

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA<sup>1</sup>

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I

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An attempt is made in this paper to trace the development of two closely-linked and overlapping social sciences, viz., sociology and social anthropology, and in that process to try to explicate the relationship between their development and the cultural milieu in which it has occurred. That milieu has changed much and radically during the last six decades or so when both the disciplines developed to their present stage. With India's becoming free and embarking on a programme of planned development, others besides sociologists are thinking of using sociology to bring about rapid change. The coming into existence of the Indian Council of Social Science Research is itself a testimony to the intelligentsia's realization of the importance of the social sciences in changing the relation between men and their environment, and also between different classes and groups. To complete the story, it is the task of the social scientists to study how successful they have been in achieving the goals set for them.

Sociology is a relatively young discipline. Although its roots go back to about three or four centuries, it was only in the nineteenth century that it started assuming its present role of the science of society in the sense of the systematic study of all societies in space and time. However, we are not concerned here with tracing the development of sociology and social anthropology in the West and shall merely rest content with a few general historical statements. Broadly, the intellectual climate in western Europe, which itself was closely linked with the political, economic and other forces of the day, favoured the development of the two disciplines. Intellectually, thanks to Darwinism and Positivism, man was beginning to be seen

change. The popularity of sociology in the U.S.A. was due to the many problems which a vast, rich and rapidly-developing country had to face, such as urbanisation, immigration, ethnicity, crime, juvenile delinquency and prostitution.

## II

These scattered remarks on the development of the social sciences in the Western world are only intended to serve as a background to our discussion of the development of sociology and social anthropology in India. We are convinced that their growth was intimately influenced by nationalism. Nationalism was itself a product of the interaction between alien rule and indigenous society, and it would not have come about without the great improvement in communications, and the introduction of printing, modern law courts and educational institutions, all of which followed the establishment of British rule. Nationalism was, however, only the top of the iceberg : it was accompanied by self-awareness at other levels such as religion, sect, caste, tribe, region and language. Some of the problems that are coming in the way of the country's integration and development have been thrown up by self-awareness at the lower levels.

Broadly viewed, the growth of the two disciplines in India falls into three phases : the first, covering the period between 1773-1900 A.D., when their foundations were laid; the second, 1901-1950 A.D., when they became professionalised; and finally, the post-Independence years, when a complex of forces including the undertaking of planned development by the government, the increased exposure of Indian scholars to the work of their foreign colleagues, and the availability of funds, resulted in considerable research activity.

The origins of sociology in India go back to the days when British officials discovered that knowledge of Indian culture and social life was indispensable to the smooth functioning of government. In 1769, Henry Verelst, the Governor of Bengal and Bihar realised the need, and also stressed the importance, of collecting information regarding the leading families and their customs in his directives to revenue supervisors. Since then many British officials and missionaries had made earnest efforts to collect and record information regarding the life and culture of their Indian subjects. For instance, Francis Buchanan undertook an ethnographic survey

as a part of nature. The progress of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century gave rise to a host of economic and social problems with the result that a few scholars considered the social order as worthy of serious study and criticism. The most throughgoing of the critics was of course Karl Marx who analysed the capitalist system, prophesied its doom, and worked zealously all his life to hasten it towards its preordained end. Another class of critics became social workers who tried to ameliorate the evil effects of the industrial system such as urban poverty, exploitation, break-up of the family system and prostitution. It was they who discovered the technique of the social survey, a basic weapon in the arsenal of the social scientist.

Anthropology, as is well-known, was the product of European expansion over the world during the last three or four centuries. The need to govern men of various races and vastly different cultures created in the European rulers a need to study the life and cultures of the ruled. As European knowledge of the non-European world increased, and as societies were formed to promote such knowledge, the idea emerged, under the influence of Darwin's theory of evolution and the Victorian idea of progress that the institutions of the non-Europeans represented stages through which the Europeans had passed long ago. This notion also gave a fillip to European, Christian evangelism. Evolution was the idea that put into a coherent framework the fast-accumulating knowledge about the cultures of the primitives in various parts of the world. Social evolution was followed by the idea of diffusion, viz., that artefacts, institutions, beliefs and ideas spread from people to people, in the course of human history, and anthropologists became busy tracing the spread of culture-items from one part of the world to another. Functionalism, especially of the Radcliffe-Brownian variety, was the next integrating principle to be followed by the Structuralism of Levi-Strauss. Over the decades, the method of intensive field-work (or "participant observation") conducted through the languages of the natives came to be the anthropologists' principal technique for data collection.

The utility of social sciences was seen in more than one Western country for the solution of economic and social problems. In this respect, economics has been the most prominent, and its importance increased with the twentieth century tendency of governments everywhere to assume new welfare functions, and undertake planned

of Bengal in 1807 at the instance of the Governor-General-in-Council. Abbe Dubois, a French missionary in Mysore, wrote in 1816, a book entitled *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, which is even now valuable. He wrote about the life, customs and ritual of the people he lived amongst. He was also one of the first to study caste and inter-relations between castes. Walter Hamilton's gazetteer, *A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan and Adjacent Countries*, published in 1820, attempted to locate many places in India accurately in terms of longitude and latitude, provided the history of various towns, and estimated the population of India to be 123 million (Cohn, B. S. 1971 : 3).

These early attempts to gather information were the forerunners of more systematic attempts in the later part of the nineteenth century. In 1871 the first all-India census was undertaken by the British government. This new institution was used by British officials for collecting a vast quantity of information which fell outside its normal purview. In 1901, attempts were made by Sir Herbert Risley to establish an ethnographic survey of India which would develop as part of the census. Among the arguments put forward for justifying the considerable expenditure in carrying out the survey were the following :

- (1) the contribution of such a survey to the solution of European problems with the aid of superior data available in India;
- (2) the need to collect data before they disappeared through cultural and social change; and
- (3) the indispensability of data for purposes of legislation, famine relief, sanitation, control of epidemic diseases, judicial procedure and the like (Cohn 1968 : 17).

Thanks to the work of such officials as Wilson, Risely, Baines, Blunt, Thurston, O'Malley, Hutton and Guha, the census has become an invaluable source of information not only for demographic studies but for social and cultural analysis. The range and quality of the data collected have increased greatly since Independence but for an outstanding exception, the omission of the data regarding caste.

The census also became an instrument of official policy. Sir Herbert Risley, Commissioner of the 1901 census for instance, noted as well as deplored the tendency of tribes to become *jatis*

which meant their absorption into Hinduism. In observations such as this can be seen the germs of the policy of erecting barriers between Hindus and other groups and sections. The recording of Scheduled Castes as distinct from the Hindus was also in line with this policy. It is significant that while caste distinctions among Hindus were scrupulously recorded, similar distinctions among other religious groups did not receive attention, and this fact seems to have gone unnoticed by Indian nationalists who were in the habit of accusing the British of pursuing a policy of "divide and rule". Finally, the recording of caste divisions among the Hindus at each census sharpened the self-awareness of each caste and gave rise to competition amongst them to claim higher positions in the caste hierarchy than had been traditionally and locally conceded. Each caste saw in the census a ready-made avenue for obtaining the government's approval for mobility and census officials were flooded with applications from caste leaders. In the years following World War I, many nationalist leaders felt that the recording of caste at the census promoted "fissiparousness" and was therefore denounced by them in the legislature and outside. The 1941 census omitted caste for reasons of economy. It was only in 1951 that the recording of data on a caste basis, excepting for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, was omitted as a matter of policy.

