

SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA-II

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Course Contents

Page Nos.

BLOCK 1 IDEAS OF INDIA		9
Unit 1	Multiple Images	11
Unit 2	Gandhi and Ambedkar	26
Unit 3	Ideological Images of India	40
Unit 4	Ethnographic Images of India	54
Unit 5	Constitutional Foundations	67
BLOCK 2 RESISTANCE, MOBILISATION AND CHANGE		81
Unit 6	Mobility and Change	83
Unit 7	Ethnic Movements in India	98
Unit 8	Peasant Movements in India	112
Unit 9	Dalit Movements in India	128
Unit 10	Women's Movements in India	144
Unit 11	Working Class Movements in India	162
BLOCK 3 STATE AND SOCIETY: CONTESTING IDEOLOGIES		181
Unit 12	Communalism	183
Unit 13	Secularism	195
Unit 14	Nationalism	206

COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course has been designed to introduce the student to the history and vastness of our country and the plurality of culture, diversities of caste, tribe, region, religion and ethnicity of the people of India. It is meant to be a journey which covers a wide canvas and unveils the rich heritage of the great civilization of the people of India.

Starting from Unit I which introduces the images of India in a historical perspective, the course acquaints the student with the multiple images that have been portrayed by travelers, historians, scholars and administrators over a period of time, especially during the British period. Some of these images were quite distorted and damaging as some even portrayed the people of India as barbaric. However, with increased access to education by Indians during the British period in India, and a better understanding of the cultural and social diversities in Indian society, the British also acquired a more realistic approach to the understanding of “The Wonder that was India” (A. L. Basham).

No one can understand Indian society, past and present, without a sound understanding of the impact of the British rule in India and the freedom struggle that followed. Thus, there are large sections in almost all units which uncover the multitude of responses of the people of India to the British rule. These responses include the Freedom struggle and highlight the role of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad and many other political leaders who spearheaded the freedom movement.

The freedom struggle was committed to overthrowing the British from India and attaining sovereignty (Swaraj); but alongside this Freedom struggle, there also emerged a struggle within Indian society to rid of its deep rooted social evils like sati, child marriages, caste discrimination and untouchability. The social reform movement had also consolidated its position by now and social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy and Ishwar Chander Vidyasagar in Bengal to Dayanand Saraswati in Punjab, Gokhale and Ranade in the West to Annie Beasant in the South were all equally committed to the upliftment of the down-trodden sections of Indian society, especially women and untouchables.

We won Independence in 1947 but the struggle for social justice within Indian society continues even today, in the form of Dalit movements. All these sections of Indian society are still struggling to get their rightful position. Despite the constitutional safeguards, discrimination continues to surface in everyday life. There are entire units in this course, devoted to a detailed discussion on all the above mentioned movements. The roles of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been highlighted in these units.

The post Independence period has witnessed a wide range of revolutionary changes and challenges in Indian society. The partition of India and the creation of Pakistan have been and continue to be a serious threat to the majority-minority relations within the framework of secularism in India. This theme runs through many of the units, especially units on Communalism, Secularism and Nationalism.

Urban growth, industrialization, education, development, liberalization, globalization have all brought about drastic transformation in Indian society, both rural and urban and impacted the basic institutions of caste, family and village. The status of women and Dalits has also witnessed major transformation.

The Units on women's movements, peasant movements and Dalit movements cover a wide range of issues being debated and the plans implemented to achieve their goals. Here again, the historical perspective gives a panoramic view of all that these movements have gone through, their stories of success and failure stories.

Units devoted to Secularism and Nationalism bring out the complexities of achieving these goals in a society with such a huge population with such vast diversities, rapidly developing and transforming into one of the world's biggest economies, apart from being the largest democracy in the world. India has many unique features like casteism, regionalism, secularism, multi-culturalism and every other "ism" that you can think of and all of these "isms" are also acquiring new meanings and covering new arenas. Factors and forces which come in the way of achieving secularism and nationalism have been discussed in great detail. The inability to separate religion from politics poses a major challenge in achieving and 'nationalism'. In the Indian democracy, caste, religion, region and all other secularism divisions play a very significant role as vote banks. Political parties always use caste, religion and regional sentiments just before elections to win votes especially on the basis of the communal divide, which is precisely why communal riots erupt just before elections.

Some of the major forces, internal and external which come in the way of achieving goals and ideals of equality, liberty, secularism, nationhood etc. enshrined in our Constitution have been discussed at length in units on Communalism, Secularism and Nationalism.

After going through this course, the student is expected to have learnt about the different images of India, its people, its diversities and the unifying forces and factors underlying these diversities in a historical perspective and challenges faced in the present day society.

This course is presented in three interrelated Blocks. Block 1 deals with the ideas of India as reflected in the traditional plural foundation of India. Besides covering the historical, philosophical, cultural and political imagination of India it also covers the fundamental secular, democratic, socialistic and republican imagination of India as reflected through Indian constitution. This Block also analyses the imagination of India by Gandhi and Ambedkar and also the ideological and ethnographic imagination of India. Block 2 is on Resistance, Mobilisation and Change. It covers the dynamics of mobility and change, ethnic, peasant, Dalit, women's and working class movements in India. In Block 3 the contesting ideologies of communalism, secularism and nationalism in the changing context of state and society in India are discussed.



BLOCK 1
IDEAS OF INDIA

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UNIT 1 INDIA: MULTIPLE IMAGES*

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Tradition of Plurality and Culture of Accommodation in Indian Society
 - 1.2.1 Facets of Pluralism and Unity in India
 - 1.2.2 The Eternal Syncretic Tradition in Hindu Spiritualism
 - 1.2.3 The Historical Trajectories of India
- 1.3 Colonial and Western Imagination of India
 - 1.3.1 Macaulay's Minute
 - 1.3.2 James Mill's Description of Indian Civilisation
 - 1.3.3 India as Imagined by Hegel, Marx and Engels
 - 1.3.4 Max Weber on India
 - 1.3.5 Mark Twain on India
- 1.4 Cultural Encounter: East and West
- 1.5 The Assimilative, Liberal and Cultural Nationalist Imagination of India
 - 1.5.1 Rabindranath Tagore
 - 1.5.2 Gandhi
 - 1.5.3 Nehru
 - 1.5.4 Ambedkar
 - 1.5.5 Cultural Nationalist Imagination
- 1.6 Nationhood and Uniqueness of India
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- Explain the traditional facets of plurality of Indian society and the legacies of unity and diversity therein.
- Elucidate the eternal syncretic tradition in Hindu spiritualism
- Develop a critique of the colonial description of Indian society
- Underline Hegel's, Marx's Weber's and Twain's visions of India
- Elaborate Tagore's, Gandhi's, Nehru's and others' perspectives of India, and
- Examine the plural foundation of Indian society as enshrined in the Indian Constitution

1.1 INTRODUCTION

India as a society is founded on pluralism and traditions of accommodation and cultural liberalism. It has a long historical legacy of such a tradition. However

*Contributed by Prof. Debal K SinghaRoy, IGNOU, New Delhi

the cultural ethos of Indian society has not been interpreted and imagined uniformly. While Indian leaders, philosophers, poets and writers have highlighted the essential plural and accommodative foundations of Indian society based on historical facts, the colonial rulers and many Westerners have portrayed Indian society in negative terms. This unit will provide glimpses of such images and will create the backdrop for the further discussion on Indian society. It begins with the essential facets of the culture of accommodation and pluralism, unity and diversity of Indian society. It also provides a historical glimpse of Indian society and presents a brief outline of colonial imagination of Indian society through Macaulay's Minutes, and James Mill's description of Indian civilisation. Furthermore the understandings of Indian society by Hegel, Marx, Engels, Max Weber and Mark Twain are also briefly given in this unit. This would be followed by the images and description of India by Edward Said, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Ambedkar and the cultural nationalist ideologues. The plural foundation of nationhood, the uniqueness of India and the constitutional foundation of Indian society are also discussed in this unit. Let us begin with a discussion of the plural foundation of Indian society.

1.2 TRADITION OF PLURALITY AND CULTURE OF ACCOMMODATION IN INDIAN SOCIETY

As we try to develop an image of India, we very often encounter varieties of ideals, images and realities of India. We have a huge landscape with long civilizational heritage, rich religious and philosophical traditions, profound cultural frameworks and economic foundations to describe the socio-political and geographical dynamics of India. Significantly all these ideals, images and realities have always remained plural in Indian society.

1.2.1 Facets of Pluralism and Unity in India

Society consists of people. In India we find people of distinctive physical features. Herbert Risley had classified the people of India into seven racial types. These are (i) Turko-Iranian, (ii) Indo-Aryan, (iii) Scytho-Dravidian, (iv) Aryo-Dravidian, (v) Mongolo-Dravidian, (vi) Mongoloid, and (vii) Dravidian.

According to the 1971 census there are 1652 languages in India which are spoken as mother tongue. The famous linguist Grierson noted 179 languages and 544 dialects. India is a land of 22 official languages, 13 different scripts and over 720 dialects. India is a land of multiple religions. Though India is the birth place of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and varieties of tribal religions, every major religion like Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Bahaism have their strong followers in India. According to census 2011, followers of Hinduism form 72.8% of the total population, Islam 14.2%, Christianity 2.3%, Sikhism 1.7%, Buddhism 0.7%, Jainism 0.4% and other religious groups forms 0.7% followers. There are also caste or caste like diversities within most of these religious groups.

However despite these diversities there are strong bonds of unity in India which are reflected in the geopolitical unity marked by the Himalayas in the north end and the oceans on the other sides. Politically India is a sovereign, secular and democratic state. The same Constitution and same Parliament cover every part of it. We share the same political culture marked by the norms of democracy, secularism and social justice. The ideal of geo-political unity of India is culturally

and historically inherited as reflected in the concepts of *Bharatvarsha* (the ancient classic name for India). The other important source of unity of India is marked by the institution of pilgrimage which is reflected in the network of shrines and sacred places in different parts of India.

1.2.2 The Eternal Syncretic Tradition in Hindu Spiritualism

The syncretic tradition of Indian culture provides the space for accommodation and tolerance and the bondage which creates the mosaic of unity in diversity. Though Hinduism is the majority religion of India, The tradition of accommodation is eternal to Hinduism as it is practised as the way of life in India. Philosophically it has upheld the tradition that has conceived the whole world to be part of a single family: **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** (“*vasudha*”, the earth; “*iva*”, is ; and “*kutumbakam*”, family). The concept originates in the Vedic scripture *Maha Upanishad* (Chapter 6, Verse 72): It goes further to say that *ayam/nijah Paroveti ganana laghuchetasam udaracharitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam* which means: "Only small minded man discriminate saying: One is a relative; the other is a stranger. For those who live magnanimously the entire world constitutes but a family. It is considered an integral part of the Hindu philosophy.

Hinduism is founded on the spirit of universality. As **Vivekananda** has aptly pointed out in his famous Chicago speech in 1893, Hinduism as a religion has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance that believes not only in universal toleration, but accepts all religions as true. He further pointed out that India as a nation has sheltered the persecuted and refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. On that occasion he quoted a few lines from a Vedic hymn that depicts the essence of Indian society and Hinduism:

“As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which people take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee”.

1.2.3 The Historical Trajectories of India

Hinduism has traditionally been defined as a way of life rather than a monolithic religion. As way of life it has remained linked to varieties of societal practices and its civilizational trajectories. India possesses the 5,000 years old heritage of the Indus Valley Civilization, known as the Harappan Civilization (c. 3300-c.1500BCE). While tracing the trajectory of Indian history, we trace its roots to the Vedic society (c.1500-c. 200BCE), and also note its encounters and the emergence of Jainism and Buddhism, medieval dynastic rules, Persian, and Greek attacks (c. 200 BCE-c.1200 CE); repeated Muslim attacks and formation of Muslim Sultanate, spread of Bhakti movements, emergence of Sikhism, strengthening of Vijayanagar Empire in the south India (c.1200-1526 CE), formation and expansion of Mughal, Maratha, Sikh and other empires; the arrival of British colonial power and end of Mughal power (c.1526-1857CE), consolidation of British colonial power and India’s struggle for freedom (1857-1947). All through these phases of historical changes, challenges and encounters with outside forces, India has retained the culture of pluralism and accommodation.

However the response of Indian society to the changing historical trajectory in general and to the outside forces in particular has been portrayed differently by

various scholars. In the following section of this unit we will provide a glimpse of such portrayal and imagination of India by Macaulay, Hegel, Marx and Engels, Weber, Mark Twain and others

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Identify the main features of unity and diversity in India

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

1.3 COLONIAL AND WESTERN IMAGINATION OF INDIA

The colonial power had made a negative portial of Indian society, its people and culture, language and education. This perspective was widely depicted in the infamous Macaulay’s Minute on Education, February 2, 1835, James Mill’s account of India etc.

1.3.1 Macaulay’s Minute

The document reads:

“...that the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are moreover so poor and rude I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works.

I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted and I certainly never met with any orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanscrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. ... It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same.....”

Hence Macaulay suggested that “we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing, that English is better worth knowing than Sanscrit or Arabic, We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, -a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population”(http://home.iitk.ac.in/~hcverma/Article/Macaulay-Minutes.pdf).

1.3.2 James Mill's Description of Indian Civilisation

Many colonial historians have described Indian civilization with various negative attributes. For instance, an English historian James Mill, compared the Hindus with the “savages of America”; the Indian architectural and sculptural creations were termed “arts of the barbarian”; and India was, in these writings, a “half-civilised nation”. The colonial scholars also considered the Indian way of life abominable and believed that it needed to be metamorphosed and given a western orientation. This perception was behind the “civilising mission” that the British had embarked upon. It is to be mentioned here that their description of India was not only impressionistic, but also biased. They were unable to take cognizance of several noble ethos of Indian society, both in their imagination and writings.

Mill's low estimate of the state of civilisation attained by the Hindus provided a justification for continued British rule, and supported the view that India should be governed according to civilised European standards, rather than those of the native population. Mill believed that ‘the English government in India with all its vices is a blessing of unspeakable magnitude to the population of Hindustan’ (<https://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/james-mill-and-india>).

1.3.3 India as Imagined by Hegel, Marx and Engels

In the imagination of Hegel, Marx and Engels, India appeared to be a static identity. They figured India as distinctive specimen. For Hegel, the dawn of history was in the East. But China and India remained unchanged for millennia. In Hegel's own words: “India like China is a phenomenon antique as well as modern; one which has remained unchanged and fixed”.

Marx used Indian material to elaborate his materialistic theories of the social history of Europe. He described very early stages of human society in which all men were both owners and workers. Marx believed that a society of this nature had actually existed in India from the most ancient times until the British conquest. In the *Communist Manifesto* central concern was the societies which were his based on class differentiation. Here no reference was made to the nature of society in India, China, or other countries of Asia. In his “Principles of Communism”, Engels in 1847 referred to India and China as countries which for thousands of years have made no progress. In the same place he refers to semi-barbarian countries which previously had more or less remained outside of the line of historical development. These are now doomed to be taken over by civilization, personified above all by English industry and trade (cf. Thorner 1980).

The most distinctive character of India according to Marx is its age-old village system. The great mass of the population are dispersed over the surface of the country in tiny agglomerations. Situated on its own tract of arable and waste lands, each village forms a little world unto itself with an independent organization and a distinct life. The dominant feature of the village is the “domestic union of agricultural and manufacturing pursuits”. The “peculiar combination of hand-weaving, hand-spinning and hand-tilling agriculture” gives the villages self-sufficiency (Marx 1853)

Since the Indian villages had preserved their ancient structure, Marx described Indian villages to have “stereotyped primitive forms”. Another label he applied to them was “family communities, implying that they were held together by ties

of consanguinity”. Caste and slavery are mentioned as village features, but only in passing and not much is made of them. There is an isolated reference to differences in rank (Thorner 1980). For Marx self-sufficing communities i.e. Village communities had some specific characters:

“These idyllic village communities had always been the solid foundation of oriental despotism... they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies.that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjected man to external circumstances instead of elevating man to sovereign of circumstances, that they transformed a self-developing social state into never-changing natural destiny”

1.3.4 Max Weber

Max Weber viewed the evolution and transformation of the world in terms of rationalization of thoughts, ethics and actions. For him the society in India that is founded on the traditional spirit of Hinduism, is devoid of the rational spirit to develop rational capitalism in society. The predominance of “otherworldly” mysticism – in which salvation can only be achieved through a process of detachment from material wellbeing, has made the people remain grounded on traditional thoughts and actions.

However Max Weber's thesis has been contested by many scholars on the ground that many traditional business communities have contributed to the growth of capitalism; that many have compartmentalised their religion from economic activities and have contributed to the growth of capitalism. It has also been mentioned that the process of capital accumulation in India is to be understood in terms of specific nature of Indian culture and economy; and not by aping the west.

