical point in its development. In the following pages, accordingly, I shall treat the historical development of Indian sociology under three stages specified below; and, after briefly discussing the first two, dwell at some length on the third in order to elucidate the present problems in Indian sociology.

As the three stages are interlinked, all of them may be found in one time-period but in a different order of importance. Respectively, therefore, they may characterize the time-sequence according to the main focus of research in each period. We may thus distinguish three stages in the historical development of Indian sociology as follows:

1. Proto-professional stage of sociology prior to the twentieth century.
2. Professional stage of descriptive and explanatory sociology in the first half of the present century.
3. Currently needed stage of diagnostic sociology.

II

The first stage is characterized as "proto-professional" because it marks the period of data collection, description, and explanation which are of sociological import but not yet used for the consolidation of a distinct branch of knowledge. In this period, sociology was submerged in the governmental reports and surveys on the life of the people and in the papers and monographs on the same subject but under the label of antiquity or indology, and later of economic or "social" studies. Two distinct demands dominated this stage: (1) the requirement of the State Polity to learn about the people for an efficient government, and (2) the desire of the Social Polity to know about itself.

Both were prevalent from remote periods in India's history. Kautilya (c. 300-400 B.C.) advised the king to collect data about the country and the people, and his treatise *Arthasastra* contains a substantial amount of aforesaid information [Shamasastry 1951]. Amongst some others, a well-known treatise of this kind, written during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) is Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari* [Blochmann and Jarrett 1939-48]. Also, the literature of the period

especially during the 13th—16th century, testifies to the corresponding role of the social polity [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1958: 174-212].

The British realized the same need as felt by the previous rulers. Therefore, with the consolidation of their power, firstly in Bengal, Governor Henry Verelest asked the revenue supervisors in 1769 to collect information on the leading Indian families and their customs. The procedure was later extended by the East India Company (and afterwards by the British Imperial Government) to all classes of people in India, and thus resulted in the collection of a wealth of sociological data as contained in the British Parliamentary papers and reports, etc. [e.g. *Select Committee Report, 1812*]. Warren Hastings, during his Governorship of Bengal (1772-74) and Governor-Generalship of India (1774-86), arranged for the preparation of a compendium of Hindu Law [Halhead 1776] which was a product of significant sociological value for what it does and *does not* contain, as was another effort of Hastings to prepare a compendium of the Mahomedan law [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1958: 314-326]. Similar sporadic but consistent attempts towards collection and collation of data on the life of the Indian people were made by the British during the consolidation of their power in India in the second half of the 18th century.

Specific attempts were made in this respect from the beginning of the 19th century. Francis Buchanan (later Buchanan-Hamilton) was commissioned to survey extensive areas in south and eastern India; Walter Hamilton's Gazetteer came out in 1820, and Edward Thornton's Gazetteer in 1854 [Buchanan-Hamilton 1807; Hamilton 1820; Thornton 1854]. Subsequently, the preparation of the Imperial as well as the District Gazetteers became a routine task of the administration, as also the socio-economic account of the people in the reports of the Population Census from 1880 which contained valuable sociological data. Other agencies also were formed for the collection and collation of data of sociological significance; such as, the all-India ethnographical surveys of castes and tribes from the last decades of the 19th century [e.g. Nesfield 1885; Risley 1891; Crooke 1896; and so on]. Along with the governmental agencies, the Christian missionaries and many European intellectuals and administrators collected and collated data on their own initiative, which are of substantial sociological value [e.g., Dubois 1816; Maine 1861, 1871; Baden-Powell 1872, 1899; Fick 1897; Stevenson-Moore 1898].

Also, in this period, the Indian social polity found a new interest to learn about itself. "Confronted by the disquieting spectacle of what seemed superior social organization as well as superior material culture, Indian thinkers began to look at their own family, law, education, and religion in ways different from those sanctioned by century-old traditions" [Becker and Barnes 1952: II. 1135-1136]. This outlook, brought to the forefront of the Indian society by persons, like, Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), Swami Dayanand Saraswati, (1824-1883), Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901), Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), led to the collection and collation of new empirical data as well as documentary evidence and to reinterpretation of India's religions and ethic, customs and institutions, etc., which are of no less sociological relevance.

Rammohun Roy, for example, is reported to have had collected data on the widows who were burnt on their husband's pyre, while he reinterpreted Hinduism in the light of universalism in religion and wrote on the utility of English education as a gateway to the Western knowledge in science [cf. Nag and Burman 1945]. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) not only adduced evidence from scriptures in favour of widow marriage and against polygyny but also collected empirical data on child widows and supplied statistics to support his statement that, contrary to the claim, polygyny was prevalent in the 1860-s among the Bengali *Kulin* Brahmins [Vidyasagar 1972: II. 201-208]. Also, in the light of their accounting of the prevailing social organization and their interpretations of the social system, the Indian social polity began to furnish data on the caste system, family, rural-urban interactions, social stratification, changes in the material culture, values and ideas of the people, and so on [e.g. Native 1880; Bhattacharya 1896; Ranade 1902]. Many of these studies, however, are in Indian languages—in Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, etc. [e.g. Bose, R. 1874].