Indological studies also received considerable stimulus from the efforts made by British scholars and officials to become more familiar with the life and culture of Indians. In the early days of British rule in India, Sanskrit pandits and Arabic scholars were employed to assist British judges to decide cases involving religious practices, customs and laws. As early as 1776, a treatise on Hindu law in English was prepared, with the assistance of Pandits, for the use of British judges (Kapadia, K. M. 1954 : xi).

The part played by the great British Orientalist, Sir William Jones, in founding the study of Sanskrit and Indology in the Western world is well-known. He established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1787, and one of the main activities of the society was the publication of a journal devoted to antiquarian and anthropological interests. The study of Sanskrit provided a powerful stimulus not only to Indology but to such disciplines as comparative philology, comparative mythology and comparative jurisprudence.

Another factor which contributed to the study of social institutions was the impact of British education on the native elite. The

confrontation with an alien culture and the interpretation of ancient Indian literature by scholars such as Max Muller sharpened as well as redefined their self-awareness. It resulted in a critical appraisal and reinterpretation of Indian culture, and in attempts at reform.

Attempts to cast this data on India, culled from the literatures, surveys, censuses and other sources, in a comparative and theoretical framework began in the latter part of the nineteenth century and this had an impact on the development of social anthropology and sociology the world over. The works of Sir Henry Maine, who served for some years as the Law Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council, are outstanding examples of such an attempt. His first work, *Ancient Law* (1861) was written before he visited India while his second, *Village Communities in the East and West* (1871), was written subsequently. Two other outstanding thinkers who made use of Indian material were Marx and Max Weber. Besides literary material, Weber also used ethnographic material available in the census and other reports.

To sum up : the administrative needs of the British rulers led them to collect information about the economic, social and religious life of the people. This task became increasingly complex and systematic as the nineteenth century progressed, and it provided the stimulus for not only social anthropology and sociology but Indology. An ancient civilisation such as India's could not be understood without the aid of the several disciplines subsumed under Indology. The information collected was used by the British for administrative and policy purposes while innumerable groups among Indians used it for achieving mobility. The discovery of India's past, and the antiquity, richness and versatility of its heritage, gave self-confidence to the elite and the material necessary for national myth-making. The criticisms of Hinduism by European missionaries, and the conversion of poor and lowly Hindus to Christianity, were also factors that fed the nationalist sentiments of the new elite most of whom were upper caste Hindus. There was an urge for social and religious reform, a reinterpretation of the past and an examination of the present. The soil was being made ready for the planting of sociology.

### III

With the beginning of the twentieth century, the two disciplines

entered the early phase of professionalisation. While the Indological trend,—which relied heavily on the early literary sources, and in particular, the scriptures, epics and law books,—continued, studies based on direct empirical investigation and on the available census and other reports began to be popular. Although the bulk of the ethnographical work continued to be carried out by the British officials connected with the census operations, professional sociologists and anthropologists in Europe, began to be attracted to India. W.H.R. Rivers' study of *The Todas* (1906), based on intensive fieldwork, was the first monograph in the modern social anthropological tradition, to be published. Rivers did his fieldwork among the Todas in the winter of 1901-2 and his interest in India continued almost until his death in 1922. Besides *The Todas*, he published several papers on India, including one on the origin of hypergamy, and another on kinship and marriage in India in the first issue (1921) of *Man in India* (Rooksby 1971 : 99, 109-112). His posthumous work, edited by W. J. Perry, *Social Organisation* (1924), was intended to be delivered as a course of lectures in Calcutta University. Two of his students, G. S. Ghurye and K. P. Chattopadhyaya, came to play an important role in the development of sociology and social anthropology in India. His influence on Indian anthropology and sociology continued, through Ghurye and Chattopadhyaya, well into the 1940s. Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown remained relatively unknown till the end of World War II.

Rivers' study of the Todas was followed by Radcliffe-Brown's on the Andaman Islanders but with the latter there was a gap of fifteen years between fieldwork and publication. This was also the period when several European sociologists such as C. Bougle, M. Mauss and Max Weber wrote on India relying on secondary sources.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, two Indian scholars, L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and S. C. Roy, made their mark in anthropology. Their achievement is all the more noteworthy as neither of them had had a formal training in the discipline. Ananthakrishna Iyer produced accounts of castes and tribes of Cochin and Mysore and also a useful study of the Syrian Christians of Kerala. Roy wrote monographic accounts of several tribes in Bihar. He was also a champion of "his" tribes (as Lewis Morgan was of the Iroquois), and in 1921 he founded the journal, *Man in India*. Roy also wrote a book entitled, *Caste, Race and Religion in India* (1934).

The demand for establishing the Ethnographic Survey was finally conceded by the British government in 1905. The establishment of the Survey may be regarded as a milestone in the development of anthropology in India. The volumes on the tribes and castes of each province, the district gazetteers and finally, the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (26 volumes, Calcutta, 1908-1909) were all written as part of the Survey. During this period several professional associations which had the aim of furthering ethnographical research sprang up. In Bengal, S. C. Mukherjee organised the *Dawn Society* which brought out a journal devoted to the study of folkways and cultural institutions. Again in Bengal, the National Council of Education established in 1906 the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* (Bengali Literary Association) which played an important role in propagating ethnographical studies.

It was during 1900-1920 that the first steps were taken to introduce sociology and social anthropology as academic disciplines in Indian universities. The efforts of Brajendranath Seal deserve special mention in this context. Seal, who was for many years Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta, wrote, lectured, and initiated studies on what he called "comparative sociology." He wrote a comparative study of Vaishnavism and Christianity, and also a paper on race origins. He contended that social development was multilineal and ramifying, and that judgments regarding the superiority of social customs and institutions were irrelevant. He was of the view that social institutions could be fully and adequately studied only in the context of race, religion and culture. He left a strong impression on his students including Radhakamal Mukherjee (Baljit Singh, 1955: 464-465). He became Vice-chancellor of Mysore University in 1917, and along with A. R. Wadia, was instrumental in introducing social philosophy and sociology there. Seal was unusual in his awareness of the importance of sociology as British-trained Indian academics were generally supercilious towards it. Traces of this attitude are still visible among them.

Seal also had a hand in the introduction of sociology, in 1917, in Calcutta University in the Post-Graduate Councils of Arts and Sciences, and the subject was taught by Radhakamal Mukherjee and Benoy Kumar Sarkar. Later, in 1919, L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer was appointed to a lectureship in ethnography at Calcutta and he was followed by K. P. Chattopadhyay. In 1921, a department of



anthropology was established at Calcutta, and a master's course was instituted in the subject. B. S. Guha, who had obtained a Ph.D. in the physical anthropology at Harvard, joined the department in 1926. In 1927 he joined as anthropologist the Zoological Survey of India, which was created out of the Zoological and Anthropological sections of the Indian Museum in 1916. In 1945 he headed the newly-formed Anthropological Survey of India. The existence of the Museum, and the later location of the two Surveys, the Ethnographic and the Zoological, in Calcutta, contributed to the city's becoming the centre of anthropology in India. It was at Calcutta that D. N. Majumdar and N. K. Bose received their initial training in anthropology.

In 1914, the Government of India gave a grant to the University of Bombay for starting the teaching of sociology, and a course of lectures in sociology and economics was offered to post-graduate students the same year. Later in 1919 a department of sociology and civics was founded under the leadership of Patric Geddes, the distinguished biologist and town-planner. The establishment of this department was a landmark in the development of sociology, if not the social sciences as a whole, in India. Sociology was at first a part of the M.A. course along with economics, and only in the late 1930s, a full, eight-paper M.A. course in sociology was introduced.