Moreover there is no dearth of scholars who have effectively shown India, its people and culture with a positive connotation and spirit. Here we may cite the example of Mark Twain:

1.3.5 Mark Twain

America's beloved humorist and one of its best known writers, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known to the world as Mark Twain came to India in January, 1896. Based on his extensive visit to India, Mark Twain wrote that “India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grandmother of tradition.” Twain records in his autobiography, “an imaginary land - a fairy land, dreamland, a land made out of poetry and moonlight for the Arabian Nights to their gorgeous Miracles in. . .” . He found the people “pleasant and accommodating.” He added “They are kindly people. . . . The face and the bearing that indicate a surly spirit and a bad heart seemed . . . rare among Indians.

Commenting on the Indian heritage, Twain said: “India had the start of the whole world in the beginning of things. She had the first civilization; she had the first accumulation of material wealth; she was populous with deep thinkers and subtle intellects; she had mines and woods and a fruitful soil. ...”. He was intrigued by the diversities in the Indian way of life. “Their character and their history, their

customs and their religion confront you with riddles at every turn - riddles which are a trifle more perplexing after they are explained than they were before," he wrote.

Twain said repeatedly that India was his favorite land on the whole 'Equator journey'. He loved the color and variety of Indian life. Take the famous passage in "Following the Equator" : This is indeed India - the land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poetry, of splendour and rags, of palaces and hovels, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the . . . cradle of the human race, birthplace of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend, great-grandmother of tradition . . . the one land that all men desire to see, and having once seen, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for all the shows of all the rest of the globe combined (cf.Sharma 1968)

Check Your Progress 2

1) What was the objective of British education in India according to Macaulay?

.....

2) What were the features of Indian villages according to Marx?

.....

1.4 CULTURAL ENCOUNTER: EAST AND WEST

It is important to note that for centuries the British kept on describing India in terms of their own understanding and imagination of Indian society and its history. These descriptions tried precisely to justify the continuity and expansion of the colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent. However from the later part of the 19th and early 20th century with the gradual spread of English education and emergence of a thin section of middle class the public awareness among Indians about the colonial perception of India and its culture, society and civilization started growing. They started to react and object to the colonial assumptions of Indians, which were biased and derogatory in many ways. The arrival of the printing press, both vernacular and English, and increased connectivity widely contributed to such articulations.

Indian scholars and leaders developed a critical view not only western culture, but also of their own culture. The cultural contacts made the scholars see the

strengths and weaknesses of both the cultures. Consequently, there have been descriptions of both the Oriental and of the West by scholars.

It is to mention here that India has got unique spiritual tradition and has experienced several movements to regenerate this tradition. Bhakti movement in 15th century was a popular movement which treated all sections of society equally and it developed two traditions of Saguna and Nirguna. The first one believes in the form of God Vishnu or Shiv relating to the Vaishnavite or Shaivaite traditions. It advocated equality among all the castes. The followers of Nirguna believed in formless universal God. Ravidas and Kabir were the major figures of this tradition. It became more popular among the dalits in urban areas in the early 20th century as it provided the possibility of salvation for all. It promised social equality.

1.5 THE ASSIMILATIVE, LIBERAL AND CULTURAL NATIONALIST IMAGINATION OF INDIA

Although there were substantial differences among the social thinkers, and nationalist scholars on the necessity and outcome of these cultural contacts, they were agreed that the pre-colonial era was neither “dark” nor “bereft of glory”. The Indian freedom fighters, scholars, poets and philosophers widely highlighted the underlying facets of unity in Indian society that was a precursor in attaining ‘nationhood’.

The writings of of R.G. Bhandarkar, Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru Ambedkar and many others, widely contributed to lay the foundation of nationalist discourse of Indian unity. Some scholars highlighted the aspects of civilizational unity of Indian society to strengthen the foundation of Indian nationhood

1.5.1 Rabindranath Tagore

Tagore has imagined India as assimilative, cosmopolitan, compassionate, liberal and quintessentially secular philosophically. This is most comprehensively expounded in his classic poem '*Bharat Tirtha*' (Indian Pilgrimage), where Tagore writes:

“Oh! Mother, let my mind awake slowly on this sacred shore of the sea, where great souls of the world have come together to pay reverence. Here with outstretched hands we bow down to the Divine in human form.Adore here your reverential Mother Earth where great souls have come together on the seashore to pay reverence”.

With regard to the arrival of outsiders in India he writes: “Nobody knows whose invitation invoked so many souls who have gathered here like a turbulent current of river that has come and dissolved itself in the Divine Ocean. In this sacred place the Aryans, non-Aryans, Dravidians, Afghans and Moghals have come and detached their individuality in One Supreme Body. Nobody will go empty handed from this seashore where great souls come together to pay reverence. Those crossed the great mountains and deserts singing the song of your glory from their hearts like martial music and got their seats in your Own Self. By throwing away Prophecies the bonds of difference, they have emerged into universal

brotherhood”.

He also invites everyone to come to this country with a purpose and he writes:

“Come, Oh! Aryans, come non-Aryans, come Hindus and Muslims. Come, come, Oh! Englishmen, come Christians, come Brahmins, purify your heart; hold the hands of downtrodden and out-castes. Remove all ills and disrespect. Come quickly for the coronation of Mother; where the “Mangal Ghat” has to be filled with sacred water which become consecrated by the touch of the great souls who have come together on the seashore to pay reverence”. (<http://www.scotlandyoga.com/sahaja-yoga-news/2007/07/06/bharat-tirtha/>)

Tagore was a universalist and a humanist. He was against all orthodoxy as practised in Indian society. He was looking for an ideal image of India, while critiquing the social ills and orthodoxy in society. In many poem and through many characters in his novels he raised this concern. Perhaps the most complex novel to explore this theme was 'Gora', the story of an adopted child of a Brahmin family who turns ultra-orthodox only to realise the reality of his birth and the futility of orthodoxy.

Tagore was for a free India, and strong by condemned voice against the merciless killing of freedom fighters by the British forces. He returned his Knighthood in the wake of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He wrote “My voice is choked, my flute has lost its strains, it’s like the inside of a prison on a moonless night. You have submerged my world under the burden of nightmares. That’s why I tearfully ask — have you forgiven, have you loved those that poisoned the environ you created, those that stamped out the light of your lamp” (Mitra, 2017).

In Tagore’s view, Indian civilisation was ‘syncretic’ in nature. It is founded in unity in diversity, without diminishing the significance of the uniqueness of all social and religious groups that has provided the plural and composite foundation of Indian society. In direct opposition to this was the aggressiveness of western civilisation, which tried to forcibly homogenise different cultures — a feature Tagore vehemently opposed.

1.5.2 Gandhi

Gandhi has furthered the idea of the assimilative nature of Indian civilization. He even suggested that the objective of the freedom movement need not be to expel the British from India. For him the English would get assimilated in Indian society as the thousands of other migrants have got assimilated in it. Gandhiji recognised that India was a land of diversity and so he never substituted ‘Indian civilisation’ with ‘Hindu culture’ or ‘Hindu civilisation’.

Gandhi had a wide and inclusive understanding of India as a nation: To him "By the Indian nation Gandhi means ordinary Indians, irrespective of their religious, linguistic, regional or caste differences, as well as the new emerging middle class"..(Gandhi: xiv). He further writes: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals, but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another’s religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation’

He always said: "If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsees and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity if only for their own interest" (Gandhi 52-53).

Gandhi's view on the village is unique. Gandhi believed in the autonomy of the villages founded on agriculture, supplemented by village and cottage industries. He was not in favour of industrialization. He wrote: "India does not need to be industrialized in the modern sense of the term... Agriculture does not need revolutionary changes. The Indian peasant requires a supplementary industry. The most natural is the introduction of the spinning-wheel, not the handloom. The latter cannot be introduced in every home, whereas the former can, and it used to be so even a century ago" (Gandhi 115). Gandhi was for self sufficiency, dignity and autonomy of each individual.

Gandhi has written about political power and the state. He writes "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means the capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a State everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that, 'government is best which governs the least. (Young India, 2-7-'31)

1.5.3 Nehru

India appears in Pandit Nehru's imagination as a plural country of various sorts. He writes that the 'heart of Hindustan as it has so long been considered, the seat and centre of both ancient and medieval civilization, the melting pot of so many races and cultures'. He further writes: When I think of India, I think of many things: of broad fields dotted with innumerable small villages; of towns and cities I have visited; of the magic of the rainy season which pours life into the dry parched-up land and converts it suddenly into a glistening expanse of beauty and greenery, of great rivers and flowing water; of the Khyber Pass in all its bleak surroundings; of the southern tip of India; of people, individually and in the mass; and, above all, of the Himalayas, snow-capped, or some mountain valley in Kashmir in the spring, covered with new flowers, and with a brook of our choice, and so I have chosen this mountain background rather than the more normal picture of a hot, subtropical country. Both pictures would be correct, for India stretches from the tropics right up to the temperate regions, from near the equator to the cold heart of Asia (1946:49-50, 54).

Regarding diversity and unity among the people of India he says that the diversity of India is tremendous; it is obvious; it lies on the surface and anybody can see it. It concerns itself with physical appearances as well as with certain mental habits and traits. Their racial stocks are not the same, though there may be common strands running through them; they differ in face and figure, food and clothing, and, of course, language. He however finds that though outwardly there was diversity and infinite variety among our people, everywhere there was that tremendous impress of oneness, which had held all of us together for ages past,

whatever political fate or misfortune had befallen us. ... That essential unity had been so powerful that no political division, no disaster or catastrophe, had been able to overcome it.... I was also fully aware of the diversities and divisions of Indian life, of classes, castes, religions, races, different degrees of cultural development. Yet I think that a country with a long cultural background and a common outlook on life develops a spirit that is peculiar to it and that is impressed on all its children, however much they may differ among themselves.....But if we were going to build the house of India's future, strong and secure and beautiful, we would have to dig deep for the foundations (Ibid. 52—53).

What is Bharat Mata and who is Bharat Mata? On this question he clarifies: Bharat Mata, Mother India, was essentially these millions of people, and victory to her meant victory to these people. You are parts of this Bharat Mata, I told them, you are in a manner yourselves Bharat Mata, and as this idea slowly soaked into their brains, their eyes would light up as if they had made a great discovery (Ibid 54)

Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardization of externals or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.

He also writes regarding the differences. "Differences, big or small, can always be noticed even within a national group, however closely bound together it may be. The essential unity of that group becomes apparent when it is compared to another national group, though often the differences between two adjoining groups fade out or intermingle near the frontiers, and modern developments are tending to produce certain uniformity everywhere. In ancient and medieval times, the idea of the modern nation was non-existent, and feudal, religious, racial, or cultural bonds had more importance. Yet I think that at almost any time in recorded history an Indian would have felt more or less at home in any part of India"(Nehru. 55).

1.5.4 Ambedkar

Ambedkar was deeply concerned about establishing a social order in India founded on equality and justice for all. However he was deeply disturbed with social division in Indian society. As nationalism became a concern, Ambedkar pointed out that "philosophically, it may be possible to consider a nation as a unit, but sociologically, it cannot be regarded as consisting of many classes and freedom of the nation, if it is to be a reality, must vouchsafe the freedom of the different classes comprised in it, particularly of those who are treated as the servile classes". He further writes that nationality is ' a feeling of consciousness of kind which on the one hand binds together those who have it , so strongly that it overrides all differences arising out of economic conflicts or social gradations and on the other hand , severs them from those who are not their kind . It is a feeling not to belong to any other group. This is the essence of what is called a nationality and national feeling'

For him a serious and ideological commitment for ensuring equality for all sections is a prerequisite to actualize nationhood. Nationalism in India emerged not only as a protest against the domination of the colonial forces but also as a protest against the internal domination of the lower castes by the upper caste. Within the persisting system of inequality and caste based social segregation according to

him, the untouchables would be underprivileged; rather they would remain in a situation of slavery. He writes: “Turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path.” Ambedkar was for a casteless society to be founded on the constitutional principle of equality, fraternity and justice for all citizens. (We will discuss more about Ambedkar’s ideas of India in the following unit of this course).

1.5.5 Cultural Nationalist Imagination

The cultural nationalists have seen India in terms of a traditional cultural unit founded on the spiritual ethos of Hinduism. This view perceives India as a unique manifestation of a historic, geographic, cultural, linguistic unity. The writings of Savarkar(1923) locate the roots of Indian nationalism on the claim of inherited common race, land, history, language, culture and common ‘others’. Savarkar elaborates that Sindusthan/Hindusthan is founded on ‘one nation and one race— of a common fatherland and therefore of a common blood’... Hindus are the decedents of the ‘Aryans who made their home ‘on the banks of the Sindhu ... developed a sense of nationality ... and actually brought the whole land from the Himalayas to the Seas under one sovereign sway; that Hindusthan is a land of Hindus who had to face the attack of Arabs, Persians, Pathans, Baluchis, Tartars, Turks, Moguls invaders for centuries. It was through this prolonged furious conflict that people of India became intensely conscious of themselves as Hindus and were welded into a nation. To him the Hindus are one because they own a common Sanskriti (civilization) of Hindu culture and Sanskrit has been the chosen means of expression and preservation of that culture and the history of this race’.: (Savarkar 1923: 4-12, 43, 92, 115).

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Write a note in about 50 words on Gandhi’s idea of the village in India

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- 2) Who is Bharat Mata according to Pandit Nehru?

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1.6 NATIONHOOD AND UNIQUENESS OF INDIA

India has acquired independent nation statehood through a prolonged struggle. The society in India is founded on the idea of cultural *syncretism*. It is founded on the sustained culture of dialogue, accommodation, synthesis, reciprocity, tolerance and mutual respect for each other. The liberal ethos of all religious groups has been part of the national symbol of independent. Brenad S. Cohn wrote: India established as a secular state at independence, carefully chose several

non-Hindu symbols for its flag. It has the Buddhist Wheel of Law on it. The new government selected the Ashok Chakra and Lions for the national seal, Ashoka was a Buddhist ruler. For the national anthem, they accepted the poem by Tagore, *Jana Gana Mana*, which has a listing of the regions and peoples of India as the national anthem. (Cohn 54). It depicts the legacy of tolerance and accommodation of Indian society and polity.

Constitutionally India is founded on one state and one citizenship. It has imagined each citizen to be equal in the eyes of law. Equality, fraternity and justice for the citizen has been the cornerstone of the Indian Constitution. However to pave the foundation of a plural society, along with individual rights, the Constitution of India has also given every religious group the freedom to promote and protect its cultural activities as per law. It has provided the space of individual rights through Article 19-22 of the Constitution. Article 19 ensures the individual right to freedom (freedom of speech and expression; to assemble peaceably and without arms; to form associations or unions; to move freely throughout the territory of India; to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business). Article 20 provides protection to the individual in respect of conviction for offences. Article 21 provides protection to individual of life and personal liberty. Article 22 provides protection to individual against arrest and detention in certain cases.

The Constitution of India also provides the space for collective rights through Article 15 and 26. Article 15(4) permits the State to make special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizen or for the Scheduled Castes the Scheduled Tribes. Article 26 gives ‘every religious group a right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, manage its affairs, properties as per the law’

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Write a note on religious pluralism in India’s national symbol.

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- 2) What is the place of group rights in the Indian Constitution?

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

India is essentially a plural society founded on multiculturalism. It has a long historical past that encountered a host of outside forces including those of Islam, Christianity, and colonialism etc. These have in many ways contributed to the fabric of the composite culture of Indian society. However the foundation of Indian society has been diversely depicted by scholars. This unit has provided you a glimpse of the views of the colonial administrators, of Hegel, Marx, Engels, Weber etc on Indian society. It has also highlighted the imagination of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and others. The ideal image of India is enshrined in the Constitution of India; we have also touched upon some aspects of this image. This unit is a precursor of the units to be discussed at length in the following units of this course.

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GLOSSARY

Cultural Ethos: The cultural world-view of a specific people.

Civilization: An advanced stage of social and cultural development

Orientalists: refers to scholars who study Asian societies, their culture, languages, history, literature and their politics.

FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 **GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR**

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Life and Education of Gandhi and Ambedkar
- 2.3 Gandhi's Political Career
- 2.4 Gandhi's Advocacy For Satyagraha and Non-Violence
- 2.5 Gandhi's Legacy of Nationalism and Secularism
- 2.6 Role of Gandhi in National Movements
- 2.7 Gandhi's Vision on Marginalisation, Inclusion and Exclusion in India
- 2.8 Political Career of B.R Ambedkar
- 2.9 B.R Ambedkar's Socio-political Philosophy
- 2.10 B.R Ambedkar's Ideas on Marginalisation and Social Inclusion
- 2.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.12 References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to discuss

- The political careers of Gandhi and Ambedkar
- Gandhi's Satyagraha and non-violence
- Role of Gandhi in national movements
- Visions of Ambedkar and Gandhi on marginalization and social inclusion
- Socio-political philosophy of Ambedkar

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit, an attempt has been made to shed light on two great personalities, Mahatma Gandhi and B.R Ambedkar. The first one is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is popularly known as 'Mahatma Gandhi' and the second Babasaheb Ambedkar 'the Chief Architect of Indian Constitution'. Both are well known social activists, nation builders and social reformers. Their roles for making a framework for inclusive and egalitarian social structure have been globally appreciated. They fought against historically rooted structural discrimination, exploitation, marginalisation and humiliation based on caste, colour, religion, region, gender, class etc. Establishing non-violent society founded on social equality, justice and empowerment for marginalised communities and groups has remained an unfinished project of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar. They strongly believed in democratic spirit, secular character, cultural and religious harmony of Indian society. This unit is not a straightforward biography which talks about everyday life of Gandhi and Ambedkar, nor does it deal exclusively with Ambedkar and Gandhi's socio-political ideas. An effort has been made here

*Contributed by Mudasir Yousuf

to highlight and discuss those areas in their writings which depicts the image of Indian society, that they ideally conceived. This unit first discusses how Mahatma Gandhi imagined India as a nation based on the ideas of equality, secularism, pluralism, empowerment of marginalised sections and non-violence. Similarly, the next part of the unit discusses and debates Dr. Ambedkar's intellectual imagination and contribution for the welfare of the society especially against structural marginalisation of oppressed classes in general and *Dalits* in particular.

2.2 LIFE AND EDUCATION OF GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR

Mahatma Gandhi was born in Gujarat on 2 October 1869, as the youngest child of the Gandhi family. Due to his father's position as a local politician, the family was subject to transfers within the province, and his father moved to Rajkot when he was seven years old. He completed his primary and secondary education there. After completing his college education, he went to England to study law. He spent three years in England, and was "*called to the Bar*," or made an official barrister, in 1891. He then returned to India to begin a legal practice. Initially he hesitated to speak out he ended his first trial badly and refunded his client's money. Later on Gandhi was offered a job with a Rajkot merchant who did business in South Africa and he decided to go to South Africa for one year. Gandhi stayed twenty years in South Africa. During these twenty years in South Africa he made a deep study of the socio economic conditions of the Indians there. Gandhi himself encountered racial discrimination when he was not allowed to travel in a first class compartment though he had purchased the ticket for the same. This incident at Maritzburg gave birth to a new Gandhi. He raised his voice and revolted against such humiliation, discrimination and injustice inflicted on Indians in South Africa (Pandey, 2012: 355).

Gandhi challenged different forms of domination whether ancient or modern, in the subcontinent. He developed a comprehensive theory that goes beyond national boundaries about the basic contours of 'good society' and the importance of 'non-violence'. Drawing upon 'ethnicity', 'religion' and other India-specific socio-economic characteristics, Gandhi tried to articulate a distinctive cultural vision of nationhood – a vision that immediately gained currency during the freedom struggle (Chakrabarty, 2007: 2).

B.R Ambedkar was born on 14th April, 1891, at Ambedgaon village in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. His father Ranji Sakpal and grandfather Maloji Sakpal, both served in the British Army. His mother's name was Bheema Bai, and she died when Ambedkar was six years old (Trivedi, 2012:1). He was born in a poor family which belonged to one of the Hindu untouchable communities in India. The untouchables comprised a number of distinct groups which formed the lowest strata of Hindu society (Keer, 1954:1). Dr. Ambedkar was educated in Mumbai at Elphinstone College, then in New York at Columbia University, and at London School of Economics and the Inns of Court before returning to India to eventually become the greatest leader of the Dalits. Among the professors who influenced him, a notable individuality was John Dewey. B R Ambedkar, popularly known as 'Babasaheb' nationally and internationally is counted as one of the great intellectuals of India. B.R Ambedkar's search for knowledge, struggle for inclusion and emancipation of suppressed people in the country is remarkable and unprecedented.

Historically Indian society is fractured in terms of caste, gender, religion, and region but Ambedkar gave us a legal framework which would help to establish an egalitarian system socio-culturally, economically and politically. Jaiswal (2008) holds that Ambedkar's starting point was specifically his enormous contribution to the compilation of the Constitution of Independent India, which rejected the label of the most excluded section i.e. Untouchables. It is unfortunate that in the present political juncture the holistic vision of Ambedkar is completely forgotten (Zene, 2013:22).

2.3 GANDHI'S POLITICAL CARRIER

Gandhi's idea of non-violence, which had been originally given shape in *Hind Swaraj*, the text to which Gandhi can be said to have adhered to till the last day of his life (Mukherji, 2016:69). In 1915 Gandhi came back to India as a liberating force to emancipate millions of Indians from British rule. When he entered Indian politics, the Indian National Congress was in a state of anarchy. It was ridden with the crisis of conflict between moderates and the extremists. As we mentioned above, Gandhi stayed two decades in South Africa but these years did not make him a great lawyer but made him a social activist, political leader, strategist and a great thinker. India was waiting for him to lead Indian politics and organize the freedom movement (Rao, 2014:80). Gandhi was not a preacher, but a doer. He engaged in political activity with the objective of achieving specific goals. He strongly believed every age has its *Yugadharma*, and the dharma of his age was politics. His particular goal in life was to attain *moksha*, and he believed that his *moksha* lay in the practice of politics (Ray, 2008:XV).

2.4 GANDHI'S ADVOCACY FOR SATYAGRAHA AND NON-VIOLENCE

Let us discuss Gandhi's ideas of Satyagraha and Non-violence

- i) **Satyagraha:** Satyagraha is an important part of Gandhi's socio-political philosophy. The literary meaning of Satyagraha is "*Holding on to the truth*", "*adherence to truth*". Satyagraha was evolved in South Africa more than 100 years ago as a resistance movement against racial discrimination. On 11 September 1906, he addressed the Indians who had assembled in the Empire theatre, Johannesburg. Gandhi used *Satyagraha* in its ordinary Gujarati meaning and not the classical Sanskrit sense, which means insisting on something without becoming obstinate or uncompromising. When the two terms *Satya* and *Grah* are combined there is a beautiful duality of meaning, implying both insistence *on* and for truth. Gandhi's theory of *satyagraha* is an integral part of his theory of truth and non-violence. Gandhi had an intense sensitivity to racism, an acute sense of racial self-respect and a strong sense of Indian identity (Parekh, 1989: 143).

For Gandhi, *Satyagraha* was a well-calculated step towards and a necessary movement in the direction of national regeneration. It educated the people and *de-mystified* the system. It also organized them, built up their political power and *threatened* the British system. The foundation of *Satyagraha* is based on reason, morality and politics; it relied on the powers of argument, suffering, love and organized pressure, and appealed to the opponent's

head, heart and interests. It played an important role not only in political praxis but also in political theory. It provides a mode of action which not only recognizes the importance of rational persuasion but also takes full account of and finds ways of overcoming the processes that block and distort it. Gandhi's *Satyagraha* proposes one possible mode of action. It patiently probes and exposes society's moral defenses, asks disturbing questions and unsettles settled convictions without frightening those involved. It also cuts across ideological and party lines, builds up communities of concerned citizens, cultivates and mobilizes new constituencies, gives hope to those paralyzed into inaction by an externally engineered feeling of powerlessness and releases a new moral energy (Parekh, 1989:166). Many scholars admitted that *Satyagraha*, was a successful substitute to structural violence, perpetrated by the ruling authority at that time.

Chakrabarty (2006) holds that Satyagraha was not only theoretical in nature but shows a specific type of action that revolved around local issues in the general context of colonial exploitation. In this method, local grievances figured prominently in all the movements Gandhi organized or launched to strengthen national movements, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. *Satyagraha* is a form of persuasion, which aims not only at the conquest of the opponent but at the removal of conflict through genuine agreement. Based on truth, non-violence and self suffering, it is a force for structural change Gandhi's Satyagraha is a solution for all evils and form of mass mobilization. Lelyveld (2011) points out that Satyagraha is a means of active struggle to achieve a national goal involving the powerless or poorest of the poor, in the social participation (pp.46). On moral grounds, Gandhi rejected violence. According to him non-violence is a constructive initiative for any socio-political transformation, international relationships, ending in a peaceful transfer of power. The use of violence did not change the opponent's perception of truth; it enforced him to behave in a manner contrary to his sincerely held beliefs, and violated his moral integrity. He further argued that violence rarely achieved lasting results. An act of violence was deemed to be successful when it achieved its immediate objectives. He thought we needed a new method. It should activate the soul, mobilize the individual's latent moral energies, appeal to both the head and the heart, and create a climate conducive to peaceful resolution of conflict conducted in a spirit of mutual goodwill. Gandhi thought that his method of *satyagraha* met this requirement (Parekh, 2001: 68).

- ii) **Non Violence:** For Gandhi, non-violence is the highest moral principle, and an alternative to the dominant forms of violence in modern society. Non-Violence was not a new phenomenon but historically it was widely practiced in *ancient* India and formed the basis of its social structure. The principle of non-violence was central in his nationalist mobilization against the British. Ray (2008) holds that the concept is also situated in an essentially religious temperament as well as critique of ideas and ideologies of the Enlightenment. Gandhi refers to non-violence as a "law of life" and as a means of socio-political action (pp.91). Non-violence and Satyagraha have a great significance in the life and teachings of Gandhi. They were two socio-political weapons he used in achieving his various goals. Non-violence and Satyagraha were not new ideals but they are the eternal

principles of life preached for thousands of years. But Gandhi's great intellectual imagination reinterpreted and restated these fundamental principles of human behaviour in new ways and showed their importance, relevance, applicability and universality. The initiative of Satyagraha constitutes the heart and soul of Gandhi's belief in non-violence.

2.5 GANDHI'S : LEGACY OF NATIONALISM AND SECULARISM

Let us discuss Gandhi's idea on Nationalism and Secularism

- i) **Nationalism:** There is no universal definition of nationalism and it has been debated by many scholars differently. Brack (2012) holds that nationalism has two meanings; one is 'devotion to one's own nation' patriotic feeling, principles or efforts and second is a movement favoring political independence in a country that is controlled by another or is part of another country (2012:3). Indian concept of nationalism includes many underlying forces that moulded the Indian Independence movement, and strongly continued to influence many ideologies and the politics of India. Indian concept of nationalism is a modern phenomena and it is not merely based on religion but inclusiveness and non-violence (Sharma, 2011:7). Gandhi's struggle against colonialism and other socio-cultural marginalisation was an important milestone in the history of Indian nationalism. His approach for non-violence, Satyagraha and notion of Swaraj were inclusive for all sections of society. Bose (1953) points out that "Gandhi was opposed to the division of India into a predominantly Hindu and Muslim territory on the ground that this was going to be no solution to the communal problem. In his own way, he plodded on, trying to create, in his little corner of work in Noakhali and Bihar, a condition of social justice and religious toleration to form the basis of socio-political unity" (1953:3).
- ii) **Secularism:** The understanding of secularism in India is different from the west. Gandhi understood secularism in a modern way and he was strongly against religious based politics. Gandhi wanted India to be the homeland for every religion. He imagined that kind of nation which guarantees and respects all religious beliefs, and all socio-cultural aspects of life. According to him, religion should be separate from politics, economy, education and other areas of socio-cultural life. He believed that in a multi-religious society and a secular state all sections of people need to be cherished and respected publicly as well as privately. The most important idea was that no single religion should be permitted to dominate the others. Secularism has emerged as a uniting force of Indian people against colonialism and also meant an opposition to communalism (Bain, 2009:2). Varma (1959) holds that Gandhi wanted India to be a truly spiritual nation which valued truth, peace, non-violence, and fearlessness more than force and power, and charity more than love of self. Gandhi advocates the spiritual concept of nationalism. According to Gandhi nationalism grows in the process of historical evolution and cannot be created by political pronouncements or maxims of expediency. He was opposed to the 'Two Nation' theory. The basic concept in Gandhi's ideal of nationhood focussed on abolition of invidious, discrimination between rich and the poor, and untouchability, while emphasizing gender equality, peace, mutual co-operation and human unity and respect for every religion (1953:122).

1) Describe briefly Gandhian concept of satyagraha.

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2) Explain briefly concept of Non-violence.

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2.6 ROLE OF GANDHI IN NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

Gandhi became a powerful national leader within four years of his return to India. His intellectual imagination, management, broad vision, moralistic language, clarity of ideas, use of culturally suffused symbols, manners, huge self-confidence, and courage to establish healthy and inclusive leadership for each and every section of society, added to his charisma (Parekh, 2001: 15). Gandhi launched strong national movements which on the one hand bring structural change in the socio-political ideology and on the other hand these national movements become productive against the colonial regime. The important nationalist movements were Non-Cooperation Movement (1919-21), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930–2) and Quit India Movement (1942). The Non-Cooperation Movement (1919-21) was the first one that gained popularity, with the blend of the Khilafat agitation of the Muslims against the dismantling of the Khalif in Turkey (Chakrabarty, 2006: 9).

Gandhi was of the view that a government can perpetuate injustice only when the people of a country co-operate with it. In the words of Gandhi, “Even the most despotic government cannot survive except by the consent of the governed which is often forcibly procured by the despot. But as soon as the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, the despot’s power is gone”. Non-Cooperation may be resorted to in the form of hartal, social ostracism or picketing. Though it seems a mild technique, it can prove to be a strong method when undertaken on a mass scale. Non-Cooperation was not designed against anyone but was meant strengthen courage, tenacity and steadfast fearlessness in the Indian People (Pandey, 2012:336). Parekh (2001) highlights that Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement made political independence a collective national goal. It also led to a large body of voluntary institutions, greatly expanded civic space, and reduced the moral hold of the colonial state. However, it failed in its basic objective of paralyzing the colonial state by establishing an alternative one behind its back.

Gandhi made significant contributions to making Civil Disobedience a legitimate method in the socio-political domain. Civil Disobedience means capacity for

unlimited suffering used to challenge the opponent. It is not a state of lawlessness and licence but presupposes a law-abiding spirit combined with self-restraint. Complete Civil Disobedience is revolt without the element of violence in it. Civil Disobedience becomes a sacred duty when the state has become lawless (Fischer, 1951: 140). Gandhi defined Civil Disobedience as the breach of immoral statutory performance. He regarded it as a complete effective and bloodless substitute for armed revolt. Gandhi required Civil Disobedience to be civil and non-violent. According to him “Disobedience” must be based on some desirable principle. It should be practiced with a great caution (Pandey, 2012:367). Similarly on August 8, 1942 the Quit India Movement got began when people were becoming increasingly restive and impatient against British policy and administrative attitude. Gandhi feared that if this resistance was not given an organized nonviolent expression, it would break out in sporadic disorder and violence. Since the British did not seem able at that time to ensure India’s defence and were not willing to let India defend herself, Gandhi called upon them to “Quit India”. Gandhi said “our quarrel is not with the British people; we fight their imperialism. The proposal for the withdrawal of British power did not come out of anger. It came to enable India to play its due part at the present critical juncture.” Singh (2008:20).

2.7 GANDHI’S VISION ON MARGINALISATION, INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN INDIA

Indian society and Indian social structural framework have remained historically non egalitarian because atrocities based on of caste, gender, ethnicity, disability etc. Marginalisation is a process which emerges and operates in different dimensions of society. It is founded on the dynamics of social denials and deprivations, inequality and uncertainty, hierarchy and domination (SinghaRoy, 2014:302). Marginalisation has historical roots in Indian society and the war against marginalisation has remained an unfinished project of Gandhism. Gandhi played a constructive role for the inclusion of socio-culturally and socio-politically deprived people. His major socio-political initiatives became fruitful for structural change in the lives of the marginalised sections of society. He strongly believed that real development is possible only when all marginalised sections of society participate in it, socio-culturally, politically and economically. Gandhi throughout his entire life struggled very hard for this structural inclusion in terms of Education for all, women empowerment, health, youth employment, minority participation and end of caste discrimination.

Gandhi disliked the inherent elitism and the irrelevance of English education within the Indian context. He formulated a new inclusive education policy in Independent India, called ‘*Nai Talim*’ or 'basic education'. According to him, “*By education I mean all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit*”. The focus here was on particular ways of acquiring knowledge. For each village community, as well as the country as a whole, basic education was needed. Gandhi, believed that the best possibility of education is ‘earn and learn’ which encourages self-sufficiency and self-reliance among people. According to Gandhi, this type of vocational education provides fertile space and productive skills such as spinning, weaving, carpentry, pottery, and animal husbandry to the students. He emphasized education through the vernaculars and the cultural aspects of education rather than literacy, and pointed out that if

we did not do this, we would have to pay dearly (Dayal, 2006: 259, Andrews, 2006:68). However, his agenda did not succeed, and his attempt to operationalise this model of education remained a dream.