The incipient development of sociology in India was thus linked up with the Indian renaissance, of which the most prominent figure is considered to be Raja Rammohun Roy. The trend was not lost in later years. On the contrary, the role of the national movement for independence was considerable for the growth of Indian sociology in the 19th and the 20th century, as stated or implied by the founders of professional sociology in India, like, Brojendra Nath Seal, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Radhakamal Mukerjee. Also there are evidences to indicate that one of the by-products of the mass movement of the

1920-s, led by Gandhi, was to stimulate the interest of the social scientists in "village studies" [cf. Patel 1952: 1; Mukherjee, R. 1965: 169-173]. And, since India's independence in 1947, national issues have markedly influenced sociological research on India, as is obvious from the published literature. Indian sociology has thus been geared to the task of answering the "Indian question" in different contexts—colonial or otherwise, etc.—from the beginning to date.

III

Indian sociology attained a professional character when the University of Bombay started a post-graduate course in economics and sociology in 1914, the University of Calcutta began to teach sociology to the post-graduate students from 1917, and an undergraduate course in sociology was introduced in Mysore University in 1917. The students produced in these centres, especially in Bombay, and Calcutta, headed new centres of sociological study and research in Lucknow, Poona, Baroda, Delhi, etc.; and the latter centres (especially the Lucknow centre) accelerated the professionalisation of sociology in India. In the first half of the present century, however, teaching of sociology in India was either linked with economics or social anthropology, or it had a strong antecedence of idealistic philosophy. This had left its effects on the development of the discipline.

The effect on descriptive sociology was two-fold: The macro-studies were essentially oriented towards the economic life of the people [e.g. Mukerjee, R. K. 1945; Mahalanobis *et al.* 1946; Chattopadhyay, K. P. and Mukherjee, R. 1946]. The micro-studies were prompted by the anthropological approach towards intensive examination of purposively selected small areas. The result of both tendencies was: (1) the "economic" bias tended to ignore some vital "social" facts like the religion-caste-family-kinship organization of the people; and (2) the "anthropological" bias was not only partial to the non-economic variety of "social facts" but the implicit or explicit attempt to generalize for India by employing the "multiplier effect" on the small pieces of observation was usually not valid and certainly not precise and comprehensive [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1965: 176-181).

However, macro-studies of the descriptive type and of "sociological" orientation were not altogether absent in the first half of the

present century [e.g. Ketkar 1909; Ghurye 1938; Chattopadhyay, K. P. 1952]. Also, large-scale studies in descriptive sociology attained a high degree of efficiency in later time [e.g. Gore *et al.* 1967]. Moreover, while the currently undertaken micro-studies are usually free from pro-anthropological or anti-economic and anti-historical bias, attempts are now made to collate micro-studies in order to produce useful pieces of descriptive sociology of rural life, urban development, family and caste organization etc. [e.g., Bose, N. K. 1960; Bulsara 1964; Kolenda 1968; Desai 1969]. By the second half of the present century, descriptive sociology in India has thus attained maturity, and India has become one of those countries which possesses masses of sociological data and description.

Similar to descriptive sociology, in the first half of the present century explanatory sociology developed in India with different orientations. A purely ideological orientation was evident, of which the main trend was to rationalize the so-called Hindu view of life through "sociological" interpretation of the ancient Indian texts and treatises, like, the *Bhagvat Gita* and the *Manusmriti*. Not many professional sociologists subscribed to this trend, and its exponents are rarely found today [e.g. Motwani 1958]. The Western idealistic orientation in sociology is hardly discernible as a trend in India; compared to the former its exponents—both in the past and at present—are even rarer. In recent years, only a few have posed the issues emerging from this orientation vis-a-vis empiricism in social research [e.g. Chattopadhyay, D. P. 1967]. On the other hand, there has been an equally feeble trend to move over from empiricism to idealism having a distinct universal quality of its own. Radhakamal Mukerjee, one of the pioneers of descriptive sociology in India, whose contribution to explanatory sociology with an "economic" slant is also of permanent value, and who in later years advocated the "trans-disciplinary" (not the inter-disciplinary) approach to sociology, is perhaps the best exponent of this trend [cf. Mukerjee, R. K. 1964*a*].

These trends could play contradictory roles in Indian sociology if they were strong enough to assert themselves. But they remained subservient to the predominant trend in Indian sociology throughout its development which is empirical against an inter-disciplinary background of indology, history, social anthropology, economics, psychology and politics; they could, therefore, complement this trend as correctives against gross empiricism and be controlled, at

the same time, against idealistic chauvinism or sterile pedantism. The predominant trend was set by Brojendra Nath Seal (1864-1938) —a philosopher and erudite scholar in the sciences and humanities [cf. Seal 1958]. He initiated studies in "comparative sociology", was instrumental in introducing the teaching of sociology in Calcutta University (as Professor of Mental and Moral Science) and in Mysore University (as Vice-Chancellor), and thus played a very important role in professionalizing the discipline in the sub-continent. The trend was followed and expanded by his students and like-minded colleagues who, like Seal, were influenced by the European and American schools of thought but maintained an originality of their own [e.g. Sarkar 1922, 1937; Mukerji 1932, 1946; Mukherjee, R. K. 1939; Ghurye 1932, 1943; Chattopadhyay, K. P. 1935]. They, thus, established a landmark in the development of Indian sociology, and some of their students carried on the tradition [e.g. Bose, N. K. 1949; Karve, 1953; Kapadia, 1947; Desai 1959].