Geddes, who headed the department, inspired several young scholars. His interests were in human geography (relation between culture and environment) and in town-planning, with particular attention to problems of urban deterioration. His reports on the town-planning of Calcutta, Indore, and the temple cities of south India contain much useful information and demonstrate his keen awareness of the problems of urban disorganisation and renewal (Baljit Singh, 1955: 464). His analysis of the 'valley section' and his treatment of interrelationship between man, place and work reveal the strong influence of Le Play.

Geddes exercised some influence on the development of sociology in India through his students, G. S. Ghurye and N. A. Thoothi. (Thoothi in particular tried to carry further Geddes' line of research on his return to Bombay after obtaining a doctorate at Oxford.) Radhakamal Mukherjee was also influenced by Geddes but in his case the influence came through association with Geddes in the urban surveys. Mukherjee subsequently carried out studies on the social

effects of industrialization.

After working with Geddes in Bombay, Ghurye went on a scholarship to London where he was L. T. Hobhouse's student for a year. Not finding Hobhouse stimulating, he went to Cambridge where he came under the influence of Rivers, then at the height of his fame. Rivers' thinking was to have lasting effects on Ghurye and through Ghurye, on his students. Ghurye wrote several papers including one on "Ethnic Theory of Caste" for his Ph.D., and this provided the basis for his book, *Caste and Race in India* (London 1932). After returning from Cambridge, Ghurye joined the department at Bombay, where he became, after a few years, professor and head.

Under Ghurye's leadership, Bombay became the leading centre for sociology, especially research, in the country. He had students from all over the country; some of them are, or have been, heads of active departments and have written impressive books and papers.

Ghurye has written prolifically and over a wide range of themes. (In both these respects he was equalled if not surpassed by Radhakamal Mukherjee). His studies include Rajput Architecture, Shakespeare and Kalidasa at one end and the sexual behaviour of American females at the other. His knowledge of Sanskrit enabled him to use the scriptures and epics in analysing and interpreting Indian culture and society.

Ghurye was catholic in his interests as well as methods. In his teaching and research, he refused to make a distinction between social anthropology and sociology. A few of his students, K. M. Kapadia, Irawati Karve and S. V. Karandikar carried his approach and concepts to material in the sacred texts and other literature in Sanskrit. Ghurye insisted on field-work, though he himself was an arm-chair scholar. He founded the Indian Sociological Society in 1952 and was the first editor of its journal, *Sociological Bulletin*. He is still productive.

Lucknow was another centre of sociology and anthropology. A combined department of economics and sociology was started in 1921 by the university with Radhakamal Mukherjee as professor and head. He was joined a year later by D. P. Mukerji and in 1928 by D. N. Majumdar who was appointed to a lectureship on "primitive economy". These three men, all hailing from Calcutta, made Lucknow an influential centre of teaching and research in sociology and anthropology.

In spite of the concentration of such talent, sociology had only

a minor place in the department at Lucknow. Till the 1940s, there was only one paper in sociology as part of the M.A. economics course, and none at the B.A. (This was in contrast to Bombay which had a full M.A. course, and with sociology also being taught at the B.A.) Anthropology became a distinct department only in 1951 and this was followed by the creation of a joint department of sociology and social work.

The foundations for the growth of Lucknow as an influential centre for sociological studies were laid by Radhakamal Mukherjee. In his early career he was greatly influenced by such scholars as Binoy Kumar Sarkar, Brajendranath Seal and Patrick Geddes. Later, after his visit to America, the influence of Veblen and other institutionalists became strong on his works.

Mukherjee attempted in his earlier writings to combine Geddes' analysis with Seal's advocacy of the Indian tradition in response to the Western challenge. In his earlier works he was empirically oriented and attempted to build a regional, and ecological sociology and stressed the need for a multidisciplinary effort to comprehend reality better. He put forward a theory of human migration and settlement in which he argued that human beings, like plants, thrive best in those frontiers which are similar in environment to those in which they have already succeeded. His regional analysis was pervaded with his notion of 'Sangha' which depicted the Hindu notion of commonality and cooperation rather than conflict. He was of the view that only commonality provides for a balanced functioning of all human needs—, psychic, physical and social,—and rejected the hedonism of the West. The influence of American institutionalists on his later works was revealed in the increasing emphasis he laid on values and tradition. This trend led him to stress the importance of myth, language, ritual, art and symbolism, and his work became increasingly philosophical if not mystical.

D. P. Mukerjee joined R. K. Mukherjee at Lucknow in 1922 after passing the master's degree with economics from Calcutta. "D.P.", as he came to be popularly known, taught both economics and sociology. D. P. was also concerned with the impact of the West on India. He viewed the processes of change under British rule as similar to changes under earlier alien rulers. While in his earlier writings he advocated a synthesis between India and the West he changed his views later. He was also deeply influenced by Marxian thought as is evident in his emphasis on economic factors in the

process of culture change. However, towards the end of his life he rejected much of Western, in particular, American techniques. He became a convert to the view that "Indian social research should be grounded in the study of Indian traditions, customs, rituals, myths and folkways" (Kapadia, 1954 : 237). 'D. P.' also held to the view that the development of personality was best in a system of commonality guided by tradition and voluntary cooperation in the 'Sangha' spirit.

The issues raised by D. P. influenced a few young scholars at Lucknow who questioned the positivist approach to sociology, and attempted instead to work out a sociological theory based on India's traditional social thought. They emphasised the uniqueness of Indian society and its traditions, and the possibility of comparison between India and other countries was denied implicitly or explicitly. This point of view finds sophisticated expression in the writings of A. K. Saran.

D. N. Majumdar, the third member of the triumvirate, exerted yet another kind of influence on students and research activity at Lucknow. He was also a product of Calcutta where he studied under S. C. Roy, Ananthakrishna Iyer and others. He joined Radhakamal Mukherjee at Lucknow as a lecturer in primitive economy in 1928. Later in 1933 he left for Cambridge to work for the Ph.D. in cultural anthropology under T. C. Hodson. He also managed to attend Malinowski's seminars at the London School of Economics. His later works reveal the influence of Malinowski. While in Cambridge he also studied physical anthropology with G. M. Morant, and serology with R. R. Gates.

On his return to Lucknow, Majumdar vigorously carried on research in both physical and cultural anthropology. He conducted extensive anthropometric and serological surveys of many tribes and castes in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Bengal. He also undertook a study of the physical growth of children in Uttar Pradesh. In cultural anthropology his work was mainly ethnographic in character based on fieldwork and covered a wide area in north and west India. His major concern in cultural anthropology was with the problem of culture change. He held the view that: "With his expert knowledge of social relationships, the sociologist can help predict, control and direct social change and speed up social progress" (quoted in Madan 1966 : 174). Majumdar was also instrumental in establishing the *Ethnographic and Folk-*

*culture Society* in U.P. in 1945. Its quarterly journal, *The Eastern Anthropologist*, first published in 1947 has provided a welcome forum for anthropologists in India and outside.

As already mentioned, sociology was introduced as a subject in the B.A. course in Mysore as far back as 1917 when the university started, and this was due to Seal and Wadia. There were reasons for Wadia's interest in sociology: he was a product of Bombay University which had pioneered the setting up of a department of sociology and civics under Geddes. His post-graduate work in Oxford was also a factor in his interest in sociology. Perhaps as important, Wadia was by temperament an activist and reformer, and more interested in ethics and social philosophy than in the hair-splitting subtleties of metaphysics. His innate activism was strengthened by his ancestral religion of Zoroastrianism which required its adherents to do good and fight evil.