For Women’s empowerment Gandhi pointed out; “My own opinion is that, just as fundamentally men and women are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other’s active help. But somehow or the other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man’s teaching that she is inferior to him. But the seers among men have recognised her equal status” (cited in Kripalani, 2007: 155). Gandhi’s voice against the discrimination of women was consistent and by doing so his idea was to make the women realize that they were not meant only for household chores, but also for better and higher causes of society (Bakshi, 1987:6). According to Gandhi man has used her as his plaything and as the object of his lust. He further highlights that “To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it’s man’s injustice to women. If by strength is meant brute strength then, indeed, woman is less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man’s superior” (Dayal, 2006:260). Gandhi emphasised that education for women would ensure their moral development and make them capable of occupying the same public space.

Caste and untouchability were not major concerns of Gandhi during his stay in South Africa. When Gandhi came back to India, he was often overwhelmed by the oppressive and offensive presence of caste and untouchability. Caste system had been the protector and preserver of Hindu society, but he acknowledged that in contemporary times the system had become full of evils like ostentation and hypocrisy, pleasure-seeking and disputes (Jordens, 2012:105). Gandhi involved himself in a long and often harsh debate with orthodox Hindus on the one hand and, from the early 1930 onwards, with self-assertive leaders of the Dalits themselves on the other (Hardiman, 2005:126). Gandhi believed that caste organisation was basic to the structure of Indian society but he strongly condemned discrimination, domination, and humiliation on the basis of caste and untouchability. Gandhi was aware about the social psychology of Hindu caste system which consists of an exclusionary attitude and brutal physical and psychological violence (Bilgrami, 2014:110). Gandhi was a very stimulating thinker, his thoughts and actions were of full of passion for inclusiveness for every section of society. He emphasized justice, equality, fairness, human dignity for all human beings nationally and internationally.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Check briefly Gandhi's concept of Naya Talim.

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2.8 POLITICAL CAREER OF B.R AMBEDKAR

B.R Ambedkar was one of those who played a prominent role in the emancipation of the marginalised people in India. His political activities and his fight for structural inclusion benefits all in general and marginalised sections in particular (Rajasekhariah, 1989:4). During his entire life, Ambedkar's political career went through various stages. Mishra (2004) highlights that the first stage starts from 1918 to 1928; in this period he established himself as a lawyer, and received the highest degree in economics. At Mahad he led the *satyagraha* struggle for securing for Dalits, human rights of drinking water from public ponds. The second period started from 1929 to 1936, in this period he started the constitutional fight to acquire separate electorates for Dalits. He believed that those who were socially segregated must also have a separate political platform. In the third phase from 1937 to 1946 he organized the Independent Labour Party. He was an opposition leader in Bombay Legislature and later he became the labour member in the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1942. In the fourth period he worked effectively as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India and became known as the "Modern Manu". Later on he became the Law and Justice Minister in of the first cabinet of Independent India and after that he worked as Opposition Leader in Parliament (2004:21). In his political career and involvement in the independence movement, B.R Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi disagreed over the best approach to gaining rights for lower castes. Gandhi preferred to keep the depressed classes within the Hindu fold, to reform Hinduism from within, and to avoid special rights for depressed classes. In contrast, B.R Ambedkar wanted to ensure rights and representation for lower castes (Fenkins, 2006:39).

2.9 B.R AMBEDKAR'S SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

B.R Ambedkar is one of those figures in the history of modern India about whom many people know little bit and very few understand much, while Ambedkar, the scholar remains unexplored (Mukherjee, 2009: 346). He played an important role in the making of India's liberal constitution of 1950 as a member of the Constituent Assembly and the Chairman of the drafting Committee. He founded a sect of Protestant Buddhism called the '*Navina*' which means the 'new way' or 'new vehicle'. He was highly educated and studied at Colombia and London School of Economics. He was a scholar as much as a politician. B.R Ambedkar wrote several books which address the core issue of society. He provided a scholarly interpretation of the caste system, wrote on the currency and finance in British India, Pakistan and the partition of India, Buddhism, Untouchability, Comparative Constitutionism, minority and Federalism and other subjects like culture and Politics, Anthropology and History, Law, Jurisprudence, Religion and Society. His vast interest and the depth of his knowledge were truly strong. Many times he disagrees with Gandhi on how to address social inequalities and how to ensure social justice in India throughout the 20th century into the present movement.

B.R Ambedkar's main concern in life was to meet the challenge of wrongly idealized social relations which threatened the whole of human existence and shook the foundations of a moral and just social order. The unfinished project of

his life was to arouse in people the passion for equality and justice. Instead of speculation he firmly believed in practical wisdom and his socio-political life was essentially committed to development and evolution under conditions and events that prevailed in Indian society (Mishra, 2004:7). His knowledge successfully breaks the chains of traditionalism, religious orthodoxy, historically rooted dominations and socially constructed superstitions. He never thought of any socio-cultural realities in a confined or isolated manner but structurally and collectively. Ambedkar's intellectual and socio-political struggle has created productive grounds which uplifts marginalised groups and develops a socially inclusive platform in the contemporary context. He believed that historical form of structural discrimination like casteism involved in itself social, economic, cultural and political framework of governance of Hindu society (Thorat and Kumar, 2008:3). B.R Ambedkar's perspective on Federalism was critical as compared to other thinkers. He considered the comparative method appropriate for understanding similarities and differences of the federal system in India with the federal systems elsewhere in the world (Kumar, 2010:310).

B.R Ambedkar's political philosophy is not entirely based on speculative and ethical ideas but it is related to real human problems and issues. He believed that the human being is always changing, always growing. He further says that man is what his mind makes him. In other words, every man has a mind of his own and that should be allowed to act and react. It should have opportunities to develop fully so that each develops his own individuality without any humiliation and subjection (Rajasekhariah and Jayaraj, 199: 361). Timothy (2006) points out that B.R Ambedkar's most famous writings, for example *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), *The Buddha and the Future of His Religion* (1950) and *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (1957) change the discourse of social realities. Ambedkar tried to develop a coherent account of the nature of religion and its relation to politics and power. In *Annihilation of Caste*, he argues that Hinduism is a religion of rules, a compendium of ritual regulations which are based on the caste ideology of hierarchy and untouchability. B.R Ambedkar holds that caste is the central fact of Hinduism and untouchability is a defining characteristic of caste. According to him one cannot reform caste because untouchability is an inherent feature (1957:134). Ambedkar holds that caste as a system of social and economic governance or organisation (of production and distribution) is essentially based on certain customary rules and norms, which are unique and distinct (Thorat, 2006:287). His lifetime concern was to fight against socially constructed injustice by all possible and necessary means and establish an egalitarian society.

2.10 B.R AMBEDKAR'S IDEAS ON MARGINALISATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Marginalisation is a man-made and socio-culturally constructed process. It is legitimated and continuously reproduced through unequal structure of hierarchy and domination through the organised and institutionalised structure of class, gender caste and race. Marginality gets legitimized and reproduced through the strong institutional and normative arrangements of society to sustain the hegemony of the dominant group, to provide legitimacy to exploitation and inequality, social segregation, inequality and disempowerment. (SinghaRoy, 2014:59). B.R Ambedkar had a brilliant and insightful mind and diagnostic ability

that always gave him great strength to search for inclusiveness for common people. His prominent political and social ideas addressed socio-cultural problems such as caste system, the pernicious practice of untouchability, gender discrimination and the emancipation of the marginalised people and open up new possibilities (Rajasekhariah and Jayaraj, 199:358). He was a dynamic political theorist who devoted his whole life to the de-construction of different forms of marginalization. His inclusiveness reinforces public and private upliftment, human dignity, honesty, equality, and liberty, rights and civic facilities for the marginalised groups in India.

B.R Ambedkar's understanding is that marginalisation is a condition that exists when a person or community is being denied or is cutoff from social relations and social interactions because of any socio-culturally constructed inferior identity like caste, creed, colour and gender. Marginalisation is a state of a person or community's disappearance in public and private life. In Indian society caste is the fundamental root of marginalisation and discrimination. In Ambedkar's interpretation any form of marginalisation is embedded in institutional structure. He tried to rebuild Indian society by eliminating discriminative social structures. He highlights the structural and institutional actions that delimit the lives of the Dalits. He also gives prominence to their cultural oppression which means how the dominant meanings of our society stereotype marginal groups (Verma, 1999:2809). Thorat (2006) highlights Ambedkar's inclusive agenda against historically and structurally rooted inequalities, and deprivations suffered Indian society by the Untouchables due to the denial of economic, civil and cultural rights. He further mentions three safeguards to ensure that the practice of untouchability and caste discrimination do not continue. These were (i) the safeguards against present discrimination were to include provisions of equal rights, (ii) legal safeguards in the form of preventive laws against the violation of the legal rights, and (iii) proactive measures to ensure that the discriminated groups had a fair share in and participated in the legislature, executive, public services, education and other public spheres (in the form of a reservation policy). These safeguards provide protection against violation of laws against discrimination in public and private spheres and provide space for participation. In Ambedkar's view, equal rights would provide the legal framework, overturning the unequal customary legal framework of the institution of the caste system and untouchability. (2006:300).

Ambedkar's concept of '*Social Justice*' is a good example for his idea of '*total inclusion*' for the marginalised people. According to him social justice stands for the liberty, equality and fraternity of all human beings. His idea of '*Social Justice*' was progressive because it encourages rationalist and humanist feelings. He did not support any type of hypocrisy, injustice and exploitation. He wanted to establish a system based on right relations between man and man in all dimensions of his life. He believed in a social system in which man's status is based on his merit and achievements and where no one is noble or untouchable because of his/her birth. Dr B.R. Ambedkar did not believe in violence and he considered the mass media to be a powerful tool for social changes for justice and freedom. Ambedkar was strongly concerned about the inclusive development of the marginalised sections of Indian society (Raghavendra, 2016: 28).

B.R Ambedkar strongly believed that education plays an important role in the liberation of the individual. He assumed that education is not merely a means for the development of a child's personality or a source of earning ones livelihood.

Rather, he believed that education is the most dominant agent for structural changes in society. Ambedkar's views on women empowerment are a great source of insights regarding inclusion in every dimension of their life. He saw women as the victims of oppression, discrimination and marginalisation in society. Keeping his contribution in view Amartya Sen said that "*Ambedkar is my Father in Economics. He is a true celebrated champion of the underprivileged. He deserves more than what he has achieved today. However he was a highly controversial figure in his home country, though it was not the reality. His contribution in the field of economics is marvelous and will be remembered forever*".

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Discuss Ambedkar's socio-political philosophy.

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- 2) Elaborate the ideas of Ambedkar on marginalisation and social inclusion.

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2.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the life sketches of Gandhi and Ambedkar and their ideas and vision on non-violent struggle, social equality, justice and empowerment for deprived communities. Both Gandhi and Ambedkar strongly believed in creating an egalitarian society through democratic principles, secular character, cultural and religious harmony in Indian society. We have also examined how Mahatma Gandhi imagined India as a nation based on the ideas of equality, secularism, pluralism, and empowerment of the marginalised sections. Apart from Ambedkar's contribution in the making of the Indian Constitution, we have also elaborated Ambedkar's intellectual imagination and contribution for the welfare of society, especially against structural marginalisation of oppressed classes in general and *Dalits* in particular.

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UNIT 3 IDEOLOGICAL IMAGES OF INDIA*

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Ideological Image
- 3.3 Ideological Images of India
 - 3.3.1 Pluralism
 - 3.3.2 Nationalism
- 3.4 Indian Civilization
- 3.5 Social Change and Modernization in India
 - 3.5.1 Modernization and Continuity of Tradition
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 References
- 3.8 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- define the concept of ideology
- give a description of ideological image of society
- discuss the nature of ideological images of Indian society
- outline the concepts of nationalism, pluralism and Indian civilization
- discuss the change and modernization in India
- identify the major forces responsible for continuity of tradition along with modernization.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“*Saare jahaan se achha Hindustan hamaraa*” (Better than all the world, is our India) is the very poetic and descriptive image of Indian society, as described by the great poet Allama Iqbal. Indian society has withstood social heterogeneity and cultural diversity, social, ethnic, caste, communal and religious pluralism, multiple streams of the national movement, contrasting styles of party leadership and clashing ideological perspectives. Giving a descriptive image of India’s changing social, political, and cultural climate in the post colonial period, and recounting the state of Muslims in India from the ancient days requires volumes of historical literature. Hence a holistic portrayal of India's structural and cultural domain is indeed difficult. This unit attempts to provide a description of ideological imaging of Indian society. The ideas, thoughts and descriptions relating to the culture of pluralism and nationalism of its own and a great civilization having complex structure of great and little traditions are dealt with at length here. It is also argued that the models of modernization in India co-vary with the

*Contributed by Rabindra Kumar Mohanty

choice of ideologies. It is also felt necessary to see how the modern values in India are being assimilated into the traditional norms and develops a composite norm, which provides the continuity to the process of social change.

3.2 IDEOLOGICAL IMAGE

Within Sociology, ideology is broadly understood as referring to the worldview a person or a society has regarding the sum total of their culture, values, beliefs, assumptions, common sense, and expectations. Ideology is a system of concepts and views which serves to make sense of the world while obscuring the social interests that are expressed therein, and by its completeness and relative internal consistency. It tends to form a closed system and maintain itself in the face of contradictory or inconsistent experience. In fact, ideology gives an identity within society, within groups, and in relation to other people. Ideological image refers to a clear depiction or portrayal of society which is unique, and shows how thoughts, actions, and interactions of people are shaped across cultural space and time, and what happens to society at large in the holistic journey of transitions and transformations.

3.3 IDEOLOGICAL IMAGES OF INDIA

A national and, to a great extent, global consensus on India that has been constructed over the years is that it builds itself in a culture of pluralism and nationalism of its own and is a great civilization having a complex structure of great and little traditions. The Post-colonial India leads the story of the success of the largest democracy in the world with a written constitution. This story of success is garnished with references to a secular constitution in a country of many religions, a free press, an independent judiciary and a thriving intellectual community. Many of these claims are grounded in varying degrees of truthful capturing of some aspects of India's economic and political reality. When the captured images are magnified to a scale that a glorified picture of India emerges and leads to theorisation and celebration of the idea called Indian Ideology. This Indian Ideology of celebration of the 'Idea of India' is shared, in different hues, by a vast majority of Indian intellectuals within India and those settled abroad. Ideology refers to a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it. Indian intellectuals are unsparing in their scrutiny of India's social ills: 'Hunger, misery, illiteracy; inequality of every kind, sexual discrimination, economic exploitation; corruption, commercialization, fanaticism; the spreading of slums, the looting of the environment-a detailed scholarship of anger or disgust covers virtually all. Perry Anderson's book (2013) "The Indian Ideology" connects three phases of modern Indian history- the struggle for independence led by Gandhi, the 1947 partition and the making of the Indian republic under Nehru's leadership and Indian nationalism.

India is often referred to as the land of cultural plurality and diversity where two contrasting worldviews - that of the traditional and continuous and the formal and official (inherited from the British) thrive. These two views today coexist uncomfortably, often at cross purposes and clashing with the contemporary official worldview. Amidst such controversy Indian intellectuals examine the real ground situations through field experience to explore the more recent new category of cultural landscape within the context of India's multiple faiths /beliefs, plural

communities and cultural diversities vis a vis international principle of sacred values and categories.

3.3.1 Pluralism

Pluralism is acknowledging the fact that multiple power groups should exist and compete in a free and open place of ideas, from which policies and law are generated to govern the society. It is a form of society in which various social groups including the minorities maintain their independent cultural traditions without any restrictions. In simple terms it can also be a situation where people with disagreeing beliefs live in the same society peacefully without disbanding their beliefs.

Since time immemorial, India is a home to numerous languages, religions, tribes, races, castes and sub-castes depicting cultural pluralism. Of them religious pluralism has a different existential predicament in India. Religious pluralism is a belief that one can overcome religious differences between different religions and conflicts within the same religion. For most religious traditions religious pluralism is based on non-literal view of one's religious traditions allowing for respect to be followed between different traditions on core principles rather than on marginal issues. It is an attitude which rejects focus on immaterial differences and instead gives respect to those beliefs that are held in common, well within limits and limitations.

The existence of religious pluralism depends on the existence of freedom of religion which is when different religions of a particular region possess the same rights of worship and public expression. Freedom of religion is weakened when one religion is given rights or privileges which are denied to others. Religious freedom did not exist in those countries where the state restricted or prevented the public expression of religious belief and even persecuted the individual religions. In some Middle Eastern countries, where they adhere to one particular religion, pluralism is rather restricted if not overtly curbed.

Secularism in western notion is a practise of separating state from religion, restricting in it from interfering in the religious matters of people. India has its own version of secularism. Keeping in view the pluralistic society and beliefs of the people, Gandhi, during independence struggle had come out with his Indian version of secularism which means equality of all religions. Thus, secularism in India is a result of its pluralistic diversities and this is driving India since many years and continues to do so.

Activity 1

Make a list of Tribal, Caste and Religious groups in your neighbourhood in order to explain the concept of pluralism. Write also a paragraph on interaction and intercommunication among them.