The trend faced a challenge in the 1950-s and early 1960-s from two directions viz. (1) the imposition of a rather a-historical, non-economic, "micro" approach fashionable, at that time, in some sectors of the British and American social anthropology; and (2) the imitative and a-contextual importation of some "static" theories of social systems and "dynamic" theories of communication, diffusion, innovation and change, which were then prevalent in certain sectors of American sociology. While the former could not curb the originality and usefulness of some researchers [e.g. Srinivas 1952, 1962], both had a serious effect on the steady development of Indian sociology. There was a spate of superficial (and often irrelevant) theorizing and inconsequential (and often fallacious) "applied research". Sociology, to be sure, appeared to attain the "scientific" status with its own jargons and phrases, and occasionally looked very impressive with heavy doses of quantification (necessary or not). But, whether or not the fashion-setters could still contribute significantly to the growth of sociological knowledge, the younger sociologists thus could escape the rigour of science and yet impress the "academic" public with theoretical cliches and "quantified" research findings without much effort to comprehend the substantive reality and undergo the methodological (and not mere technical) exercise to explore it.

Those who pursued the discipline in the manner described earlier did not neglect the intrinsic merit of sociological contributions

from other societal references, but fought against their doctrinaire imposition on Indian sociology [e.g. Singh, B. 1961]. In the beginning, they were considered "biased" or were ridiculed as backdated. Even D. P. Mukerji, one of the pioneers of Indian sociology, was accused of raking up an obscurantist outlook (and duly ignored) when he entitled his *Presidential Address to the First All-India Sociological Conference* in 1955 as "Indian Tradition and Social Change" and said:

> "Neglect of the social base often leads to arid abstractions, as in recent economics. On the other hand, much of empirical research in anthropology and in psychology has been rendered futile because its fields have so far been kept covered. Yet, within this mansion of sociology the different social disciplines live. . . . In any case, participation by long conditioning, which is the first requisite of understanding, should make it less possible to pass on the most jejune and vapid generalizations about Indian problems with which we are being familiarized today in the name of scientific research. . . .
>
> "Thus it is that it is not enough for the Indian sociologist to be a sociologist. He must be an Indian first, that is, he is to share in the folkways, mores, customs and traditions, for the purpose of understanding his social system and what lies beneath it and beyond it. . . . It pains me to observe how our Indian scholars succumb to the lure of modern 'scientific' techniques imported from outside as a part of technical aid and 'know how', without resistance and dignity. In the intellectual transactions which are taking place, it seems that we have no terms to offer, no ground to stand upon. . . . Our progressive groups have failed in the field of intellect, and hence also in economic and political action, chiefly on account of their ignorance of and unrootedness in India's social reality [Mukerji 1961: 20-31].

The aberrations, however, began to be remedied from the latter part of the 1960-s mainly under the wholesome impact of social reality and also because Indian sociology never totally forsook the responsibility to answer the "Indian question". The proponents of the aforesaid British and American schools of social anthropology no longer fought against the historical or economic "bias", and increasingly the knowledge gained from the American and European

schools was brought into the Indian perspective in an objective and wholesome manner. Explanatory sociology in India thus resumed a proper course of development, in which the role of non-Indian sociologists also has been appreciable. A listing of all—Indian and non-Indian sociologists—in this context would be too long; any selection would be invidious. Just to avoid a total neglect, however, a few non-Indian sociologists may be mentioned without casting any reflection on others (e.g., Bailey 1958; Dumont 1970; Fukutake 1967; Singer 1972). The names of Indian sociologists in this respect are well-known to all of us.

By this time, however, Indian sociology had reached a point at which, like descriptive sociology, explanatory sociology was relevant and necessary but not sufficient. In the colonial period, the appropriate task of Indian sociology was to describe and to explain the Indian society for two main reasons. It was necessary to present an objective picture against superficial generalizations which, on the one side, eulogized India's past well above that of the West and, on the other, denigrated its present [e.g. Mayo 1927]. The latter not only absolved the colonial power of its role in perpetuating India's current backwardness but also enabled it prognosticate that in India "any quickening of general political judgement . . is bound to come very slowly indeed" [*Indian Statutory Commission* 1930: I. 15]. Equally necessary it was to explore the society unequivocally and comprehensively in view of the wide variations found in the subcontinent of India. For this prompted one spontaneously to arrive at a fallacious conclusion, as the seven blind men in the Indian fable came to, by characterizing an elephant according to the parts of its body—the trunk, foot, ear, etc.—they touched, respectively: a point I have repeatedly illustrated elsewhere [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1965]. Obviously, in independent India also two responsibilities of Indian sociology—description and explanation—are relevant and necessary and, therefore, evermore efficient descriptive and explanatory sociology must be on the agenda. But, today, the course of consolidation of knowledge cannot stop at description and explanation; instead, they are to lead to the answer of the question "what will it be?" about the contemporary Indian society. This means that Indian sociology must now attain the diagnostic stage which will also further enrich the preceding descriptive and explanatory stages by more comprehensive collection of data and more precise unequivocal interpretation of the data on an *a priori* basis as well as in the light of the

available and applicable theories.