While Wadia looked upon sociology as "applied philosophy", and while Bombay was the first university to start a post-graduate department, Mysore had the distinction of being the first to introduce the subject at the B.A. level (Parvathamma, C. 1972 : 61-62). In 1928-29, sociology was accorded the status of a "group" subject in the B.A. pass course: this meant that students could choose it as one of the three "options", each option comprising three papers. In the same year was introduced the B.A. Honours course in social philosophy which included such subjects as social anthropology, social psychology, sociology, Indian social institutions, Indian ethics, Indian political theory, ethics, political philosophy and philosophy of religion. A master's course in social philosophy was added in 1937 and this involved writing a dissertation. However, the department started Ph.D. research programme only in 1960.

Wadia's teaching and administrative duties were too heavy to permit him to do research. In spite of this, he was able to publish papers in professional philosophical journals in India and abroad but the books he published were more or less of a popular kind. All told he did much for the promotion of philosophical and sociological studies in India.

Sociology was also one of the disciplines included in the ambit of the Deccan College and Post-Graduate Research Institute at Poona. A combined department of sociology and anthropology was started there in the late 1930s with Iravati Karve as the head. Mrs. Karve had been a student of Ghurye at Bombay and had gone subsequently

to Germany to obtain a doctorate in anthropology. She did extensive field-work in various parts of the country, and her knowledge of Sanskrit gave her access to data in the scriptures, law books and epics. Her main focus of interest was in the study of kinship. In her ambitious book *Kinship Organisation in India* (1952) she attempted an analysis of kinship systems in different parts of India.

Another university in which the study of sociology was introduced during this period was Osmania university. The subject was first introduced at the B.A. level as one of the options in 1928. However, it was only in 1946 that a full-fledged department of sociology was created. Christoph Von Furer Haimendorf and S. C. Dube were associated with the department and their work put Osmania on the map of Indian and international anthropology and sociology.

There were other institutions, governmental and private, besides universities which carried out sociological and anthropological research. Of the governmental institutions, the Census and Anthropological Survey of India were the most important. B. S. Guha, the Survey's first Indian director, analysed the racial composition of the Indian population as part of the 1931 Census and it still holds the field. Another notable director was N. K. Bose.

Bose was that unusual phenomenon, the scholar who was also a political and social activist. He was all his life a Gandhian, and was Gandhi's personal secretary during his Noakhali (in Bangladesh) travels in 1947. His academic work was continually interrupted by calls to political and social work.

Bose (1901-1972) obtained the M.Sc. in anthropology from Calcutta in 1925. He was Assistant Lecturer in Anthropology in Calcutta (1938-45) and eventually rose to the position of Reader in Human Geography in the University, a post which he held till 1959. He was Director of the Anthropological Survey of India from 1959 to 1964. From 1967 to 1970 he held the office of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Government of India.

Bose was basically a student of Indian civilisation and culture, and his approach was historical. His interests were wide-ranging, from studies of tribes to urban problems, caste, social movements, national integration, the processes of cultural and social change, and scriptural norms governing sacred and secular life. He was of the view that production relations explained the persistence of caste and that changes that are appearing in the caste system could

be attributed to changes in production relations. He encouraged studies of the distribution of cultural traits. He also developed a classification of cultures based on Indian textual categories. He was of the view that parochial loyalties were strengthened by the rising middle classes in their desire to consolidate their sectarian advantages. Though a Gandhian he made a critical analysis of Gandhism (Sinha, S. 1970 : 1-22). Bose's best work is said to be his *Hindu Samajer Garhan* which is in Bengali.

The contribution of missionaries to the study of Indian languages, folklore, culture and religion is well known. But one who originally came to India as a missionary but subsequently gave up evangelical activity to become a tribal ethnographer and social worker deserves mention. Verrier Elwin is the author of valuable monographs on the Baiga, Muna and Agaria of Madhya Pradesh and the Saura of Orissa. All of them are based on first-hand study. They have a wealth of descriptive detail on such themes as religion, folklore, "bachelors' houses", homicide, sex and art. All scholars interested in Indian tribal ethnography are in debt to Elwin. But his role as advisor on tribal affairs to the Government of India is another story. He wanted the tribes to be protected from the more advanced sections of the populace and their art, song, dance, clothing etc., to be "preserved". One could understand the need for protecting the tribals from exploitation by traders, contractors and money lenders but any policy other than their integration with all other sections of the population is unfair to tribals and unrealistic considering the forces released since Independence.

Among learned societies, the *Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (now *Asiatic Society of Bengal*) was the foremost in promoting anthropology and sociology. Its counterpart in Bombay, the *Anthropological Society of Bombay*, was also active providing a forum for Indologists and anthropologists. The *Mythic Society*, Bangalore, and Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Patna, also deserve mention. The annual meetings of the *Indian Science Congress* provided a welcome opportunity for anthropologists (including archaeologists, ethnologists and physical anthropologists) from all over India to meet and discuss their problems.

The learned societies published journals, and much less frequently, monographs, and this met a real need of Indologists, anthropologists and folklorists. Mention has already been made of S. C. Roy's *Man in India* and D. N. Majumdar's *Eastern Anthropologist*.

Both are indispensable for anthropologists and sociologists.

We must now mention some of the less successful attempts at founding journals. *The Indian Journal of Sociology* was started in Baroda in 1920 by Albert Widgery, a professor in Baroda College, with support and encouragement from the dewan, Sri Manubhai Mehta, and also the Maharaja, Sri Sayajirao Gaikwad, who was known for his progressive ideas and measures. Only the first four issues of the journal are available today and they reveal a catholic outlook regarding the scope of sociology in India, including empirical sociology, social philosophy, social work and Indology (Shah, A. M. 1972 : 62-67).

*The Indian Sociological Review* was started in 1934 under the auspices of Lucknow University with Radhakamal Mukherjee as editor. It was stated in the foreword to the first issue that attention would be focussed on "anthropological and social psychological field-surveys, region by region, group by group". The *Review* was short-lived like its Baroda predecessor, the *Journal*.

Several university journals carried papers of interest to sociologists and anthropologists. Even the fact of support from the local university did not ensure regularity or longevity. Besides, the multidisciplinary character of university journals made it difficult to trace papers in any particular discipline. For instance, the extremely useful papers on folklore in different parts of India published in the *Journal of the University of Bombay* during 1930-52 are rarely used by folklorists and anthropologists. This would not have happened had they been published in an anthropological or folklore journal.

During the years 1910-1950, the study of the two disciplines became professionalised, though slowly until 1950 or so. Sociology and social anthropology were not taught in more than half a dozen universities, and Bombay was the only centre of post-graduate research in sociology (which included social anthropology) in the country. There were not more than a dozen teaching posts in these two disciplines in the universities. *The Anthropological Survey of India* was the most important research organisation for anthropology though much of the research carried out by it did not reach the interested public. It is not then surprising that the two disciplines did not make an impact on the academic world in contrast, for instance, to economics and political science. Economists also concerned themselves with issues which had political implications:



for instance, the economic exploitation of India by alien rulers never failed to stir nationalist sentiment deeply. The formation of a National Planning Committee in the late 1930s by Jawaharlal Nehru under the aegis of the Indian National Congress showed the potentialities of economics for India's growth. Gandhi's home-spun remedies for removing the poverty of peasants were another instance of the discipline's potentialities even though most foreign trained Indian economists did not consider them worthy of serious consideration.

Sociology and social anthropology suffered from certain other disabilities as well. As already mentioned, the association of sociology with *European*, as distinct from British, and American academic traditions, made it suspect in the eyes of Indian academics steeped as they thought they were in the traditions of the Cam and the Isis. British intellectual insularity was hugged by these men with an eagerness that was both comical and pathetic.