3.3.2 Nationalism

Nationalism is generally seen as a political principle for establishing sovereign nation-states. Nanda (2006) argued that nationalism in a multi-national context is viewed differently at different levels. By analysing several cases of linguistic and provincial movements in India, he tried to demonstrate that in multi-ethnic

countries, such as India, nationalism assumes a political connotation at the macro level and a cultural connotation at the regional level. While the political connotation symbolises the establishment of a sovereign nation-state at the macro level, the cultural connotation, by and large, underlines the protection of distinct cultural nation/nationality in a given provincial political space within the common sovereign state.

India faces the uphill task of reconciling national integration efforts with accommodation of multiple ethnic identities within the framework of a single sovereign polity. The task becomes all the more difficult as free India has adopted a secular democratic political system. It is well known that India is a veritable labyrinth of cultural pluralism/diversity. Of numerous languages, religions, tribes, races, castes and sub-castes of cultural pluralism in India, language, tribe and, to some extent, religion, happen to be crucial, as they not only serve as important markers of group identity, but also provide viable bases for nationality formation. The fact that linguistic and tribal identities in India are linked to a definite territory, that is, a concept of 'homeland' or 'desh', reinforces their salience.

Moreover, the term 'desh' implies not merely a territory, but also a people, language, style of life, and pattern of culture; in fact, a nation in the European sense of the term. Deshpande (1983) observes that the concept of 'homeland' is variously expressed in Indian vocabulary as '*desh*', '*nadu*', '*rastra*', to name some of these. In addition, several linguistic and tribal groups in India possess distinct history, culture, myths, symbols and values. All these elements go into the making of territorially rooted cultural nationalities in India and render her a multi-national character. Given such a complex socio-cultural reality, any attempt to disturb the natural linkage between language, culture and homeland would cause disaffection among the affected people. As a matter of fact, this natural linkage between territory, language and culture was disturbed for the first time in India during the colonial period.

The colonial policy of keeping 'Indian India' separate from 'British India' was perhaps designed to thwart the development of nationalism at the all-India level. It did not, however, take long for nationalism to grow at the all-India level. Indian nationalism assumed a liberal-political content and it evolved from a sense of pan-Indian geo-political unity and an anticolonial perception shared by people belonging to diverse cultural nationality backgrounds. In fact, the all-India national consciousness was mainly articulated by the nationalist elite comprising various cross sections of the Indian middle class.

Apart from the all-India level, nationalism in India was also seen at the regional-national level. Unlike the pan-Indian national consciousness, however, the regional national consciousness emerged as a form of cultural nationalism seeking to preserve identity and protect 'homeland' vis-à-vis other nationalities in the country. It is in this sense that the regional cultural nationalism differed from the pan-Indian political nationalism which aimed at India's independence and the establishment of the Indian nation-state. Moreover, the regional national consciousness emanated from a cultural sense of 'pre-existent nation' defined in terms of a distinct culture, shared history, specific language and common territory. Thus, the origins of cultural nationalism in India date back to the colonial times. The rise of such cultural nationalism was mainly attributed to the existence of artificial provincial units in colonial India.

Like colonial experience elsewhere, in India too, British colonialism carved out administrative provinces which did not match the physical distribution of nationalities and their socio-cultural affiliation. In some cases, several nationalities were juxtaposed in one provincial unit. For example, the Bengal presidency contained different nationalities like the Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Maithili, Bhojpuri and a host of tribal communities. The Madras Presidency included the Tamils, Telugus, Malayalees and Kannadigas; while the Bombay Presidency comprised the Marathis, Gujaratis, Kannadigas and Konkanis. In some other instances, people of a particular nationality (for example, Oriyas, Kannadigas, etc.) were apportioned to two or more provincial units. Juxtaposition reduced the smaller nationalities into a minority position; apportionment led to cultural fragmentation and territorial dismemberment of some nationalities. The fragmentation of culture and territory created disjuncture among language, culture and territory. Thus, tension and conflict resulted in both the cases: in the case of juxtaposition, conflict resulted from domination of one nationality over another; in the case of apportionment, tension resulted from a fear of loss of 'homeland' and, hence, identity.

The mainstream nationalities, whose culture and territory were not fragmented and who happened to be in majority, emerged as dominant nationality under favourable colonial conditions. While their culture and language flourished under colonial patronage, the language and culture of the dominated and peripheral nationalities faced serious threats. Furthermore, the deprived nationalities perceived the subordination of their cultural identity to the mainstream as the root-cause of their socioeconomic and political deprivation.

The very consciousness of protecting and preserving one's cultural identity within a culture-congruent provincial unit gave rise to several cultural nationalisms in colonial India. The rise of national consciousness among the Oriyas, Sindhis, Assamese, Telugus, and Malayalees, and the assertion of tribal identity by the Jharkhand tribes are some cases in point. As mentioned earlier, these cultural nationalisms at the regional level were pursued simultaneously along with the anti-colonial national movement for liberation of India. Several studies have discussed this dual character of nationalism in the Indian context. A.R. Desai (1966: 368), for example, noted that from the standpoint of the united national movement for India's independence, the movement of the nationalities for self-determination assumed decisive significance. Some recent articulations on national identity in India reiterated this thesis quite unequivocally. For example, M.N. Karna (2000: 94) observes that both language and region have shaped regional national identity in India and that pan-Indianness objectively co-exists with the regional national consciousness.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark T for true or F for false against each statement.
 - a) Freedom of religion is strengthened when one religion is given rights or privileges and denied to others.
 - b) India is the largest democracy in the world with a written Constitution.
 - c) Ideology refers to a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it.

- d) Nationalism is generally seen as a blind loyalty towards one's own country's culture against other nation-states.
- 2) What are the three phases of Indian History described in the Book entitled "The Indian Ideology"?

Three phases are

- a)
- b)
- c)

3.4 INDIAN CIVILIZATION

Indian civilization is distinguished from other civilizations of the world in respect of its continuity and heterogeneity, its accommodating ethos and its composite character. Hence, Sunil Khilnani (1997) writes:

"The founding idea of India was never simply a commitment to abstract values or ideas – of pluralism and democracy – but was rooted in a practical understanding of the compulsions and constraints of Indian politics. Indians, no more than their counterparts anywhere else, are moderate, principled or even especially tolerant people: they are deeply self-interested. (1997:xiii).

He further writes that the idea of India is not homogenous and univocal. In fact, no single idea can possibly hope to capture the many energies, angers, and hopes of one billion Indians; nor can any narrower ideas – based on a single trait – fulfil their desires. What has given the modern India, as distinctive identity over the past half-century, is that it has kept India a democratic, tolerant, and open-minded state. It allows them to learn to live alongside one another" (ibid:xiv).

Indian civilization is more than 5,000 years old. We have assimilated many cultures, races, warriors and marauders during this short time span. The Vedas, the Puranas and the Upanishads were written here. Spiritual knowledge was imparted by India to the world. India civilization is believed to begin from river banks, the banks of the Indus river and the Ganges river. India derives its name from the Indus river.

In order to understand civilization, one has to undertake a study based on cataloguing (listing of cultural traits); cultural essence (to identify the essential underlying process); and cultural communication (enduring elements that are transmitted among the parts of the society). N.K. Bose (1967) and Surajit Sinha (1972), Bernard S. Cohn (1971) and others use a civilizational perspective in the understanding of Indian society. They have tried to explore the historicity, continuity and inter linkage of various structures in India. They analyse the structural under-pinning of any civilization to get a sharp and historically framed portrait of religion, caste, village, state formation, land relations and the like. They believe that a social system, a nation, or a civilization has to be understood in a historical-civilizational frame.

For Majumdar (1951) "So far as the available evidence goes, there cannot be the slightest doubt that Indian civilization manifests itself in a way and a form very different from that with which we are familiar within the rest of the world. We

have consequently to approach the history of India in a different spirit, and adopt a different scale of values in order to appraise her culture and civilization. The wars and conquests, the rise and fall of empires and nations, and the development of political ideas and institutions should not be regarded as the principal object of our study, and must be relegated to a position of secondary importance. On the other hand, more stress should be laid upon philosophy, religion, art, and letters, the development of social and moral ideas, and the general progress of those humanitarian ideals and institutions which form the distinctive feature of the spiritual life of India and her greatest contribution to the civilization of the world”.

Rabindra Nath Tagore (1930) writes “Our real ties are with the *Bharatavarsha* that lies outside our textbooks. If the history of this tie for a substantially long period gets lost, our soul loses its anchorage. After all, we are no weeds or parasitical plants in India. Over many hundreds of years, it is our roots, hundreds and thousands of them, that have occupied the very heart of *Bharatavarsha*. But, unfortunately, we are obliged to learn a brand of history that makes our children forget this very fact. It appears as if we are nobody in India...”

Check Your Progress 2

- i) List out any three prominent criteria that distinguish Indian civilization from other civilizations of the world.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
- ii) Name any three aspects that are to be included in a study in order to best understand the concept of Civilization.
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3.5 SOCIAL CHANGE AND MODERNIZATION IN INDIA

Yogendra Singh (1973) labels social change as ‘ideology’. In his book "Social Change in India": Crisis and Resilience, Yogendra Singh (1993: 12) discusses two types of tendencies of social change in modern India: “First, there has taken place a substantial change in the social structure without simultaneously bringing about a structural change in the society. It results into tensions and often builds up social crisis. Secondly, there has taken place a sea-change in the subjective domain or the consciousness of the people in respect of social change.”

To him Indian civilisation has always been based on the principle of holism, hierarchy, continuity, and transcendence and its character has been influenced by orthogenetic changes and changes in its Great Tradition and Little Traditions

but the forms of the institutions remained unchanged as the endogenous changes were confined only to 'Sanskritisation'. The real change came from the contact of western civilisation in the 17th century, which began with the process of colonization. The earlier encounter with Islam only reinforced the tradition as Islam was a traditional religion and a synthesis of Islamic tradition and Hindu tradition took place. The Islam of the Indian subcontinent also adopted the features of hierarchy as most of the Muslims were Hindu converts. In political structure also, the feudal system was common to both the religions. Despite having differences in ideologies, a syncretic relationship between both the religions was apparent in the Indian subcontinent. Social change and modernism are two different things especially while evaluating traditional societies. Social change can be continuous without having the modern or pre-modern type of evolution. Hence to study change in Indian social system applying western evolutionary perspective will be an injustice to the very pattern of Indian society. Indian social system was undergoing changes without inculcating any modern notion of change which can be studied from qualitatively distinctive evolutionary differentiation.

Taking elements from different theoretical understandings and practical experiences, the change in Indian society is *sui generis* and these changes cannot be studied from any one perspective due to presence of heterogeneity of culture and differential effects of modernity on different societies.

According to Yogendra Singh (1973), social change in India can be approached in terms of the following theoretical perspectives:

- 1) The causation of social change is to be sought both from within and without the social system or the tradition. For this we find the concepts employed by Redfield and Singer as being particularly useful and make a distinction between the heterogenetic or exogenous and orthogenetic or endogenous sources of change.
- 2) A distinction between cultural structure and social structure is also made to focus upon the need to observe changes at the level of these two relatively independent substantive domains. Again, following Redfield, cultural structure has further been sub-divided into the categories of the little tradition and the great tradition. Similarly, the social structure is divided to form categories of micro-structure and macro-structure.
- 3) These distinctions follow from the need to focus upon the contexts, through which processes of change could be evaluated in matters of spread and depth.
- 4) Finally, the direction of change is represented in a linear evolutionary form from 'traditionalization' towards 'modernization'. Traditionalization comprises the total range of changes governed by orthogenetic patterns in the cultural and social structures. Modernization similarly represents the net balance of changes following from heterogenetic contacts.

The causal forces, substantive domain, contexts and direction of change provide us the logical boundaries within which the more specific processes of social change in India could be observed and described. These specific processes and the relevant concepts describing them have been noted in the form of a paradigm by Y Singh. Singh examines the significance of the specific concepts in the course of the analysis of change pertaining to the relevant substantive domain.

Yogendra Singh sees the process of social change through two perspectives- i) structural, and ii) evolutionary. Structural changes are seen through the variables of social mobility, technological modernity and secular institutions, changes in norms and value systems etc and modernisation is seen through the flow of these values and their impact decides the nature and extent of the transformation. However, an evolutionary perspective is based on theoretical assumptions and these theoretical perspectives can be either structural-functional or dialectical. Dialectical approach sees the ‘breakdown’ of old institutions as the prerequisite criteria for the change and change in psycho-neurological factors are not appreciated in this method. Structural-functional approach treats evolution as a continuous process from the sub-human to human and beyond this. As Talcott Parsons writes “Modernisation follows an ‘evolutionary universal’”model. He believes in the homeostasis of social agencies and revolution as the breakdown of this balance.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) What is meant by ‘traditionalization’ and ‘modernization’ in the words of Y Singh? Give your answer in one sentence for your answer.
 - a)
 - b)
- ii) Name the four types of theoretical developments in Indian Sociology as discussed by Y. Singh?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
- iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.
 - a) The concept of modernity cannot be understood in isolation to tradition.
 - b) Talcott Parsons writes that “Modernisation follows an ‘evolutionary universal’” model.
 - c) D.P. Mukherjee, A.R. Desai and Ram Krishna Mukherjee emphasized the significance of a dialectical model in Indian Sociology.
 - d) Sanskritization characterized a change within the framework of Indian tradition.

3.5.1 Modernization and Continuity of Tradition

Modernization like social change is not only a composite concept but also an ideological concept. The models of modernization co-vary with the choice of ideologies. The composite nature of this concept renders it pervasive in the vocabulary of social sciences and evokes its kinship with concepts like ‘development’, ‘growth’, ‘evolution’ and ‘progress’. The basic problematic idea of modernization in the Third World nations is ideological, particularly when we examine the modernization ideology in India. Louis Dumont finds the relative

autonomy between dominant tradition and absolute values. In the pre-colonial era, the micro institutions of India like caste system, family, village, and community retained the traditional structures. However, modernization brought homogeneity in elite structures but the 'trickle down' effect is not visible because social base for recruitment of these elites were limited. After reforms, these bases widened and the elite culture got prominence in urban centres.

The concept of modernity cannot be understood in isolation to tradition. So, it is necessary to see how modern values are being assimilated into the traditional norms and develop a composite norm, which provides the continuity to the process of social change. So, the historicity of modernisation should be seen in Indian sense as Marriot calls it "Indianisation of modernity". Modernity and traditions are found together in one basket where traditional role structures are giving way to the modern norms and traditional norms are also keeping their own significance. For instance, in the cultural structure of India, the Islamic impact constitutes an important heterogenetic source of cultural transformation and synthesis and its significance can be seen at the levels of both the little and great traditions. This has been followed by westernization as a major form of exogenous cultural impact on India, and its ramifications also have relevance for the little and great traditions.

The changes in social structure could also be discussed more fruitfully when a distinction is made between the macro- structures and micro-structures. The instances of macro-structures are: bureaucracy, industry, market, leadership, political parties, etc. These consist of role relationships, which have a pan-Indian extension of boundaries. In contrast, the micro-structures, such as kinship, family, caste and sub-caste, tribe, etc., have limited boundaries for extension of role relationships and their obligations. The integrated approach, as offered by Singh through a schematic arrangement of concepts of change, has the advantage of being comprehensive as well as theoretically consistent.

In the book on "Essays on Modernization in India" (1977), Singh has analysed the varied and complex processes involved in modernization in India, the forces released by it and their bearing on the stability, creativity and development of India as a dynamic nation and composite civilization. Offering an integrated perspective, Singh portrays the challenges and contradictions that India encounters in the course of its modernization. Can modernization be treated as a universalistic process or does it have its own historicity? What are the essentially cognitive and cultural correlates of modernization? Can it be looked upon as a scientific and operational notion in social science and can its magnitude empirically be tested on a sub-structure of society? What are the processes involved in political, cultural, social and educational modernization in India? And, what new faces of social, political and cultural contradictions are released while these processes are on? And, how do these forces account for the future stability, sustained creativity and development of India as a dynamic nation and composite civilization?

In an important essay on ideology, theory and method in Indian Sociology, Yogendra Singh (1979), divides a period of a quarter century of Sociology in India from 1952 to 1977 into four heuristic categories:

- i) 1952 to 1960 – a period of adaptive changes and innovations;
- ii) 1960 to 1965 – a period of significant shifts in theoretic priorities and

beginning of some critical tensions in theory and ideology of Indian Sociology;

- iii) 1965 to 1970 – a period of marked sociological self-awareness and growth of new directions in theoretical and substantive contributions; and
- iv) 1970 to 1977 – a period of new maturity and new horizons of knowledge.

He attributes these four periods to four types of theoretic developments in Indian Sociology. These theoretic orientations are:

- a) Philosophical theoretical orientation
- b) Culturological orientation
- c) Structural theoretic orientation
- d) Dialectical-historical orientation

The philosophical orientation in Indian Sociology is associated with the contributions of Radhakamal Mukerjee, D.P. Mukerji and A.K. Saran. This orientation has not made a significant impact on the theoretical nature of Indian Sociology according to Singh (1983). It is interesting to note that despite the profoundness of scholarship of these scholars, the impact is minimal. The impact of western Sociology was becoming more and more enveloping and empirical bases of societal understanding looked simpler than the rigour of philosophy.