The present problems in Indian sociology are thus germane to this demand on its further development. I shall, therefore, conclude this paper, firstly, with a brief discusssion on the prevailing concepts and formulations in Indian sociology for purposes of explanation and diagnosis: such as, achievement-orientation and rationality in respect of "modernization"; urbanization and social transformation in respect af planning; "Protestant ethic" and industrial development in respect of value-consideration; nuclearisation of the joint families or "sanskritization and the dominant caste" in respect of social change; and so on. Afterwards, I shall discuss the role of sociology vis-a-vis other social science disciplines in order to unfold the social reality in contemporary India.

IV

In any scientific discipline an explanation may be: (1) relevant or irrelevant, if it is fallacious; (2) necessary or unnecessary, if it is *sui generis* to the given facts; (3) efficient or inefficient, if it is equivocal; and (4) sufficient or insufficient, if it is not comprehensive. If these four sets of characteristics were unrelated and each could occur independently in 2 ways as either/or, an explanation would have the possibility to occur under one of $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16$ mutually exclusive categories. The characteristics are, however, sequentially related in such a manner that they produce 5 mutually exclusive possibilities for an explanation to occur; such as, if an explanation is not relevant, it cannot be necessary, efficient or sufficient. We may illustrate the 5 possibilities with reference to Indian sociology and thus indicate how it has reached a critical point in its development which calls for the diagnostic approach to the discipline.

1. *An explanation may not be relevant, and, therefore, not necessary, efficient and sufficient.* According to the Brahmanical "tradition", which has permeated into virtually all sectors of the Indian society, all social actions fall under one of the four categories of *dharma* (related to religious practices), *artha* (related to wealth and material well-being), *kama* (related to the fulfilment of desire), and *moksa* (related to ultimate salvation). The evaluation of any social action, however, refers to whether it is a *dharma* action (e.g. righte-

ous) or an *adharma* (e.g. not-*dharma*) action. The category of *moksa*, in this context, consumes all actions. Therefore, the "traditional" social actions *categorized* as "artha" and "kama" but evaluated as *dharma* can be achievement-oriented at any time period, and this possibility is reinforced by the fact that the gamuts of *dharma* and *adharma* actions are not immutable. Otherwise we fail to explain instances when a Brahmin working even at the production bench of a shoe factory (e.g. the Bata complex) does not consider himself to be committing an *adharma* action, which he would reckon to have done if he was earning his livelihood as a cobbler. Thus, the lack of achievement-orientation *per se* is not a characteristics of the so-called Indian tradition, as we are told in course of an imitative and a-contextual application of a model of "modernization".

McClelland, who perhaps has given the most logically structured formulation of achievement-orientation in reference to "economic growth" [cf. McClelland 1961], tends to agree to the above in his later writings [McClelland 1971: 290-291] and to imply the need for sociology to attain what I have labelled the diagnostic stage in order to substantiate his viewpoint [McClelland: 254-293]. Correspondingly, if we pursue the example of "traditional" social actions in India in present times, we find that the consequence of *dharma* and *adharma* actions is assessable in the future perspective according to the doctrine of *karma* and the theory of reincarnation of souls. Accordingly, the contemporary actions are cumulative and the net effect on the presumed next birth is derived by subtracting the total consequences of *adharma* actions from that of *dharma* actions. An enterprising person, therefore, can consistently perform *adharma* actions with impunity (e.g. profiteering through the adulteration or hoarding of foodstuffs) and be absolved of the sin through perfunctory *dharma* actions (e.g. occasional charity to those who have suffered the most from the course of profiteering and blackmarketing, contribution to the propagation of religion, etc.). Rationality which has been aptly defined as "the use of the most effective means to reach a given end [Rogers 1962: 91], can thus be purposively applied in the Indian contemporary situation to *optimize the relation between ends and means* without moving out of the sphere of "traditional" ideology and action.

Possibly, it is in this or a similar manner that many apparent incongruities in the contemporary Indian society can be duly expos-

ed; one of which I have indicated as the "anti-social" activities of many "achieving" persons. Hence, like achievement-orientation, rationality *per se* is not a suitable indicator of any course of modernization. Instead, for the clarification of the above and allied concepts in contemporary Indian sociology, what is needed is *not an explanation* of the lack of achievement-orientation, rationality, etc., but a *diagnosis* of how rationality works in India today, whether the "traditional" achievement-orientation is conducive or not to the desired course of social development, and so on.

2. *An explanation may be relevant but not necessary and, therefore, not efficient and sufficient.* An alteration in a societal arrangement is likely to alter a behaviour pattern which is *sui generis*. It may be useful, therefore, to describe the latter with reference to the former, but to draw the explanation which follows automatically is hardly necessary. For example in the second half of the present century India is being rapidly urbanized with the establishment of new industrial and urban centres and the development and extension of the existing cities and towns. This has naturally called for the migration of villagers to the urban sites and led to certain alterations in their living and behaviour patterns which in regard to the nature of work and recreation, habitation and consumption of cultural amenities, circle of neighbours, comrades at work, and so on, are the direct consequences of their transfer from a rural (and predominantly agricultural) to an urban (and essentially industrial) sector of the society. These differences, therefore, may be relevant and necessary to *describe* the course of urbanization in India today [e.g. Rao 1970]; but for *explanatory* purposes, they are obvious from the fact of movement from rural to urban environment. Hence, any explanation of social transformation in India in terms of such characteristics of urbanization—which still continues in Indian sociology—would be unnecessary and therefore inefficient, and certainly not sufficient.