If sociology was not respectable, anthropology was suspect as nationalist opinion regarded it as an instrument of colonial policy, either to create divisions among Indians or to keep large sections of them insulated from nationalist forces. For instance, attempts by the British rulers to keep the Scheduled Tribes from the mainstream of the nationalist sentiment and under the special care of the British in "reserved" or "scheduled" areas convinced nationalist leaders that the discipline was being used to keep the tribes in "zoos" for scientific study by anthropologists and I.C.S. officials. Elwin propounded a theory in his pamphlet *The Aborigines* (1943) that contact with the plains Hindus had resulted in the tribals' alienation of their land, increased poverty, loss of vigour and faith in themselves. All this he dubbed "loss of nerve". Their arts and crafts, dances and songs were disappearing, and they were picking up the rags and tags of the culture of the lower strata of Hindu culture. Ghurye's systematic attack of this thesis in his *The Aborigines, So-called, and their Future*, did something to rehabilitate anthropology in the nationalists' eyes but it was only after 1947 that the discipline started coming to its own.

Anthropology was disliked during the pre-Independence period for another reason. To be studied by anthropologists meant that those who were studied were primitive, and nationalists resented this implication especially when the anthropologists were largely from the ruling race. Even when anthropologists were Indians, they were

unwelcome as they exposed the dirty and unrepresentable side of Indian life. They were really playing the British game, and their activities were anti-national. One of the authors of this paper had the unpleasant experience in 1943 of being shouted at, and asked to get out of Vijayawada by a few local lawyers as they thought he was an Indian version of Miss Katherine Mayo (author of the notorious *Mother India*), who was going to write about such unpleasant things as caste divisions, child marriage, animal sacrifice, and superstitious beliefs.

But in spite of this unfriendly, if not hostile, environment a small band of scholars continued their work analysing fundamental social institutions such as caste, joint family, untouchability, religion and sect. They published ethnographic accounts of particular groups, recording folklore and describing material culture. Prominent among them were Ghurye, Radhakamal Mukherjee, Majumdar, Irawati Karve, Bose, Chattopadhyay, T. C. Das, N. A. Thoothi and A. Aiyappan.

While Indian scholars were influenced by their Western, mostly British, teachers and colleagues in their approach, methods, interests and even themes, they cannot be accused of being imitative. Thanks to the empirical tradition and in particular to fieldwork, the Indian situation did impinge itself upon them in a manner in which it did not occur in the other social sciences, and it forced them to keep Indian society and culture all the time before them. Thus Ghurye treated every aspect, segment, area and period of Indian society as lying within his academic beat, and the quantum and variety of research done by him and his students is impressive. The department at Lucknow was similarly catholic though its research programme started much later than Bombay's. Both Radhakamal Mukherjee and D. P., in different ways, emphasised the need to adapt Western methods and techniques to the Indian situation.

Indian sociologists and anthropologists were also social critics. Underlying Ghurye's approach to the study of caste is a broad nationalism, and his criticism of the British government's and Elwin's approach to the Indian tribal problem has already been referred to. R. K. Mukherjee was a reformer and nationalist. Irawati Karve came from a distinguished reformist family and she had strong views on social and political issues of the day. So was N. K. Bose who was all his life an active Gandhian worker and social critic.

It would not be in exaggeration to say that though in the pre-Independence period sociologists and anthropologists were few in number, they did make their presence felt as teachers, researchers and critics. This they did when their disciplines were without prestige, when funds for research were conspicuous by their absence, and when lecturing and examining were regarded as the main tasks of university teachers. Research was indeed an extra activity. Even heads of large departments did not have secretarial help. Those were the days before the U.G.C. and the I.C.S.S.R. On the positive side, however, they were active before the era of air travel, conferences, seminars and workshops, and of course, of interminable committees.

#### IV

In the post-Independence period, especially the late '50s and '60s, there was a sharp increase in the popularity of the two disciplines. In the first place, there were more teaching posts in sociology and anthropology in universities and colleges, and the tremendous demand for education at all levels meant an expanding job market. An additional reason for their popularity was the fact that they did not require any knowledge of mathematics and statistics which became increasingly essential for the most popular and prestigious of the social sciences, economics. Sociology was a soft option and was usually taken by those who were not good enough for the "hard" subjects. It is only in recent years that sociology syllabuses are becoming increasingly standardised, and some universities have made provision for teaching research methodology and statistics at the master's level. Sociology has also risen in prestige.

The undertaking of planned development in the country, and the creation of the national Planning Commission had important effects on the development of the social sciences. Research and training institutes multiplied in Delhi and elsewhere to meet the new demand for information on, and analysis and evaluation of, development programmes, and for staff to man the institutes. The main source of this demand was the government and its many agencies. A Research Programmes Committee for financing social science research related to planning and development was created by the Planning Commission. The R.P.C. interpreted research related to planning both broadly and hierarchically so that while a large number of research projects were supported, the bulk of the resources went to the big men in economics. The creation of a Programme Evaluation Board

in the Planning Commission with branches in each State created jobs for sociologists and anthropologists but perhaps its more important function was to increase the general awareness of the relevance of the social sciences to planning, just as the R.P.C. educated State governments, vice-chancellors and teachers that research was not an illegitimate activity. The Ph.D. quickly assumed the status of the "sacred thread" in academic circles.

The census organization, which vastly expanded its activities in independent India, the Central Social Welfare Board, the office of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and the Tribal Research Institutes, also needed the research skills of sociologists, anthropologists and social workers. So did the Community Development Programme, which was introduced in every State in the early 50s.

An important contribution of the Planning Commission, from a social science point of view, was an increased awareness of the importance of the social sciences among the educated. This was reflected in the Planning Commission's recommendation in 1966 to the government to create an Indian Council of Social Science Research. V.K.R.V. Rao, member in charge of Education in the Commission, was responsible for this recommendation, and the I.C.S.S.R. came into existence in September 1969 with the late D. R. Gadgil as its first Chairman.

Mention must be made here of Douglas Ensminger, Director of the Ford Foundation in India from 1951 to 1970, in making sociology popular with the Indian government and with Jawaharlal Nehru. Ensminger, who had been trained as a rural sociologist in the 1930s, and who was deeply convinced about the indispensability of sociology and the social sciences in general to the task of economic development, was both energetic, hard-working and influential. He played a crucial role in selling the idea of community development to the Indian government.

However, the success that Ensminger achieved was at a price, though many social scientists may be surprised to regard it as a price. The kind of research that appealed to the administrator was one where he determined the problems to be studied and the scientist was only asked to find clear answers to them in an absurdly short period of time. Social scientists unable to adjust themselves to their newly-discovered importance, competed with each other for projects. The result was a mass of survey research quickly carried out under the

threat of deadlines. It is flattering to think that it answered the administrators' questions assuming of course that they had the time, and the inclination to read it.

While developmental efforts made increased demands on sociology, it is economics which occupies the pride of place amongst the social sciences. This is largely due to the fact that economics is the most developed of the social sciences and that it is actively involved in planning and development. Another contributory factor was the less developed condition of the other social sciences such as politics and public administration, sociology and social anthropology. It is only in recent years that the beginnings of a disenchantment with a purely economic approach to planning and development are discerned. It should be obvious that in a country such as India the part played by social, cultural and religious factors in development is considerable but our politicians do not think that this is an area where expertise is called for. The day is indeed far off when sociologists and anthropologists will have a say in plan formulation. It is also necessary to add that courses of studies in these subjects are not oriented towards development and planning. Nor is there any effort to restrict admissions on the basis of qualifications and aptitude.