The culturological orientation begins with the work of Srinivas, Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India. Brahminization, Sanskritization and Westernization were major concepts derived from this study. Sanskritization characterized a change within the framework of Indian tradition.

The structural theoretic orientation focuses on power structure, social stratification, family structure, demography and similar aspects which reveal patterns, arrangements and repetitiveness. The empirical aspects are converted into abstracted concepts, models and categories. The structural studies have also taken up a comparative framework.

The dialectical-historical orientation is primarily based on Marxist approach and method for the analysis of social reality. The dialectical method has not been termed as Marxist as adaptations have been made keeping in view the Indian social reality. It is, however, a less developed branch of Indian Sociology. D.P. Mukherjee and Ram Krishna Mukherjee emphasized the significance of the dialectical model. A.R. Desai has consistently used dialectical-historical approach with ideological fervour and commitment. He has consistently exposed contradictions in policies and programmes of change. The dialectical-historical theoretic orientation grew rapidly in the seventies, when micro-empirical realities were subjected to class observation along with macro-structural social and economic processes in India (Singh, 1983).

Singh's typology of four major theoretic orientations is significant and logically coherent. According to Singh (1993), these theoretical orientations basically have implicit or explicit ideological connotation. The implications can be discerned at the level of analysis, which as a critique rejects the way social reality is managed or justifies the formation of social reality as it has come to be, manipulated and

constructed. At an other level, they imply need for alternatives, modifications and corrections. Knowledge-neutrality is a contradiction in terms. Evaluation and analysis of social reality reveals systematic formulation of scattered, diverse and immediate impressions, which are mediated through the common man's impressionistic perceptions and views. At the third level, dominance of theoretical orientations generated institutionally tends to lead to negation and blinding of our own intellectual traditions.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit has traversed through the very descriptive imaging of Indian society. First of all, the concepts like 'Ideology', 'Ideological Imaging' and 'Ideological Imaging of Indian society' were clarified. Ideological underpinnings behind the basic features of Indian ideology such as pluralism and Nationalism were discussed. India's pluralism is best understood in terms of its Unity in Diversity. Pan-Indianness objectively co-exists with the regional national consciousness. The next section suggests that Indian civilization is distinguished from other civilizations of the world in respect of its continuity and heterogeneity, its accommodating ethos and its composite character. The final section looks at the ideological components of social change, modernization and continuity of tradition in India. It says that tradition and modernity in India are not obstacles to each other but rather go together. The causal forces, substantive domain, contexts and direction of change provide us the logical boundaries within which the more specific processes of social change in India could be observed and described.

3.7 REFERENCES

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3.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark T for true or F for false against each statement.

- a) F.
 - b) T.
 - c) T
 - d) F.
- ii) What are three phases of Indian History described in the Book entitled “The Indian Ideology”?

Three phases are

- a) the struggle for independence led by Gandhi,
- b) the 1947 partition and the making of the Indian republic under Nehru’s leadership
- c) the Indian nationalism.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) List out any three prominent criteria that distinguish Indian civilization from other civilizations of the world.
- a) its continuity and heterogeneity,
 - b) its accommodating ethos
 - c) composite character
- ii) Name any three aspects that are to be included in a study in order to best understand the concept of Civilization.
- a) cataloguing (listing of cultural traits);
 - b) cultural essence (to identify the essential underlying process); and
 - c) cultural communication (enduring elements that are transmitted among the parts of the society).

Check Your Progress 3

- i) What is meant by ‘traditionalization’ and ‘modernization’ in the words of Y Singh? Use one sentence for your answer.
- a) Traditionalization comprises the total range of changes governed by orthogenetic patterns in the cultural and social structures.
 - b) Modernization similarly represents the net balance of changes following from heterogenetic contacts.
- ii) Name the four types of theoretic developments in Indian sociology as discussed by Y Singh?
- a) Philosophical theoretical orientation
 - b) Culturological orientation
 - c) Structural theoretic orientation
 - d) Dialectical-historical orientation
- iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.

- a) T.
- b) T.
- c) T
- d) T

FURTHER READING

Majumdar R. C 1951 The History and Culture of the Indian People (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,), vol. 1, p. 42.

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GLOSSARY

Caste: An ascriptive grouping which is community based.

Great Tradition: Cultural trait or tradition, which is written and widely accepted by the elite of the society who are educated and learned.

Little Tradition: Cultural trait or tradition, which is oral and operates at the village level.

Sanskritisation: M.N. Srinivas used this concept for the first time to refer to a process of social change whereby a low Hindu caste or tribe adopts the customs ritual, ideology and life style of the higher caste with a view to improve its own caste status.

UNIT 4 ETHNOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF INDIA*

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Ethnographic Image
- 4.3 Ethnographic Image of India
- 4.4 Unity in Diversity
- 4.5 Village
- 4.6 Caste
- 4.7 Tribes
- 4.8 Religion
- 4.9 Little and Great Traditions
- 4.10 Let us Sum up
- 4.11 References
- 4.12 Specimen Answers to Check your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:-

- define the idea of image and the concept of ethnographic image
- discuss the nature of ethnographic image of Indian society
- give a description of the parameters of ethnographic image of Indian society
- outline the portrayal of unity in diversity, village India, caste, tribes and religion
- identify the features of 'Little and Great Traditions' in India.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The idea of image here does not necessarily relate to something visual, a photograph, a film captured by a camera, telescope, microscope, or other device, or displayed on a computer or video screen or a geometric sketch or a map. Another form of data collection is that of the "image." The image is the protuberance that an individual puts onto an item or mental construct. An image can be constructed about the physical world through a particular individual's perspective, primarily based on that individual's past or observed experiences. As for example an individual may form an image of a novel after completing reading it. Similarly, one can be in a position to tell you from the field the difference between the ways the birth of a girl child is viewed in a family in Mizoram (welcome) and that in Madhya Pradesh (a burden). The idea of the image is a primary tool for ethnographers to collect data which presents a holistic cultural portrait of the field and subjects that incorporates the views of the

participants (emic) as well as the views of the researcher (etic). It might also consolidate the needs of the group and advance need-based actionable changes in the society studied.

After delineating the idea of image as a mental construct or a descriptive category, the first unit, this unit deals with the concept of ethnographic image as such and ethnographic image of Indian society. While listing out the parameters of ethnographic image of Indian society, the next section relates to the basic portrayal of India's unity in diversity, village India, caste, tribes and religion. The last section of this unit discussed the features of little and great traditions in India society.

4.2 ETHNOGRAPHIC IMAGE

'Ethnographic image' refers to a methodological framework which is a detailed portrayal of the features of population, culture, communities, their ethnogenesis and habitat. Ethnography is the process of documenting the culture of a group from the subject's own perspectives. Ethnography, as the presentation of empirical data on human societies and cultures, is interdisciplinary in character absorbing within its fold the social, and cultural branches of Anthropology, Culture Studies, Sociology, Communication Studies, Social Work, Education, Folkloristics, Religious Studies, Geography, Criminology, History and Museology.

Ethnographic image is a symbolic expression or authentic impression that a person, a community or culture, organization, or product presents to the public about its glorious characteristics. The idea of an image relies on the imagination which is used and utilized to reflect on the patterns of the groups ideas and beliefs expressed through language or other activities, and how they behave in their groups as expressed through their actions that the researcher observed. The image presents the perspective, experiences, and influences of an individual as a single entity and in consequence the individual may represent this image in the group under study. Data analysis involves interpretation of the functions and meanings of human actions. There are two popular forms of ethnography such as realist ethnography and critical ethnography, which have been brought into academic discourse in an attempt to reform the contemporary understanding of society, culture, history, traditions and ethnic diversities.

Ethnographic research can range from a realist perspective, in which behavior is observed, to a constructivist perspective where understanding is socially constructed by the researcher and subjects. Research can range from an objectivist account of fixed, observable behaviors to an interpretivist narrative describing "the interplay of individual agency and social structure" (Schatz,2009:117). Critical theory researchers address "issues of power within the researcher-researched relationships and the links between knowledge and power."

4.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC IMAGE OF INDIA

The early account of ethnographic image of India is found in 'The People of India' project instituted by British India to study the society, culture, caste, tribe and Indian folklore. Two able British East India Company officers trained in Anthropology, John Forbes Watson and John William Kaye compiled an eight-volume study entitled *The People of India between 1868 and 1875*, containing

468 annotated photographs of the native castes and tribes of India. The origin of the project is traced to the desire of Lord Canning, the then Governor-General of India, who conceived of the collection of images for the private edification of himself and his wife (Metcalf, 1997:117).

The very purpose of this project was to develop a fuller understanding of the customs and beliefs of the people whom they were to administer with strategic control. Hence it was a visual documentation of “typical” physical attributes, dress and other aspects of native life with brief notes regarding what were thought to be the “essential characteristics” of each community.

In 1908 Herbert Risley, the Census Commissioner for the 1901 Census of India, furthered the same project and came out with another volume ‘The People of India’ containing 25 illustrations on Races, Caste and Tribes in India.

Many member of the Indian intelligentsia were unimpressed with the general undertone and the outcome that their people had been depicted both unfairly and dispassionately. The last such type of work by British ethnographers cum administrators, was J. H. Hutton’s *Caste in India*, published in 1944.

The contributions of different national traditions either American, Indian, French, or British anthropologists along with the internal diversity of national traditions have led to multidirectional influences on ethnographic image of India. Both western and Indian ethnographic image of India had following areas of emphasis in common:

- a) Unity in Diversity
- b) Village India
- c) Caste
- d) Tribes
- e) Religion
- f) Little and Great Traditions

4.4 UNITY IN DIVERSITY

India’s unity in diversity has been variously portrayed. Kashmir to Kanyakumari, India is one. Indian society exemplifies the best case of unity in diversity.

India is a vibrant amalgamation of varied cultural practices, races, ethnic groups, climate, religions, regions and traditions. Ancient Indian culture stood for an infinite variety of symbols and rituals. The fine arts were valued in ancient India. It is said that India is the cradle of the human race, the birth place of human speech, the mother of history and the great grandmother of tradition. Indian culture believes in the principle of humanity, tolerance, unity, universal brotherhood, secularism and close-knit social system. Indians have maintained their modesty and simplicity despite the aggressiveness of the Muslim conquerors and the reforming zeal of the British, the Portuguese and the Dutch. The Indians are distinguished for their humanness and serene nature without any severity in their principles and ideals. In spite of several diversities based on caste, regions, race, languages, religious and colour diversities, Indian society has maintained its unity.

4.5 VILLAGE INDIA

A book entitled *Village India* by McKim Marriott —like its twin *India's Villages* by Srinivas (both published in 1955)—presented the first results of their ethnographic endeavour. Marriott's study situated Indian “civilization” from a grass-roots empirical perspective. Srinivas's contribution in *Village India* is a classic example of an account of “social structure.” He perceives Rampura, the pseudonym for his village of study, as “a well-defined structural entity”. He investigated how local castes are, on the one hand, separated by rules of commensality and, on the other hand, interdependent through occupational specialization and patron-client relationships. The dominant caste fulfils, in his view, a unifying function for the village as a whole.

Ethnographic imaging of village India exhibits contested dimensions as well. Kathleen Gough did not see “India's” village as a “well-defined structural entity.” She observed the severe social consequences of drastic economic changes: decreasing coherence at the village level and increasing rivalry between castes, especially the contestation of Brahmanical dominance in Kumbapettai, a village in the Tanjore District of Tamil Nadu. Similarly, André Béteille, Gerald D. Berreman, Joan Mencher, and Frederick G. Bailey, were being mainly concerned with questions of power and dominance in Village India.

Mandelbaum (1972) writes, “A village is not a neatly separable social and conceptual package but it is nonetheless fundamental social unit.” The French sociologist Louis Dumont refers to three meanings of the term ‘village community’ as a political society, as a body of co-owners of the soil and as the emblem of traditional economy and polity, a watchword of Indian patriotism. Thus, according to this view the village community in India has been a part of India's polity and economy. A village is far more than a locale, more than just a collection of houses, lanes and fields.

Activity 1

Prepare a Social Map of your village or locality you belong to, indicating the infrastructure facility and the basic services available in the area. Give also a brief ethnographic account regarding the type change the locality has experienced during last 10 years. Share the same among your classmates.

In the early nineteenth century, British administrators described Indian villages as ‘little republics’. They opined that Indian villages have a simple form of government and are economically self-sufficient units. Villages of India have to give a share of produce to the king and need to send their young men to serve in the wars. Other than these two restrictions, Indian villages have no interference on the higher levels of political authority and they are unconcerned about who are ruling them, according to British administrators. The standard quotation, often reprinted, on the Indian village as a monolithic, atomistic, unchanging entity is from a report by Sir Charles Metcalfe, one of the founding administrators of British rule in India. The passage begins, “The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations.” It goes on to say that wars pass over it, regimes come and go, but the village as a society always emerges unchanged, unshaken, and self-sufficient.

Check Your Progress 1

- i) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark T for true or F for false against each statement.
 - a) The image is the protuberance that an individual puts onto an item or mental construct.
 - b) The views of the researcher on ethnographic data are called emic views.
 - c) Both western and Indian ethnographic image of India had Unity in Diversity as an area of emphasis in common.
 - d) 1955 is a landmark in the history of village studies in India.
- ii) What are the three meanings that Louis Dumont associates with the term village community?
Three meanings are
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

4.6 CASTE

Indian society comprises the different social systems and sub-systems such as family, jati, and village, and the different role actors have in these systems, the latter being understood in behavioural terms, as interactions between different individuals and groups. Several ethnographers concentrated on caste because they believed that understanding caste was to understand people and hence to understand India. Caste, locally called '*jati*' is the backbone of the Indian social system. Caste ranking is perceived as an extreme form of "stratification," and "pervasive inequality" is indicated as a key feature of the caste system as has been viewed by David G Mandelbaum. For Louis Dumont, by contrast, caste is not an observable reality in the first place but a "state of mind". This means that caste cannot be explained merely as a particular form of social structure or a particular type of social behaviour but primarily in terms of ideas and values.

There are thousands of such *jatis*, and each has its distinctive rules, customs, and modes of government. The term Varna (literally meaning "color") refers to the ancient and somewhat ideal fourfold division of Hindu society: (1) the Brahmans, the priestly and learned class; (2) the Kshatriyas, the warriors and rulers; (3) the Vaisyas, the farmers and merchants; and (4) the Sudras, the peasants and laborers. Below the category of Sudras were the untouchables, or *Panchamas* (literally "fifth division"), who performed the most menial tasks.

Marriott (1955) sees intercaste transactions in Kishan Garhi village "as a kind of tournament among 24 teams [castes] which make up this village society". The actors' goal in this tournament is to gain "dominance over others through feeding them or securing dependence on others by being fed by them".

M N. Srinivas (1955) has also debated the question of rigidity in caste. In an ethnographic study of the *Coorgs* of South India, he observed considerable flexibility and mobility in their caste hierarchies. He asserts that the caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed

for all time; instead, movement has always been possible, especially in the middle regions of the hierarchy. It was always possible for groups born into a lower caste to “rise to a higher position by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism” i.e. adopt the customs of the higher castes. The concept of Sanskritisation or the adoption of upper-caste norms by the lower castes, addressed the complexity and fluidity of caste relations.

Max Muller, (1860) a German Indologist, writes, “the whole caste system, as it has come down to us, bears unmistakable evidence of Brahminical origin”. Muller reveals that the Brahmans have been the strongest advocates of the caste system. They have created the vast divisions in Hindu society. They cruelly punished those who questioned the caste system and their supremacy. The principle of exclusion and inclusion or seclusion or rejection based on birth and endogamy resulted in diversification of caste groups, occupational roles and rituals.

S.V. Ketkar (1979) believes hereditary membership and endogamy as the basis of caste as an organic structure of relations. Here the organic nature of caste refers to harmony of relations between different caste groups. Emile Senart writes: A caste system is one whereby a society is divided into a number of self-contained and completed segregated units (castes), the mutual relations between them are ritually determined in a graded scale.

K.L.Sharma (1980) views that caste has never been a static system. The prevalence of thousands of castes and sub-castes and many more clans and sub-clans within these castes is a proof of diversification, differentiation and change in the caste system. Inter caste and mixed marriages, migration, change in occupations, the Buddhist movement, the impact of Islam, the impact of British and several other factors have made caste not only an adaptive but also a living symbol of social relations.