What is needed instead,—in order to appraise the concepts and formulations, like, urbanization as a "way of life", rural-urban dichotomy or continuum,—is to ascertain the *chain reaction* which may have been set up by those alterations in the living and behaviour patterns of the people which are *sui generis* to urbanization. This, however, is a matter of diagnosis and not of explanation, as indicated in a study of "urbanization and social transformation(?)"

in West Bengal [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1965: 15-58] and also substantiated by the following conclusion drawn from a study of 4 centres of industrialization and urbanization in the Okhla Estate (Delhi), Hyderabad-Secunderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Ludhiana (Punjab), and Rajkot (Gujarat) in the first half of the 1960-s:

> "If a tentative conclusion is in order, it is that the notion that the traditional institutions of a society are obstacles to industrialization is perhaps too sweeping. From the limited data we have gathered, the case rather seems to be that it is perfectly possible for traditional and modern ideas to live in separate worlds, the traditional ones being applied in their sphere, the modern ones in their own. Similarly, traditional social observances continue alongside modern practices wherever the two are not flatly opposed. Instances of any conflict between the old and the new do not emerge from our material. Our studies however mainly refer to situations which are found in the first phase of the industrialization process. It is to be seen whether this happy coexistence will remain undisturbed when these industries develop into more complex forms." [UNESCO Research Centre 1966: 31]

3. *An explanation may be relevant and necessary but not efficient and, therefore, not sufficient.* The ethos of the Parsis in contemporary India has been explained in terms of Weber's and Merton's formulation of ideas and actions in order to "relate certain values with certain behaviour patterns" [Kennedy Jr. 1965: 18]. Such an explanation to evaluate the role of entrepreneurs in India today is relevant and necessary, but it may not be efficient to appraise the concept of "industrial rationality" [Kennedy Jr. 1965: 26]. For it may be pointed out from a more comprehensive examination of the available facts that:

(1) The Parsis, Khojas, Gujaratis and Marwaris are the four of several ethnic groups which have their homeland in the western region of India.

(2) According to their success in the "twin interests in trade and technology" [Kennedy Jr. 1965: 26] the communities of Marwaris and Gujaratis are to be ranked at the top of the Indian society, that of the Parsis next, and that of the Khojas closely following the Parsis.

(3) Following Kennedy's assumption, the Parsis are governed by the values expressed in Zorastrianism, the Khojas are governed by the values expressed in Islam of a distinct variety, the Gujaratis by those in Hinduism (mainly of the Vaishnaba trend), and the Marwaris by those in Jainism.

(4) The constellation of values expressed in Jainism and Hinduism of the *Vaishnaba* trend (which may not be regarded as so very apart) is certainly very different from that in Islam or Zorastrianism.

Thus the Parsis may record success in the "twin interests in trade and technology", but so do other distinct communities of the Indian people who may also belong to the same socio-cultural *milieu*. And, while the "value system" of the Parsis (with which Kennedy correlates industrial behaviour) is different from that of the analogous communities, some of the latter ones record a higher degree of proficiency in industrial behaviour. We are thus concerned here with a matrix which contains, hypothetically, two independent sets of possibilities: (1) the presence or absence of industrial behaviour in a community of people, and (2) the presence or absence of a particular set of values in that community. Hence, unless we take this matrix into account, any explanation regarding ideas and the corresponding actions would be equivocal.

Pursuantly, for an appraisal of the concept of "industrial rationality", just any correlation between a set of ideas and a set of actions would not be efficient and, therefore, not sufficient. Equally inefficient and insufficient will be any overall explanation which regards a regressional relation of "ideas" upon "actions" as of causal, concomitant or casual importance. Instead, "industrial rationality" in contemporary India should be appraised in the light of all available theoretical explanations (e.g. Weberian, Marxist, and others) and of an intensive as well as comprehensive examination of the empirical data. This, again, is a matter of diagnosis and not of explanation.

4. *An explanation may be relevant, necessary and efficient, but not sufficient.* A collated sample of 44,657 family-units (coresident and commensal kingroups), representing 30 communities of people from virtually all parts of India, indicates that 55 per cent of the locally functioning family-units are, on the average, nuclear [Mukherjee, R. 1971*a*: 79]. Therefore, under the prevailing assumption that the

Indian family is "traditionally" joint, an explanation of break-up of the joint structures into nuclear appears to be relevant, necessary and efficient from the empirical data. Theoretical generalizations on social change in the "developing" societies due to economic development and change in the value system of the people, etc., also support (or prompt) this explanation [cf. Epstein 1962 : 322; Linton 1952: 48; Morrison 1959: 67]. But, even, if we assume that all Indians wish to live in joint families (which may not be true) and agree with Nimkoff that presently they prefer to form unilateral structure with sons and their progeny instead of the collateral structures which include their brothers, brothers' sons and their progeny [Nimkoff 1959: 34], 51 to 55 per cent of the total Indian families may be nuclear [Mukherjee, R. 1971*a*: 70-72].