The growing popularity of the two disciplines has been accompanied by increasing professionalisation. The Indian Sociological Society, established in 1951, has contributed to such professionalisation. By publishing its bi-annual journal, the *Sociological Bulletin*, and by holding occasional seminars and symposia the Society has provided a forum for sociologists and social anthropologists in the western and southern parts of the country.

The All-India Sociological Conference was another national forum for Indian sociologists and anthropologists. It was first organised in 1956 at Dehradun by R. N. Saxena, a product of Lucknow. The first conference was presided over by D. P. Similar conferences were held annually till 1960 (Atal 1971 : 431). In 1967, the Indian Sociological Society and the Conference came together. With this merger and with the support extended by the I.C.S.S.R. and the Ford Foundation to the Society, Conference has become an important professional event in the country. Since 1967, five more conferences have been held, each conference attracting more participants than the previous one.

An important development in post-Independent India was the

emergence of a distinct theoretical line instead of the previous amorphous eclecticism. This had consequences in a few areas including the choice of research methods and techniques. Even those who were hostile to the new line were forced to define their own position more clearly and this generated a debate even if it did not always contribute to clarity. But a few insulated themselves from it by calling it "social anthropology" and therefore unrelated to sociology. An explicit distinction was made between social anthropology and sociology and each was conceived of as separate from the other. This was facilitated by the fact in that those universities which taught anthropology the discipline was located in the science faculty while sociology was located in the social sciences. Social anthropology was part of a discipline which also included physical anthropology, genetics, prehistoric archaeology, culture and personality.

The 'new line' was what has been called the "structural-functional method", and its potentialities were shown in the analysis of first-hand field-material about single villages and castes. In the best work of this school, theory and data were fused together in an inseparable whole, setting a new trend for the writing of monographs. (Previously descriptive monographs were merely assemblages of discrete data, each chapter resembling a character in search of an author to put him into a meaningful play).

The "structural-functional method" rendered unfashionable the previous tendency to "explain" contemporary institutions such as caste, joint family, and ritual by reference to the sacred scriptures of the Hindus. Explanation had previously become synonymous with tracing the "origins" of an institution to the Vedas or Sutras, and this fitted well into the widespread tendency of the elite to trace the source of present customs, practices and ritual to the Vedas. The past was perceived in a romantic haze and the *rishis* of yore were credited with learning and wisdom of a super-human order. It is against this background that the structural-functional insistence that explanations had to be sought in the inter-relationships of the ongoing system itself should be viewed.

The fruitfulness of the use of the "structural-functional method" was demonstrated in the analysis of rural society and life, and others besides sociologists and anthropologists, began to see that it provided intimate knowledge and new insights regarding such phenomena as land relations, factions, caste, family and religion. This

it was able to provide because of the new and high standards of fieldwork of the anthropologists and the holistic perspective they brought to bear on the analysis of social institutions.

Fieldwork in different parts of the country revealed the existence of several uniformities. The same ideas such as pollution and purity, the same phenomena such as dominant caste, factions and extended family and patron-client relationships and bonded labour, and the same processes such as caste mobility, Sanskritization and Westernization recurred again and again in different parts of the country underneath differences of language, material culture, food, art, styles and so on. This is not to underplay the existence of important inter-regional differences. The latter are there and cannot be glossed over. For instance, while the Barber, Washerman and Potter exist in most parts of the country as distinct *jatis*, the relation of each of them to the other local castes varies from region to region demanding explanation. There are then unities as well as differences and they cannot be subsumed under the popular cliché, unity-in-diversity.

The new research also rendered the distinction between sociology and social anthropology largely untenable even though academic compartments derived from some Western universities, continue to exist irrespective of their relevance to local conditions. In India, where historically tribes have become castes, and some tribal chieftains claim to be Kshatriya rulers tracing their descent to the sun or moon, and where Sanskritization, de-Sanskritization and the impress of the locally dominant caste, weave the cultures of different groups into a tangled skein, any attempt to erect impassable barriers between the study of tribes and others is absurd. Nor is the attempt to define a discipline by its dominant method of study any more successful. Social anthropologists now feel the need to use quantitative methods and network analysis in their efforts at tackling problems involving large numbers spread over regions. At the same time sociologists refuse to regard the intensive study of communities, villages and towns as the sacred preserve of anthropologists.

An emphasis on change was inevitable in post-Independent India. So many things were happening and so fast. And the government which had embarked on planned development, and was passing legislation at breakneck speed, was understandably eager to tell everybody that a new order was being ushered in. This appealed to the patriotism of the elite including sociologists and anthropologists. And government funds were available for carrying out

research on problems of change and development. The older, i.e., above forty, social scientists who had been starved of funds found it difficult to resist taking up big projects involving large sums of money for a poor country such as India. (A few of them, taking advantage of the availability of government and foreign money became institution-builders and built impressive structures with cement and stone and marble!) They collaborated with foreign colleagues, attended seminars, conferences and workshops and flew all over the world. They contributed to changing the image of the professor: he was no longer an unworldly scholar but a busy man of the world who was able to translate an idea into a project costing so much money spread over a period of time on staff, transport, secretarial assistance, contingency etc. A scholar's importance began to be measured by the size of the grant he was able to swing.

It was during the 1950s that certain significant micro-studies in the area of social change made their appearance. Kathleen Gough's (1955) analysis of a Tanjore village gave an idea of the considerable changes which British rule had set in motion though her facts were cast into a rather simplistic and deterministic framework. The same thesis was later (1960) elaborated into a longer essay with fuller documentation. Bailey's (1957) monographic study of the relation between land coming into the market, caste and social mobility is an important work but unfortunately has not been followed up by others. Dube (1958) studied the interrelation between planned development programmes and social and cultural factors in a few villages in western Uttar Pradesh. Epstein (1962) described the differing patterns of development taken by two villages, one of which was irrigated and another "dry" in Mandya District in southern Mysore. The former village also enjoyed several facilities and advantages including the assured sale of much of its sugarcane crop to a big sugar mill in Mandya. The challenge as well as the response were different in the two villages.

The analysis of village-structure led to the discussion of politics at the micro-level. The existence of dominant castes, patrons and clients, and factions, and of continuous conflict between leaders for supremacy, could not be ignored. There were also mechanisms and procedures for the settlement of conflict (Srinivas, 1962). In describing the above, sociologists discovered that they were concerning themselves with politics on the one hand and law on the other. India after Independence offered a rich field for the study of micro-



level politics. The resources which were pumped into rural areas under the Community Development Programme, and the introduction of Panchayati Raj under which local self-governing bodies from the village upwards had new resources, were both productive of intense competition for power, pelf and prestige. All this had to be viewed in the context of certain other changes, economic, educational, legal and ideological, which were occurring at all levels.

Village politics were described against the background of local structure, economy and culture which was in sharp contrast to the description and analysis of formal political institutions and of constitutional and international law that professional political scientists were preoccupied with. And it so happened that what the Indian sociologists and anthropologists were doing was in line with the movement away from formal to behavioural political analysis in the West, especially the U.S.A. It would not be an exaggeration to say that sociologists and anthropologists were in the vanguard of the transition from formal to behavioural politics in India.

At a higher level, the sociologist's analysis of the relation between caste and politics, and of the Backward Classes' Movement, communalism, and national unity revealed the character of the forces which interacted with the new political institutions and forces of post-Independent India. The emergent products and forms have a dynamism of their own as psephologists have discovered to their cost, and which demand systematic analysis.

Educational sociology began modestly with an attempt to relate the social background of high school students in Poona with their performance, aspirations and attitudes (I. P. Desai, 1952). Similar studies were carried out by Desai's students in Baroda. The Education (Kothari) Commission 1964-66, sponsored a country-wide survey in the field of sociology of education under the leadership of I. P. Desai and M. S. Gore which culminated in the publication of a book on the sociology of education in India (1967).