4.7 TRIBES

India can proudly be called the largest “tribal” population in the world. Most of the tribal people of India live in hilly or forested remote and isolated landscape where population is very thin and communication difficult. They are found from high valleys near the spine of Himalayas to southernmost India. The main tribal territories are in the broad central belt of hilly country from West Bengal, Orissa, and Bihar on the east, through central India, to the upland parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra on the west. Although there are great social and cultural differences among the tribal people dispersed across India, the main occupations of the tribes are (1) shifting cultivation; (2) forestry and food gathering by hunting; (3) settled agriculture; (4) agricultural labour; animal husbandry; and (6) household industry

D.G.Mandelbaum (1972) points out the following characteristics of Indian tribes: (1) kinship as an instrument of social bonds; (2) lack of hierarchy (rigid status distinction) among men and groups (clans and lineage); (3) absence of strong and formal organizations; (4) communitarian basis of land holding; (5) segmentary character; (6) little value on surplus accumulation, on the use of capital and on market trading; (7) lack of distinction between form and substance of religion; and (8) a distinct psychological make-up for enjoying life.

The tribal people are bound by a sense of strong identity. Language, kinship,

magical rites and practices, pattern of habitation, food habits, and styles of life are the special features of tribal life. Kinship in tribal community governs the major social, economic and political life of their people. In tribal life the principal links for the whole society are based on kinship. Individual equality as kinsmen is assumed, dependency and sub-ordination among men are minimized. Agnatic bonds form the fundamental web, affinal ties are of lesser significance. Tribal societies are small in size. They possess a morality, religion, and world view of their own, corresponding to their social relations.

B.K.Roy Burman (1972) divides tribal communities into five territorial groupings, taking into account their historical, ethnic and socio-cultural relations. These are as follows (1) North-East India, comprising Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura;(2)the sub- Himalayan region of north and north-west India, comprising hill districts of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh;(3) Central and East India, comprising West Bengal, Bihar(now Jharkhand),Orissa, Madhya Pradesh(now Chhattisgarh) and Andhra Pradesh;(4) South India comprising Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka; and (5) Western India, comprising Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The Scheduled Tribes (article 342 of Constitution of India) in India, also referred to as *adivasis* (original inhabitants), are spread across the central, northeast, and southern regions of India. These various tribes resided in India long before the Aryans had arrived roughly in 1500 B.C. The tribals were however socially and geographically isolated, following the entry of the Aryans and then consequently the Muslims and the British. More than six hundred and fifty tribes that make up the Scheduled Tribes speak a multitude of languages. They are also religiously diverse, with some following animism, while others have adopted Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity. The social traditions of most tribals make them stand out from the country's mainstream Hindu population.

Along with being geographically and socially isolated, the tribal groups have historically been politically under-represented. Their regions of residence also have been economically underdeveloped. Scheduled tribe status under the Indian Constitution has designated reserved seats for tribals in political forums, such as the parliament, along with job reservations in the civil service and educational institutions. Some of the noted scheduled tribes in India comprise: Andamanese, Bodo, Bhils, Chakma, Dhodia Tribes of Gujarat, Gonds, Khasis, aboriginal people of Lakshadweep, Kurichiya, Kurumbar, Tripuris, Mizos, Mundaris, Nagas, Nicobarese, Oraon, Santals, Todas, Maldharis of Gujarat, Cholanaikkan, Warli, Kisan Tribe, Dongria Kondh, Bonda, Kutia Kondh, and Bishapur .

Check Your Progress 2

- i) How do Mandelbaum and Dumont differ with regard to their views on caste in India?

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ii) Name any three any three main occupations of tribes in India.

- a)
- b)
- c)

4.8 RELIGION

Religious diversity has been a defining characteristic of India's population for centuries. The country has no official state religion, but religion plays a central role in Indian daily life. Thus, India's unity in diversity is also visible in the sphere of religion. The major religions of India are Hinduism (majority religion), Islam (largest minority religion), Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and the Bahá'í Faith. India is a land where people of different religions and cultures live in harmony. This harmony is seen in the celebration of festivals. The message of love and brotherhood is expressed by all the religions and cultures of India.

Whether it's the gathering of the faithful, bowing in prayer in the courtyard of a mosque, or the gathering of lamps that light up houses at Diwali, the good cheer of Christmas or the brotherhood of Baisakhi, the religions of India are celebrations of shared emotions that bring people together. People from the different religions and cultures of India, unite in a common chord of brotherhood and amity in this fascinating and diverse land.

At the ethnographic level, some scholars try to see interconnections between religion and power. Religious status as expressed in the opposition of pure/impure is for Dumont the key value of Indian society, and it is represented by the Brahman priest in the Varna model. Within the ideology, this value does not merely stand in opposition to its antithesis—power, represented by the kshatriya varna or the king—rather it encompasses the latter. Religion, the pure, and the Brahman thus represent society as a whole. While, according to Dumont, on the ideological level the religious is thus always superior to power, on the empirical level the reverse may be the case: the king being—in terms of power— superior to the materially dependent Brahman priest. The superior encompassing value of purity and the clear distinction between religious status (Brahman) and power (the king) are the main conclusions Dumont draws from his analysis of the varna model.

Ranjit Guha (1987) emphasizes the role of religion for understanding subaltern agency. For Guha, “religiosity was, by all accounts, central to the Santal rebellion of 1855. The notion of power which inspired it, was made up of such ideas and expressed in such words and acts as were explicitly religious in character. It was not that power was a content wrapped up in a form external to it called religion. It is not possible to speak of insurgency in this case except as a religious consciousness”.

Religion is taken seriously in Indian society to form communities or social groups. Followers of India's religions have created “communities,” or groups who largely coexist peacefully but live and worship in separate social circles. Accordingly, when violence does break out between groups, it is referred to as “communal” violence. The concept of communalism is discussed in a later unit.

4.9 LITTLE AND GREAT TRADITIONS

Milton Singer and Robert Redfield (1955) developed the twin concept of Little Tradition and Great Tradition while studying the orthogenesis of Indian civilization in Madras city, now known as Chennai. Tradition means handing down of information, beliefs and customs by word of mouth by way of examples from one generation to another. In other words, tradition is the inherited practices or opinion and conventions associated with a social group for a particular period. This also includes the attitudes of the people, durable interactional patterns and socio-cultural institutions. Great tradition is associated with the elites, literate and reflective few who are capable of analysing, interpreting and reflecting cultural knowledge. Great tradition is a body of knowledge which functions as the beacon light of knowledge. In contradiction to this little tradition comprises the belief pattern, the institutions, knowledge including proverbs, riddles, anecdotes, folk tales, legends, myths and the whole body of folk-lore of the folk and /or the unlettered peasants who imbibe cultural knowledge from the great tradition. The unity of Indian civilization is reflected in the perpetuation of the unity of worldview of both the folk /peasant and the elites or the literati through cultural performance and their cultural products. Cultural performance is institutionalized around the structure of both great traditions and little traditions.

There are several centres of the great tradition in India and there is a network of socio-cultural relationship. This relationship is based on cultural knowledge and ideology. There is a difference in cultural performances of great tradition and little traditions. The domain of great tradition represents the textual or the *Shastriya* nuances, whereas the universes of little traditions are folk/peasant and local versions of textual knowledge and cultural performance. Great tradition stands for persisting important arrangements of various roles and statuses appearing in such corporate bodies, like caste, sects, teachers, reciters, ritual leaders, priests, cultural performers, religious preachers etc. all of whom are engaged in inculcation and regular dissemination of cultural knowledge. The body of knowledge which they include is from various religious texts, such as mythology and epics.

The little tradition of its own role incumbents: folk artists, folk musicians, storytellers, tellers of riddles, street singers, mendicant performers, interpreters of proverbs and puzzles, street dancers, astrologers, fortune-tellers and medicine men. In a village, the primary school teacher is a key person as regards little tradition knowledge. He himself performs multiple cultural roles and with the help of village leaders organises various folk performances, mythological plays, dramas, recitation of sacred language, saying of prayers accompanied by folk music which serve two purposes: (1) singing of devotional songs and (2) providing entertainment. The former activity is a sacred duty and the latter act is a secular one, meant for relieving stress and strain to which the peasants are sometimes subjected to.

The two traditions are not distinguishable in very isolated tribes. Among the Andaman Islanders we find nothing at all about any esoteric aspect of religion or thought. An older person may be likely to know what there is to be known as any other. There are differences between laymen and specialists in the understanding of the religion. In a primitive tribe this sort of dichotomy is similar to the difference between the great tradition and little tradition in respect of civilisation and peasant

society, respectively. The folk or tribal society constitutes a proto-dimension of peasant society.

Marriott stressed that in the North Indian context, the great Sanskrit tradition could be viewed as an 'indigenous civilization'; a body of cultural forms elaborated in an orthogenetic fashion from a regional pool of ideas. Great tradition Hinduism thus constituted a primary civilization by contrast with other great traditions such as Spanish Catholicism in Latin America which were foreign impositions rather than the orthogenetic outgrowth of indigenous culture. Such heterogenetic great traditions did nonetheless amalgamate, or syncretize, with indigenous traditions to form 'secondary civilizations'.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) What is meant by 'little tradition' and 'great tradition'? Use one sentence for your answer.
 - a) Great tradition is associated with
 - b) Little tradition comprises
- ii) How is the unity of Indian civilization best reflected?

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- iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.
 - a) The folk or tribal society constitutes a proto-dimension of peasant society.
 - b) The primary school teacher organising mythological plays is his performing sacred duty not secular one.
 - c) Among the Andaman Islanders we find nothing at all about any esoteric aspect of religion or thought.
 - d) India has no official state religion.

4.10 LET US SUM UP

First of all, in this unit, the idea of image was defined as a mental construct or a descriptive category followed by clarification of concepts like ethnographic image and most specifically the ethnographic image of Indian society. The parameters of ethnographic image of Indian society such as India's Unity in Diversity, Village India, Caste, Tribes and Religion were discussed next. Before summing up, the penultimate section identified the features of Little and Great Traditions in India.

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4.12 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark T for true or F for false against each statement.
- a) T.
 - b) F.
 - c) T
 - d) T
- ii) What are the three meanings that Louis Dumont associates with the term village community?
- Three meanings are
- a) as a political society,
 - b) as a body of co-owners of the soil and as the emblem of traditional economy and polity.
 - c) a watchword of Indian patriotism.

Check Your Progress 2

- ii) How do Mandelbaum and Dumont differ with regard to their views on Caste in India?
- Caste ranking is perceived by David G Mandelbaum as an extreme form of "stratification," and "pervasive inequality" which is a key feature of the caste system. Louis Dumont, by contrast says, caste is not an observable reality in the first place but a "state of mind".
- ii) Name any three main occupations of Tribes in India.
- a) shifting cultivation;
 - b) forestry and food gathering by hunting; and
 - c) agricultural labour and animal husbandry.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) What is meant by 'little tradition' and 'great tradition'? Use one sentence for your answer.
- a) Great tradition is associated with the elites, literate and reflective few who are capable of analysing, interpreting and reflecting cultural knowledge.
 - b) Little tradition comprises the belief pattern, the institutions, knowledge including proverbs, riddles, anecdotes, folk tales, legends, myths and

the whole body of folk-lore of the folk and /or the unlettered peasants who imbibe cultural knowledge from the great tradition.

ii) How is the Unity of Indian civilization best reflected?

The unity of Indian civilization is reflected in the perpetuation of the unity of worldview of both the folk /peasant and the elites or the literati through cultural performance and their cultural products. Cultural performance is institutionalized around the structure of both great tradition and little traditions.

iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.

- a) T.
- b) F.
- c) T
- d) T

Further Reading

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GLOSSARY

Varna: The Varna distributes social groups into four categories, all over India. It is a model of social and ritual hierarchy of caste groups. These are four Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The Varna provides a cultural idiom to the caste system.

Caste: An ascriptive grouping which is community based.

Great Tradition: Cultural trait or tradition, which is written and widely accepted by the elite of the society who are educated and learned.

Little Tradition: Cultural trait or tradition, which is oral and operates at the village level.

Sanskritisation: M.N. Srinivas used this concept for the first time to refer to a process of social change whereby a low Hindu caste or tribe adopts the customs ritual, ideology and life style of the higher caste with a view to improve its own caste status.

UNIT 5 CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS*

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Indian Constitution: Its Making
- 5.3 Indian Constitution: Basic Features
 - 5.3.1 Main Ideals
 - 5.3.2 Fundamental Rights and Duties
 - 5.3.3 Directive Principles of State Policy
 - 5.3.4 Federalism, Adult Franchise, Judiciary, Policy of Positive Discrimination
- 5.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.5 References
- 5.6 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you would be able to:

- examine India as a constitutional democracy,
- narrate the history of making of the Constitution;
- explain various aspects of the Constitution adopted by Independent India like socialism, secularism;
- describe concepts like Fundamental Rights and Duties, Directives of State Policy, Universal adult suffrage, etc.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

When we talk about India as a modern nation-state it is imperative to understand the Constitution which provides the basic framework for the legislature, executive and judiciary to function everyday without any obstruction. Indian Constitution is an extremely detailed document which has laid the foundation for the modern Indian state to function and prosper. After attaining its freedom from the British, India needed a modern outlook also keeping its tradition in mind. The long struggle of freedom for Indian sovereignty had made Constitution makers aware of the importance of liberty or freedom for the Indians. Equality was a basic principle followed in spirit and in essence in all the Articles (positive discrimination borrowed from American model for Reservation for certain sections to bring the marginalized at par with the rest of the population) and fraternity for all Indians.

5.2 INDIAN CONSTITUTION: IT'S MAKING

On 26th January 1950, the lengthiest written Constitution in the world, the Indian Constitution came into force. The Constitution provides a foundation and framework for governance and assigns roles to the institutions of the legislature,

*Contributed by Uzma Azhar

executive and judiciary. It is also a document which promises social and economic justice.

In the Preamble, the Constitution proclaims India as a sovereign, socialist, democratic republic ensuring for all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. All the laws have to conform in accordance with the statutes of the Constitution, any provision of law or regulation which is inconsistent with it is null and void.

The constitution is an essential document which describes the basic functions of good or constructive governance; ensures the protection of the rights and interests of its citizens and directs government to work for their welfare in all spheres of life. It also indicates how citizens should conduct themselves and be responsible to the government.

Preamble

Preamble of the constitution is the part which defines the ideals and idea of the people of India. It lays down the social philosophy of our nation-state and governance based on this philosophy. The Preamble to our constitution reads as follows:

“We, The People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens; Justice, social economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity and to promote them among all; Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation; In our constituent Assembly this 26th day of November, 1949 Do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves the constitution.”

Now let us look at how the constitution came into effect, the process of its making. It becomes significant to see the Government of India Act 1935 because it formed part of the basic documents that were consulted by the experts involved in making the constitution of India.

The Government of India Act, 1935 is a landmark act which further advanced the movement towards self-rule leading to the independence of India. This Act for the first time by the colonial administration aimed at establishing the federal system of Government of India, the most complicated document ever enacted by the British Parliament running into 451 clauses and 15 Schedules. The major features were: (a) All India Federation; (b) Provincial Autonomy; (c) Dyarchy at the Centre; and (d) Federal Court.

The framers of the Constitution perceived unity, social revolution, and democracy as the three interdependent goals which had to be sought together and could not be pursued or achieved disjointedly, which Granville Austin refers to as the three strands of a seamless web (Austin, 2001, pp. ix-x). Three important documents of the pre-independence period provided the framework for the Constitution apart from the Government of India Act of 1935, these were :

i) The Nehru Report (1928)

The Nehru Report was produced by a sub-committee headed by Motilal Nehru. The colonial government doubted the capabilities of the Indian

leaders, that they would not be able to produce such a document. However this document produced by the sub-committee constituted for this purpose. It as was further approved by the All Party Conference in August, 1928 held at Lucknow (Austin, 2001, p. 55). A Declaration of Rights mainly, it declared that the chief aims of the Constitution would be to secure for Indians fundamental rights and provide certain safeguards to minorities. The independence perceived at this time was of a dominion, which would function under the authority of the British, and not total independence.

ii) The Karachi Resolution (1931)

The drafting of the Karachi Resolution has been credited to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In March 1931, the Congress Convention held at Karachi adopted the resolution on economic and social changes and Fundamental Rights. It was a declaration of rights and a humanitarian, socialist manifesto. The document's provisions did in fact become the spiritual and, in some cases, the direct antecedents of the Directive Principles (Austin 2001: x).

iii) The Sapru Report (1945)

The Sapru Report published in 1945, vitiated by communal tensions and conflicts around this time, concerned itself mainly with the problems of minority fears which were overshadowing the political scene. By this time, it had become clear that India would achieve its independence in the near future and the minorities had to be reassured about their security. The Sapru Report declared that Fundamental Rights within the new Constitution would have to include certain safeguards for minorities. The report stated:

‘That what the constitution demands and expects is perfect equality between one section of the community and another in the matter of political and civic rights, equality of liberty and security in the enjoyment of the freedom of religious worship and the pursuit of the ordinary applications of life’ (Sapru, 1945, p. 260).