This sharp departure from the assumed wish and effort of the people would be caused by the age at which they (in general) consummate their marriage, their fertility pattern, and their expectation of life [Mukherjee, R. 1971*a*: 46-76]. Thus, certain societal factors which are not usually taken into account to explain the nuclearization of joint families in India (or elsewhere) may not allow about half of the Indian families to attain a joint structure irrespective of the desire of the people to do so. Evidently, therefore, the above explanation which is relevant and necessary, and follows from the kind of data a sociologist usually deals with, would not be efficient for the Indian society as a whole.

For some of the 30 communities of people, however, the percentage incidence of nuclear structures is above 55; such as, for the state of West Bengal. In these instances. therefore, the explanation of *break-up* of the joint structure is relevant, necessary and efficient. But it may not be sufficient because, after the break-up of a joint family structrure, the corresponding nuclear units may pursue the course of nuclearization or *eventually form joint families of procreation.* The latter process is possibly operating in some parts of India (e.g. in West Bengal, as our unpublished study of change in family structures over 1947-66 indicates). According to this process, a person born in a joint family may form a nuclear family of procreation but he or she dies in his/her joint family of procreation because at least one of the sons stays in the "stem" family after his marriage and the appearance of his children. The joint family system, thus, maintains its hold over the society in a particular manner, i.e. despite a temporary phase of break-up of the joint family struc-

tures; and this process may register, at a point of time, the incidence of two-thirds of all families as nuclear [Mukherjee, R. 1971*a*: 72-74].

It, therefore, follows that the fact of nuclearization of joint family structures,—the exploration of which is regarded to be one of the current commitments of Indian sociology—connot be just explained in the light of available theories and the corresponding empirical findings. A careful, precise and comprehensive diagnosis of the situation is called for, as suggested elsewhere [Mukherjee, R. 1971*a*: 84-104].

5. *An explanation may be relevant, necessary, efficient and sufficient, but the demand of the discipline may be beyond explanation.* Over centuries there have been indications of one kind or another to anticipate that the caste system of India will soon disappear [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1971*b*: 351-352]; and yet the question "what will it be?" remains as valid regarding this system as before. In this context, "the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice-born' caste" [Srinivas 1966: 6] is probably as old as the caste system itself, as the *smriti* and the *purana* (and even the *sruti*) literature of ancient India testifies (e.g. the caste hierarchies recorded in the *manusmriti*, *brihaddharmapurana*, *brahmabaibartapurana*, etc.). At any rate, the process of "sanskritization" as defined above, which "results only in positional changes in the system and *does not lead to any structural change*" [Srinivas 1966: 7; italics added], is the same as that described by Lyall and Risley in the 19th century as "aryanisation" [Lyall 1822: 102; Risley 1891: I. xxvii-xxx]. The concept of aryanisation or sanskritization is thus relevant, necessary and efficient, and may be sufficient to explain the fact that all that is happening to the caste system over centuries amounts to casual fluctuations around its central tendency to survive by means of safety valves like the process embodied in this concept. But the task of the Indian sociology today lies beyond such an explanation. It is to know "what will it be?" about the caste system.

In that context, the concept of "dominant caste" may be relevant since the structural and functional characteristics of the social groups implied by the concept may be the indicators of "what will it be?" regarding the Indian caste system. The definitional attributes of "dominant caste" are: (1) "sizeable amount of arable land", (2) "strength of numbers", (3) "high place in the local hierarchy",

(4) "western education", (5) "jobs in the administration", and (6) "urban sources of income" [Srinivas 1966: 10-11]. Unless, therefore, the 6 attributes are grouped in some way, sequentially or transferably, there can be $(2^6-1) = 63$ variants of the "dominant caste", which would drastically affect the analytical relevance of the concept. For, in any societal context, one caste may register "dominance" over others according to the first attribute but not the second, and so on in all possible combinations of the 6 attributes. On the other hand, if the identification of "dominant caste" in terms of any one configuration of these attributes is left to the judgement of individual researchers, the concept will lose its objectivity. However, the available data on contemporary India suggest that two counteracting social groups may be objectively identified through this concept.

The social group (a particular caste), identified in terms of possession of "sizeable amount of arable land", would belong to the landed interest in the society, which has a propensity to "jobs in the administration" (at any rate, the better kind of jobs) and links with "urban sources of income". Also, in consequence of these characteristics, the social group would have the largest scope for obtaining "a high place in the local hierarchy", while "western education" may be a pre-requisite to high-grade jobs in the administration or a corollary to the elite character of the group. But this group cannot have the "strength of numbers" because land in India is concentrated in the hand of relatively few persons (and not the multitude) in the society [National Sample Survey 1958: 133; 1970: 22]. Conversely, therefore, another social group (a particular caste) may be identified which stands out because of its population size, belongs to the populace with little or no arable land, none or only low jobs in the administration, hardly any urban source of income (in addition), and obviously little or no western education in the circumstances. Thus, the definitional attributes 1 and 3-6 of "dominant caste" are likely to be positively correlated and to be concentrated in one social group, and this cluster of attributes is likely to be negatively correlated with the remaining attribute 2 characterizing another social group.