The rapid expansion of educational facilities at all levels, the entry of teenagers from the most backward sections of the population into the ranks of students, overcrowding of colleges and the switchover to regional languages as media of university teaching have created acute problems for educational administrators, governments, state and central teachers, parents and students. "Campus unrest" has become endemic in many universities, and the links between student politics and state and national politics are manifest every-

where. "Sociology of Education" is very slowly establishing itself as a sub-field of sociology. In view of the gravity and magnitude of the problems which the country is facing in the area of education, it is imperative that efforts are made to strengthen educational sociology in university departments.

There have also been a few attempts at viewing change from an all-India perspective, though these have not been based on large surveys carried out by dozens of investigators but on studies carried out by conscientious scholars. Srinivas's study of *Social Change in Modern India* (1966) is an attempt to identify the main social processes at work today and to analyse their interrelations. Mandelbaum in his study, *Society in India* (1970, 2 Vols.), draws on a large number of studies, in addition, of course to his own long experience of India, and he attempts to highlight the forces making for both change and continuity in Indian society and culture. Another important study, Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970), is an interpretation of Indian society in which caste is regarded as crucial, the essence of caste being hierarchy underlying which is the opposition between the religious ideas of pure and impure. Unlike in Western society, status is divorced from power in India, so that a Brahmin is ranked above the powerful Kshatriya and rich Vaishya. Dumont's work has stimulated much discussion.

We have commented earlier on the frequent lack of provision for training in statistics and research methodology in courses of studies in sociology and anthropology in Indian universities. This has come in the way of sociologists's undertaking of studies covering large numbers of people and of building models of change. However, two exceptions to this general tendency are Ramakrishna Mukerjee who has used advanced statistical techniques in his research, and P. N. Rastogi (1970) who has made use of computer simulation and systems analysis.

There is no doubt that foreign scholars have contributed substantially to the analysis of various facts and problems of Indian society. The foreign scholars form, broadly speaking, two streams, the European and the American. The latter is a much bigger stream than the former, and among Europeans, the British did play a dominant role until the '60s. The work of Bailey, Epstein and Dumont has already been referred to and they continue to influence scholars. Another influential European scholar has been A. C. Mayer (1960) who in a well-documented study of a village in Malwa

analysed the relation between kin, caste and village. Mayer has shed light on the internal structure of caste. The same was a major theme in Louis Dumont's earlier study of the Pramalai Kallars of Ramnad (1957). Dumont's book has not exercised the influence which it ought to have had because of its being in French.

*Contributions to Indian Sociology*, edited by Louis Dumont and D.F. Pocock, exerted a significant influence on the growth of sociology in India ever since its founding in 1957. Till 1962, when Dumont and Pocock functioned as editors, it had a definite point of view, with its heroes and villains and cowboys and injuns but it treated the works of scholars seriously and critically. The mantle of infallibility which the editors wore was irritating no doubt but that should not come in the way of acknowledging the real contribution they made to the development of Indian sociology. The editorship passed on to a committee in 1963 with the result that the journal has lost its strong editorial slant but it continues to maintain a high standard.

We have already referred to the vastly enhanced influence of American social science in India today. American scholars found in independent India a new and exciting area for their researches, and this coincided with vast parts of the developing world becoming closed to research due to political factors. Also, Indian students and scholars began visiting the U.S.A. in large numbers and this could not be without its effects on the Indian academic scene.

As a result of the efforts of American scholars who carried out fieldwork in India, an enormous amount of information has been gathered and it is not unlikely that in a decade from now, Indian scholars working in different parts of India may find it essential to familiarise themselves with some of that data.

The work done by American scholars is too vast and varied to be discussed here. We shall only mention very briefly their influence on Indian sociology and anthropology. Their influence has been exercised through two principal means; one, through Indian students trained in U.S. universities, and second, through the writings of the scholars themselves. In the first group may be mentioned Surajit Sinha, Saberwal, Pratap Agarwal, Khare, Vidyarthi and several others. Some scholars who have been trained in India and who have been markedly influenced by the work of American anthropologists and sociologists such as Parsons, Merton, Bales, Smelser and Shils are Damle, Narmadeshwar Prasad, Bopagamage, and B. V. Shah. The writings of Mandelbaum, Singer, Marriott and B. Cohn

among anthropologists, Wiener and the Rudolphs among political scientists, and McLelland among psychologists have also been influential.

The influence of American rural sociology showed itself in the study of Indian rural society's response to forces of change and development, especially planned development. Indian rural sociologists, trained in U.S. universities, used statistical and scaling techniques and questionnaires and measured attitudes but their work does not seem to have had much impact on academic sociology or anthropology in India or on development programmes.

In the foregoing account we have not taken note of the influence exercised by Indologists such as Norman Brown, Van Buitenen and Dimock and educationists and others. One intangible but real influence of American social science has been to contribute to making Indian social sciences more open to each other. Those who remember the impenetrable walls between disciplines which was universal in pre-independent India will find the atmosphere different today. Several factors have contributed to this and American social science is certainly one of them. In short, American scholarly effort is sufficiently big and diverse to merit serious analysis. But it does not seem to have the clear profile of the British influence nor does it seem to have penetrated as deeply. This is perhaps due to the heterogeneous character of American sociology and anthropology and also to the relative absence of American-trained Indians from teaching positions in university departments. However, the latter situation may change in the coming years.

The influence of Marxism is also evident in Indian sociology though not as prominently as in economics, politics and history. However, the Marxist star is rising in Indian sociology. This is both due to the inherent strength and appeal of the Marxist approach, and to the popularity of the writings of thinkers such as C. Wright Mills, Marcuse and others. The recent radicalisation of the Indian political scene is also a factor in the popularity of Marxist writings.

From the above review we thus see that sociology in India has been hospitable to divergent streams of thought. However, as yet an approach or point of view characteristic of Indian sociologists has not yet developed and it is also doubtful whether such uniformity is desirable. But when a well-trained sociologist has soaked himself in a mass of first-hand data about a village or tribe or problem, it has resulted in a work in which data and theory have fused naturally

and fruitfully. Perhaps it is in this kind of work that the best hopes exist for the development of an Indian approach to sociology. This does not mean that other approaches will not yield results.

## V

In this concluding section, we shall make a few comments on the prospects for sociology and social anthropology and the tasks that lie ahead of them.

We have maintained that the disciplines flourish best when they address themselves to the analyses of the ongoing process, concerns and problems of Indian society. This is the only way in which their "relevance" can be demonstrated and become part of the prevalent intellectual climate along with the other disciplines similarly involved. This should not be taken as a plea for parochial self-absorption, immersion in the day-to-day problems of development or blind empiricism. But to grow properly sociology needs to be linked to a chunk of space-time in the same manner as history and archaeology. It is not an accident that the sociology taught and practised in each country is coloured by its political, social and academic climate, and the ideas of the leading practitioners of the discipline are responses to that climate and will in due course, become part of it. A sociology of national sociologies would not only be absorbing but would make each country's sociology more meaningful.