Through the Independence Act of 1947, India attained independence on August 15, 1947 and the British colonial rule in India came to an end. The same Act had also conferred power on the Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution for India. This Act was the result of a prolonged struggle for political freedom and the constitution of the Constituent Assembly as the precise mechanism and authority to draft the Constitution for India was the precise course to follow for the new nation–state for its political sovereignty.

Although the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly took place on 9th December, 1946 the provision for its constitution through the Cabinet Mission had already been made. Initially it had 207 members including 15 women. It was reckoned by the Constitution Drafting Committee that the inclusion of traditionally marginalised sections is to be of prime importance in order to ensure that their concerns were reflected in the Constitution. The Committee consisted of several national leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and others as members with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as its Chairman. However, the Constituent Assembly was not very active before the Indian Independence Act of 1947 and it became more active and did majority of its work only

after passing of the Act. Once a federal constitution was decided upon, the major models were selected for study. The models fell mostly into two categories; the Constitution of the United States on the one hand, and the Constitution Acts passed by the British Parliament establishing federal constitutions for Canada, Australia and India, all of which had drawn mostly on the American experience.

Various committees were constituted by the Constituent Assembly to deal with different aspects of the constitution. The Reports of these committees were considered by the Constituent Assembly and it appointed a Drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, whose efforts had finally culminated in adoption of the so drafted Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949 and came into force on 26th January 1950.

Source : Unit 5 The Constitution of India and MWG-010-B2E.p65

Check Your Progress I

- 1) What were the major features of Government of India Act of 1935?

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- 2) Name three important documents from pre-Independence era which helped in creating the framework for the constitution.

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5.3. INDIAN CONSTITUTION: BASIC FEATURES

On 2nd November, 1949, the Indian Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly. It is the lengthiest Constitution which originally had 395 Articles, divided into 22 parts and 9 schedules. For many developing countries it has been a model to follow for reference.

5.3.1 Main ideals

- a) **Sovereignty**

The Constitution in its introduction declares that the people of India have adopted and enacted the Constitution and they are the ones who are the custodians of the republic. Indian citizens are the real force in whom power is vested and Indian state is free from any foreign domination.

b) Socialist and Secular

In 1976, through the 42nd amendment of the Constitution, in the Preamble of the Constitution the terms 'Socialist and Secular' the terms were incorporated. Socialist in traditional sense meant that the means of production would be owned by the state and state would make every effort for equal distribution of wealth. Socialism in the Indian context meant Indian state would ensure minimum standard of living for all and a reduced gap between the rich and the poor.

Although, the term 'Secular' aims at the separation of religion from the State, but in the Indian context the state respects all religions and even facilitates festive rituals on various religious occasions for different religions, for example, Kumbh mela, Haj preparations, etc. Indian secularism does not mean irreligiousness, it means respect for all faiths and religions. Since, India is a multi-religious and multi-lingual country with vast differences, the country declared itself as a secular nation on the eve of independence to give equal opportunity to its citizens to practice their religion without any hesitation or fear. Secular state may be characterised as:

- i) state having no religion of its own;
- ii) state not giving a preferential treatment to the followers of any faith;
- iii) state not practising any discrimination against any person on account of his/her faith;
- iv) state providing equal opportunity of employment in government establishments to people of all faiths.

c) Parliamentary Form of Government

A parliamentary form of government has been established both at the Centre and the State by the Constitution of India. It means that the Prime Minister and his Council of Ministers are responsible for all their actions to the government, particularly to the Lok Sabha or Lower House of Parliament. When they lose their confidence with the people (majority in the House/Parliament) they should resign. In case they refuse to resign, the opposition parties will move a no-confidence motion and remove the government from power.

5.3.2 Fundamental Rights and Duties

Part III of the Constitution guarantees the Fundamental Rights to all its citizens, borrowed mainly from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 and Bill of Rights enshrined in the American constitution. The Fundamental Rights ensure political and civil rights, as the concept of Fundamental Rights was introduced to create a society which was egalitarian. From any form of coercions or restrictions by the State or by the society, all its citizens would be free equally. Liberty would no longer be the privilege of the few. One can approach the Supreme Court directly in case of violation of Fundamental Rights. They are:

a) *Right to Equality (Articles. 14-18)*

According to Article 14, the State will treat all its citizens with 'equality before law' and 'equal protection of laws' within the territory of India. It is

influenced by American and British constitutions, and means that all citizens will be given equal treatment in similar circumstances. Article 15 says that the State shall not discriminate against a citizen on grounds of caste, religion, race, sex or place of birth or any of them, but permits the state to make special provisions in certain circumstances.

Article 15-Clause (1) says, the State is prohibited to discriminate between citizens on grounds of religion, race, caste, place of birth or any of them

Article 15-Clause (2) says, discrimination by the State and the citizens with regard to access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment or the use of wells, tanks bathing ghats, roads and places of public resorts maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of general public is prohibited. Identifying the need for special protection, it offers special protection for women and children [Art 15 (3)] and provides reservation for socially and educationally backward classes of the citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes through Article 15 Clause (4).

Article 16 talks about the Right to equality of opportunity in public employment which explains that no citizen shall be discriminated against or be ineligible for any employment or office under the State on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, descent or residence. Additional grounds of 'descent and residence' not included in Article. 15 were added in Art.16. Also, Art.16-(4) provides reservation for appointments or posts in favour of any Backward Classes of citizens who, in the opinion of the State, are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

Article 17 declares abolition of Untouchability and forbids its practice in any form. In 1995, Untouchability Offences Act was enacted by the Parliament recently renamed as Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1995. Additionally to strengthen it, the government also enacted Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act in 1989 and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 'Prevention of Atrocities rules' in 1995.

b) *Right to Freedom (Articles. 19-22)*

Under Articles 19-23, Freedom as a fundamental right has been explained. All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, peaceful assembly without arms, unionization or forming association, free movement and freedom to settle anywhere within the country.

The grounds of restrictions for freedom of speech and expression are:

- i) security of the State
- ii) friendly relation with foreign States,
- iii) public order,
- iv) decency and morality,
- iv) contempt of Court,
- v) defamation,
- vi) incitement of an offence, and
- vii) sovereignty and integrity of India.

c) *Right against Exploitations (Articles 23-24)*

The Article 23 prohibits forced labour, trafficking in human beings (children and women for sex), begging, slavery, etc. Through Article 24, the Constitution prohibits employment of children below 14 years of age in factories and hazardous employment. To prohibit children from working, government has enacted several laws like Employment of Children Act, 1938, Children (pledging of labour) Act, 1933, the Mines Act, 1952 and Child Worker Regulation Act, 1986.

d) *Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25-28)*

Although the term 'religion' is not defined in the Constitution, it states secularism as one of its aims in the Preamble. The Constitution guarantees a) freedom of conscience, b) freedom to profess, practise and propagate any religion. Restrictions to this freedom are religious liberties subject to public order, morality and health (Article 25). Religious groups and other sections have the following rights to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes:

- a) to manage their own affairs in the matters of religion,
- b) to own and acquire movable and immovable properties,
- c) to administer such properties in accordance with the law.

In State aided institutions there is prohibition of religious instruction. To maintain the secular character, Article 27 provides 'no one shall be compelled to pay any tax for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination'. This is to ensure that the secular character of the State remains non-partisan.

e) *Cultural and Educational Rights (Articles 29-30)*

Under Article 29 the State has been entrusted the responsibility for the protection of interests of minorities. Constitution also confers minorities right to establish and administer educational institutions and provides following four distinctive rights :

- a) Article 29 (Clause 1) Right of any section of citizens to conserve its own language, script or culture
- b) Article 30 (Clause 1) Right of all religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- c) Article 30 (Clause 2) Right of an educational institution not to be discriminated in matters of State aid on grounds that it is managed by a religious or linguistic minority.
- d) Article 29 (Clause 2) Right of the citizen not to be denied admission in to any State maintained or State aided institutions on grounds of religion, caste, race or language.

The word 'minority' has not been defined in the constitution but is used in a wide sense to refer to a section of citizens, minorities shall be protected in respect of their language, script and culture.

f) *Right to Constitutional Remedies (Articles 32-35)*

Rights have to be accompanied by efficient system of governance for their enforcement. Under Article 32 the Constitution guarantees that a person has the right to move the Supreme Court directly for the enforcement of their fundamental rights. Except during emergency under Article 352 as otherwise provided in the Constitution, Right to Constitutional remedies shall not be suspended.

Various kinds of writs for the enforcement of these rights can be issued by the Supreme Court. One can seek redressal through following petitions:

- i) Writ of Habeas Corpus means “To have a body”. This is a safeguard against arbitrary acts of not just private individuals but also of the executive. It can be filed by anyone (including the arrested person, his relatives, friends etc.) and will force the arresting authorities to produce the person physically/bodily in the court.
- ii) Writ of Mandamus means ‘we command’. It commands the person to whom it is addressed to perform quasi public or public legal duty which he/she has refused to perform and whose performance cannot be enforced by any other legal remedy.
- iii) Writ of Prohibition means ‘to forbid or to stop’. Through this, Supreme Court or High Court can issue directions to a lower court or institution of governance, forbidding the latter to encroach on jurisdiction with which it is not legally vested or to continue proceeding in a case in excess of its jurisdiction.
- iv) Writ of Certiorari means ‘to be more fully informed of’. After a case has been decided by a lower court it can be issued denouncing or abolishing that order. The objective is to secure that order, as jurisdiction of an inferior court does not encroach the jurisdiction which it does not possess.
- v) Writ of Quo warranto means ‘by what warrant or by what order’. The court inquires into the legality of the claim which a party may assert to a public office and to remove him/her from employment if the claim is not found.

e) **Fundamental Duties**

In 1976 as Article 51-A in Part IV-A, fundamental duties were incorporated by the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution. India is the only country having in the Constitution rights and duties side by side. Rights and duties are correlated. The following ten are the charter of duties for the citizens of India:

- a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National flag and the National Anthem;
- b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom.
- c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;

- d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- e) to promote harmony and spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
- g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures;
- h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
- j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.
- k) Who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years [Inserted by the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002].

For direct enforcement of these duties there is no provision in the Constitution. They cannot be enforced by writs, but can be promoted only by constitutional methods. Their inclusion has been justified on the basis that they would help to strengthen our democracy. These duties are obligatory on all Indian citizens. Only through enlightened public opinion and education that the feelings of pride and responsibility towards these constitutional duties to the nation can be inculcated in the citizens.

Activity

At your Study Center with other students, make a Presentation on the Fundamental Rights and Duties and spread information around you in your neighbourhood, making common people aware of their Fundamental Rights and Duties.

5.3.3 Directive Principles of State Policy

Under Part IV of the constitution, Directive Principles of State Policy are stated from Article 36 to Article 51, borrowed from the Irish Constitution. These objective is to embody the concept of 'welfare state' is the objective of these Directive Principles. Basically, these are the directions or ideals for the State and law making bodies to keep in mind while framing policies and laws. They deal with the social, economic and cultural rights and are not justifiable in the court of law. They are aspirational in nature and play an advisory role for the government. For example:

- i) Articles 38 and 39 say Equal distribution of wealth and material resources among all classes of people so as to prevent its concentration in a few hands.
- ii) Article 43 says Provision of adequate means of livelihood to all the citizens.
- iii) Article 39 says Equal pay for equal/similar work for both men and women.

iv) Article 41 says Right to work, education and public assistance.

As we have mentioned above, while Fundamental Rights (civil and political rights) are justiceable (can be claimed in a court of law), the Directive Principles (social, cultural, and economic rights) are non-justiceable (cannot be claimed in a court of law) and are more in the nature of aspirations than rights. This became a site for contestation within the Constituent Assembly. B.N. Rao, A. K. Ayyar, B.R. Ambedkar, K.M. Munshi, and K.T. Shah who shared a liberal socialist outlook were in favour of making the Directive Principles justiceable (Austin, 2001, p. 77). Within the prevailing social and economic structures, they felt that a large segment of the Indian population was poor and illiterate and this weaker section of population might not be in a position to access the Fundamental Rights if the larger issues of land reforms, re-distribution of wealth, and eradication of illiteracy were not addressed first. Therefore for them, the issues of social, cultural and economic rights were far more essential to ensure an egalitarian political Constitutional democracy to usher in a new egalitarian social order.

However, the suggestion to make Part IV justiceable was rejected by the larger committee. But, judiciary has stepped in certain cases and has incorporated some of the Directive Principles of State Policy into the domain of Fundamental Rights by expanding the notion of the Right to Life and Liberty Article 21 of the Constitution in cases ranging on issues regarding minimum wages to Right to livelihood, etc.

5.3.4 Federalism, Adult Franchise, Judiciary, Policy of Positive Discrimination

i) Indian State is federal in nature, in the sense that the powers are distributed between the Union and the states. During times of emergency arising out of external danger the Union Government can assume a unitary character and the Central union government is empowered to legislate for all the States.

ii) Universal Adult Franchise

It means all the adult citizens above the age of 18 years are given the right to vote without any discrimination of caste, class, region, religion, gender or race. It is a basic principle of equality on which democracy rests.

iii) Independent Judiciary

The legislature, executive and judiciary are the three main institutions through which the state functions. As per the norms of separation of powers, Indian judiciary is independent. This independence of judiciary is ensured through direct appointment by the President and judges cannot be removed simply by the executive.

Judicial Review

From USA's constitution, India borrowed the idea that the judiciary can declare a law passed by the Union or State government (legislature/executive) as unconstitutional or null and void if it violates the rights guaranteed under the Fundamental rights to the people of India.

Rigid and Flexible Document

India has a written Constitution and borrows many features from American

constitution but it is not as rigid as the American constitution. In the form of procedures for amendments it has incorporated flexibility. There are methods which are mentioned by which the constitutional laws can be changed or amended. To put it simply, the procedure for change or amendment in laws is clearly and, simply explained and not tedious.

iv) Positive Discrimination

Part XVI of the Constitution deals with reservation for SCs and STs. The policy for granting special privileges to the downtrodden, underprivileged and marginalized sections of the population are also known as affirmative action programs. This policy was followed by USA for the victims of racial discrimination. In India, Dalits and Tribals were given special status for reservation in various categories for their upliftment and to make them a part of the mainstream population. Some of the constitutional provisions which aimed at positive discrimination are:

Article 17: Abolition of “untouchability” and making its practice in any form a punishable offence.

Article 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests.

Article 16 and 335: Preferential treatment in matters of employment in public services.

Article 330 and 332: Reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

Later, reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in 1992 and reservation for Women in Panchayats (1996) were added.

Source: IGNOU Unit 5 The Constitution of India, Unit 1 Indian Constitution and Unit 2 Constitutional Obligations

Check Your Progress II

1) When were the terms Socialism and Secularism added to the Constitution?

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2) Mention two Fundamental Rights and Duties.

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5.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have looked at the basic framework of constitutional foundation of democracy in India. We have observed the mechanism through which legislature, executive and judiciary function in day to day running of institutions of the state. India adopted its Constitution in 1950 and we are celebrating 70 years of the Indian Republic. We have seen the process of its making in detail. The basic ideals, features and objectives as defined in the Constitution have also been explained in this unit. The Constitution lays out not just the Fundamental Rights of its nationals impeding upon the State to ensure that they are not infringed upon but also the enjoined Fundamental Duties for its citizens towards the nation state have to be followed as well.

Through various features like socialism, secularism, democracy, reservations, and independent judiciary we are able to witness the wisdom with which our Constitution has been designed. It is a document which creates the balance between various institutions of the state, namely legislature, executive and judiciary, through clearly laid out guidelines.

5.5 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The major features were: (a) All India Federation; (b) Provincial Autonomy; (c) Dyarchy at the Centre; and (d) Federal Court.
- 2) Three important documents of the pre-independence period which provided the framework for the Constitution were:
 - The Nehru Report of 1928,
 - The Karachi Resolution of 1931, and
 - The Sapru Report of 1945.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) In 1976, through the 42nd amendment of the Constitution in the Preamble of the Constitution the terms 'Socialist and Secular' were incorporated.
- 2) Fundamental Rights : Right to Equality and Right to Freedom Fundamental Duties: To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India; and, to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.

5.6 REFERENCES

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Unit 5 The Constitution of India

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GLOSSARY

Preamble: Part of the constitution which defines the ideals and idea of the people of India.

Sovereignty: People are free from foreign rule and have adopted and enacted the Constitution and they are the ones who are the custodians of the republic.

Socialist: Means of production would be owned by the state.

Secular: It aims at the separation of religion from the state.

Directive Principles of State Policy: The directions or ideals for the State and law making bodies to keep in mind while framing policies and laws.

Federalism: Powers are distributed between the Union and the states.

Universal Adult Franchise: It means all the adult citizens above the age of 18 years are given the right to vote without any discrimination of caste, class, region, religion, gender or race.

Positive Discrimination: The policy for granting special privileges to the downtrodden underprivileged and marginalized sections of the population.

FURTHER READINGS

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