This way, the concept of "dominant caste" can be of analytical relevance to Indian sociology; it can thus be rescued from the esoteric judgement of different sociologists who may, accordingly, identify a "dominant caste" in 63 different ways. But this means

that a "dominant caste"characterized by the attributes 1 and 3-6 will represent the "haves" in the society, and another "dominant caste" characterised by the attribute 2 and the reverse characteristics of the attributes 1 and 3-6 will represent the "have-nots" in the society. It follows that the concept of "dominant caste" will eventually call for an examination of "caste" and "class" as *homologous entities* [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1957] or, at any rate, as *analogous and interlocking entities within a system* instead of being regarded as representing *two different systems* (viz. the former as "closed" since it is based on ascriptive attributes, and the latter as "open" since it is based on acquired attributes). Significantly, the concept of "dominant caste" is based entirely on what are labelled as "acquired" (and not "ascriptive") attributes.

Evidently, from such or a similar consideration as above, the relevance of the concept of "dominant caste" to Indian sociology, at the present stage of its development, would be substantiated. And, following therefrom, the necessity, efficiency and sufficiency of the concept to denote "what will it be?" regarding the caste system would be duly appraised. All these, however, refer to *diagnosis* and not to *explanation.*

V

More examples—relating to rural or industrial sociology, stratification and polarization in society; sociology of development, education, socio-religious movements, nation-building, etc.—may be cited to substantiate the 6 categories of explanation just discussed. Space, however, forbids the attempt. Also it may not be necessary to dwell on details since all of them concern the capacity of contemporary sociology to answer the "Indian question". The relevant issue here as with respect to any other country and any other society would be: how can sociology be the most useful to understand society and to mould it for enduring peace, greater prosperity, and continual progress. The present problems in Indian sociology are thus epitomized in its role in India today vis-a-vis other social science disciplines.

In this context, sociology in India has so far been secondary to economics as a replica of the world phenomenon [cf. Myrdal 1968: I. 28]. There were two convincing reasons for the leadership of economics in Indian social sciences: (1) during the British rule, the

effects of colonialism were most vividly felt in the economic life of the people; and (2) after independence, the principal problem of India became "the planned growth of industry, greater production, most just distribution, higher standard of living, and thus the elimination of the appalling poverty that crushed our people" [Nehru 1942: 11]. However, as found in virtually all the "developing" societies (and, for that matter, in the world at large), the role of economics in India has been unilaterally emphasized with the implication of an *invariable* relation of changes from the economic to the social, and from the social to the ideological.

The anticipation, of course, may be valid over a wide time-span and a generalized perspective of human society; but, with reference to a segment of that society and within a relatively short time-span, it may lose its precision and even validity. Marx, who is regarded by many to have insisted under any circumstances upon a course of unidirectional change from the economic to the social and then to the ideological, has pointed out exceptions to this within time-place limits [e.g. Marx 1953: 399-400]. Also Engels has clearly stated; "It is not that the economic position is the *cause and alone active*, while everything else only has a passive effect" [Engels 1943: 417]. We may thus muster a general agreement on the fact that economic progress may not synchronize *ipso facto* with social and ideological progress; instead, the social and ideological situation may stand in the way of economic development.

In India, at any rate, such a situation is evident from the 1960-s, which was indicated even in 1955 by D. P. Mukerji (quoted earlier). This became so obvious later that Myrdal commented in 1968: "The postponement of the promised social and economic revolution, which was to follow India's political revolution, is thus in danger of becoming permanent" [Myrdal 1968: I. 278]. Whether or not the comment is too drastic, it was admitted in an official review of Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama* in the journal of the Indian Planning Commission that: "If planning from below has not developed, it is because a whole group of economists drawn from various pursuasions and associated with India's Planning Commission seldom moved beyond the mechanical application of Western experience" [Thapar 1968: 5]. It is of crucial importance, therefore, to define the focus of social science research in India today and the corresponding task of the social scientists.

Myrdal has succinctly stated that the task of the social scientists

today is to evolve a "social technology, which would have meant utilizing their assembled stock of knowledge about the social facts to prescribe how social change could be induced and controlled in a rational and wholesome way" [Myrdal 1956: 173]. On this account, sociology can assume the leadership of all social science disciplines because: "Sociology has a floor and a ceiling, like any other science, but its speciality consists in its floor being the ground floor of all types of social disciplines, and its ceiling remaining open to the sky" [Mukerji 1961: 20]. But this responsibility of sociology to unravel the dynamics of society as a whole would not be discharged through mere description and explanation, both in respect of the intrinsic characteristics of the concepts and formulations in the discipline (as just discussed) and their application.