National concerns and preoccupations in sociology are not only inevitable but desirable as the only alternative would be to imitate another country's concerns. This is seen in the ex-colonial countries where individual scholars or groups of them cling to the problems, fashions and even mannerisms of their teachers in the West. Sociology has to go native if it has to be creative.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the very need to understand Indian society requires from Indian sociologists a commitment to a comparative approach in which the problems, processes and institutions of their society are systematically compared with those of neighbouring countries in the first instance, and later with other developing countries. So far such a comparative approach has been conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, the situation is so bad that even a comparison between different regions in India is rare. There is little realization of the potential for illumination inherent in

comparison. This is compounded by the widespread assumption among Indian sociologists, all the more dangerous because it is unstated, that studying one's own society is easier than studying an alien society. Just as it is necessary for Indian sociologists to study neighbouring countries, it is also necessary for scholars from the latter to study India. There are also areas and problems which should be studied on a global basis, for instance, backwardness and poverty, ethnicity, urbanization, generation gap and student unrest.

The overriding concern in India today is the attempt to raise the living standards of millions of people steeped in poverty, to reduce inequalities, economic and social, and to wipe out illiteracy. No section or group of the population can remain indifferent to this challenge, and it is only natural for social scientists to try and make their disciplines relevant to this herculean task. It was this impulse which led Indian anthropologists meeting in Simla in July 1968 (Abbi, Bihari and Saberwal; Satish, 1969) to invest "urgent anthropology" with a new meaning, viz., urgent from a national point of view and *not* in terms of recording information about dying, or at least in India, swiftly, changing, cultures. The new emphasis was on studying the way in which tribal groups were reacting to rapid social change. Similarly, the need to study problems of national integration and inter-group conflict was emphasised. In brief, the underlying conviction was that change was not only inevitable but desirable, and the analysis of social change by anthropologists would help administrators, politicians, and others to help the disadvantaged groups to adjust themselves successfully to the inevitable. Since the analysis required data collected through competent fieldwork, it would necessarily result in a significant increase in ethnographic information. (But the Conference recognized that tribes and other groups which presented problems of fundamental theoretical interest, had also to be studied on a priority basis). In short, the Simla meeting bade goodbye to the "zoo approach" with its implicit hierarchy and condescension towards tribes whose members were full citizens of India and were rapidly taking their rightful place in the national society.

As already referred to there is a feeling among some sociologists and anthropologists that their services are not being utilised for planning and development, and this feeling is also echoed occasionally by a few better-informed officials. This is partly due to a disenchantment with economics, and also with economists who

are doctrinaire and either ignorant of the culture and institutions of the people or contemptuous of them.

The need for seeking the help of the other social sciences including sociology and anthropology is felt in the implementation of the plans and not their formulation. Obviously, expertise in political science and public administration would be helpful in any effort to make officials at the lower levels effective agents for rapid change. The successful implementation of development programmes also calls for intimate knowledge of the local social and power structure, communication networks, belief-system.

Information is frequently helpful if not necessary for implementation, and here again, the services of the sociologists and anthropologists are needed. A well-trained person can collect the needed information in much less time than others, and without rubbing the people on the wrong side. He would also be able to collect only essential information and not cast his net either too widely or narrowly.

The information required for such implementation will be of various kinds. One will be intensive case studies to show up facts and their inter-relationships in detail, and the other will be information on specific items, for different regions or the country as a whole. The former is useful for diagnostic purposes, to find out, for instance, how or where a particular project has gone wrong, and whether similar failures occurred elsewhere while the latter, for undertaking planning at the macro-level and evaluating performance. In this context, the initiative taken by the I.C.S.S.R. to work out a set of social indicators deserves to be welcomed, though with caution. The present move on the part of the Government of India to measure development not merely by the increase in G.N.P. but also in the amount of benefit received by the weakest sections of the society, adds urgency to working out such indicators. Objective indices of social backwardness would be extremely helpful to State governments in distributing scholarships, fee concessions and other benefits. Information on such other phenomena as social mobility, social distance and modernization gives social scientists and others some idea of the direction in which the country is moving. There is, however, the likelihood that the collection of information might become an end in itself and not the means to policy-making. Frequent evaluation of the information collected from the view point of the use made of it is essential. (The census should also be

evaluated from this point of view.)

Modern India is a wonderful laboratory for social scientists with its bewildering intermeshing of the traditional and the modern, and the diversity and richness of its culture, and the baffling sense of sameness which accompanies the diversity but which it is so hard to translate into such terms as everyone can perceive.

One of the most fruitful areas for study is the interaction between science and technology on the one hand, and traditional culture and institutions on the other. The operative term is "interaction", for, attempts to study the "influence" of science and technology are misconceived because they are based on the wrong premise that society is only a passive recipient and not an active generator of forces as well. Studies of Indian scientists, the perceptions of their role, their social background and world-view, of the social organization of research institutions and laboratories, and of the professional associations of scientists, are essential to the successful implementation of science policy. These studies will show whether the sizeable investment of national resources for the development of science and technology is being spent wisely or not, and what are the steps to be taken to get better returns for the investment. *The easiest way in which a developing country can compensate for its previous lack of modern science and technology is to treat them as sacred cows but this type of symbolism is too expensive in terms of scarce resources, material and human.* Science organization should be a continuing subject for study and not only when a promising career is cut short by suicide.

The problem of integrating numerous religious, cultural and ethnic groups, and diverse and unequal regions into a single nation is a formidable task indeed but India must face it along with other developing countries. In some ways, India's task is even more difficult because of her vastness and geographical diversity, hierarchical society, and population size. But, on the other hand, Indian nationalism is older than that of even a few Western countries, and her long struggle for freedom has resulted in the percolation of national sentiment even to distant corners of the land.

The contribution of sociologists and anthropologists to national integration will be more through enhancing the understanding of the problem than by any concrete measures that they will be able to recommend. This is not to take a pessimistic view of their contribution for increased understanding of the nature of the problem is



itself a part of its solution. When, for instance, a problem such as ethnicity, communalism, regionalism, agrarian conflict, or inequalities is studied by a sociologist it not only puts the problem in a wider context revealing interrelations which were not evident before but also gives enough of the experience and self-perceptions of the people involved in such a way that it makes an impact on the reader. Enhanced understanding of the problem should be helpful in making clear the kind of choices that are open to politicians and administrators. In any case, these problems do not permit of quick and easy solutions. They are going to be with us for some time.

Indian sociologists do not seem to be sufficiently aware of the relevance of their discipline for popular education. Very few sociologists write for the press, and here one of the obstacles is the inability to shed jargon which probably sits more heavily on sociology than on other social sciences. Again, text-books of social studies used in high schools are either innocent of sociology, or worse, contain bad and out-of-date sociology. Sociologists have to make clear to laymen the importance of their discipline for citizenship. If they succeed in this task they will have performed a service to the country and provided a firm foundation for the development of their discipline.

While sociology can play a useful, if not important, role in policy formulation and implementation there is a likelihood that the demonstration of the discipline's utility might result in government funds being made available to agencies, institutions and individuals toeing the governmental line on various matters. Correspondingly, dissenting research and scholars would go without funds.

To sum up: while sociology and social anthropology in India have borrowed a great deal from universities in Britain and the U.S.A., they have not been wholly imitative. This is due primarily to the fact that both the disciplines have made field-work more or less essential for initiation into them. This has made them go along the grain of the society and this has resulted not only in their being preoccupied with certain substantive but with methodological problems as well. With Independence has come a greatly increased interest in the two disciplines, but, claims and potentialities apart, they have been ignored in plan formulation and treated as only marginally relevant in implementation. The danger of conformism in research is real, the double conformism to fashions in Western countries as well as to local ones, but there are also signs of inde-

pendence, earnestness and intelligence in the choice of themes and methods. A new dawn in Indian sociology may not be long in coming.

#### NOTES

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The authors are aware that their paper is in no sense a proper historical account of the development of the two disciplines. This should be attempted by a historian who is familiar with sociology and social anthropology. They are convinced, however, of the importance of preparing such a history.

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