Indian sociology is, no doubt, continually increasing its stock of knowledge but in the social arena it has mostly played the second fiddle to the current economic, political and administrative theses by (*a*) providing "facts" to the planners, administrators, etc., (*b*) showing the achievement or failure of some planned programmes for development, (*c*) highlighting some problems auxiliary or ancillary to economic planning, and so on. Even the positive advocacy for "institutional planning" has so far taken the form of vague generalizations concerning the non-economic life of the people [e.g. Singh, B. 1955: 358-369; Mukerjee, R. K. 1964*b*: 42-43]. On the other side, the suspicion of a growing "official" hold on sociology in India and of meta-scientific influence on fixation of research priorities haunts the field of social research today, an apprehension expressed by Srinivas a decade earlier [Srinivas 1962: 143-44, 145-46]. Therefore, at this crossroad of its development, sociology in India must have a role of its own to play in order to answer the "Indian question" in the present context. This role, I would submit, lies in assuming the responsibility to identify the *soft spots* in the social organism, viz. *those vulnerable regions of the social structure through which change in the society is, or can be, effected.*

We are familiar with explicit formulation of soft spots in a broad canvas of social events. To Marx and Engels, the social group identified as the "proletariat" (and not the "poor" *per se*) represents the soft spot to bring about a revolutionary change in the world society [Marx and Engels 1951: 40-43, 51-60]. In some later Marxist variations, a particular section of the peasantry represents the corresponding soft spot, or it may be additionally or exclusively

represented by the "nonconformist young intelligentsia" [Marcuse 1969: 57], and so on. On the other hand, from a different focus on the world societies (viz. of stagnation in reference to development and not of revolutionary change), Myrdal characterizes the "underdeveloped countries" as "soft states" [Myrdal 1971: 211]. However, with reference to a small canvas of social events, we frequently find that while the concept of soft spots was not precisely stated, it has been implied at the end of many conscientiously undertaken pieces of explanatory research. As mentioned earlier, this is evident from the later writings of McClelland on achievement-orientation as a generalized explanatory proposition. Also the present attempt in India (as elsewhere) to appreciate social reality through models and countermodels contains the same implication; such as when we encounter the model of "tradition to modernity" [Shils 1961; Shah and Rao 1965] and the countermodel of "modernity of tradition" [Rudolph and Rudolph 1967], "an analytical scheme for the study of social change in India" [Beteille 1966] and its appraisal [Dube 1967], and so on.

All these models—national or international in claim or coverage—are undoubtedly useful since they highlight particular areas and methods of investigation. But models are like scaffoldings erected to build a house, and they are therefore specific to the design of the house and the resources which go into its construction. Hence, when the house is so complex and universalized as a multi-phenomenal social organism,—the ultimate aim of research being to ascertain an exact design of it—a particular model cannot but be inadequate. Thus, even regarding India for which the coverage of available information is very large, Hagen stated while propounding the theory of social change: "The situation in India has seemed to me too complex to lend itself to analysis in terms of the analytical model presented in this volume without more intensive examination than it has been possible to give it" [Hagen 1962: 427-428].

It follows that what is needed for India (as for any country in the world) is a comprehensive and concerted attempt to identify the soft spots in the social organism, for which all explanatory models and evermore efficient description and explanation of the societal phenomena and the society itself would be relevant and necessary. The identification of the soft spots, however, is a diagnostic proposition, as I have illustrated in reference to India when I put forward the concept of the soft spot [cf. Mukherjee, R. 1965: 109-165]. Also

this is a task particularly appropriate for the discipline of sociology to undertake in collaboration with (and possibly by assuming the leadership of) all other social science disciplines, as I have indicated elsewhere [Mukherjee, R. 1969; 1970]. I would submit, therefore, that in view of the current stage of development of the discipline and the social demand on it at present, Indian sociology (or, for that matter, sociology in any country) must enter into the diagnostic stage in order to resolve the problems it now faces.

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DOWNWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY: SOME OBSERVATIONS[1]

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Downward social mobility has not yet been analysed adequately by sociologists. The objective of this paper is to highlight some of the dimensions and contexts, forms and factors, of downward social mobility in Indian society. Why has downward social mobility not engaged the attention of social scientists? The belief that downward mobility is involitional and not desired at the levels of group, individual and family and, therefore, it does not occur, appears to have been responsible for its neglect. Such a view is unwarranted and unfounded. Downward social mobility does occur and is a complex process involving social and economic, cultural and motivational, factors.

Furthermore, we need to distinguish between *specific* downward status mobility and *generalised* downward status mobility, for in India a lag has been observed between upward socio-religious mobility and economic or political mobility. Several sanskritizing castes have moved up in the caste hierarchy by discarding their "polluting" callings without, however, a corresponding change in their economic and political position [Harper 1968:36-65; Sharma 1970*a*: 1537-43]. Indeed, when the lower castes imitate the cultural traits of upper castes, their economic position often declines owing to the abandonment of lucrative economic activities. When this lack of fit between a rising social (caste) position and a declining economic position persists for a period of years, their generalised status may decline below what it was when they started to emulate the upper castes. Downward economic mobility here is an unplanned consequence of planned upward social mobility. Efforts to change the agrarian social structure, such as land reforms, would also force lower status upon the landlords. This 'withdrawal of status respect' (Hagen 1962: 77, 83) has varied motivational and other repercussions on the privileged sections of the society. Downward social mobility is, thus, a structural and historical reality observable in diverse forms and in different contexts.