



# **SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA**

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**School of Social Sciences**  
**Indira Gandhi National Open University**

## EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. Abhijit Dasgupta  
Delhi School of Economic  
Delhi University, Delhi

Prof. Maitrayee Chaudhary  
CSSS, Jawaharlal Nehru  
University, New Delhi

Prof. Nilika Mehrotra  
CSSS, Jawaharlal Nehru  
University, New Delhi

Prof. Debal Singha Roy  
Discipline of Sociology  
SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. Tribhuwan Kapur  
Discipline of Sociology  
SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. Nita Mathur  
Discipline of Sociology  
SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

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School of Gender and  
Development Studies  
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Pushpesh Kumar  
Department of Sociology  
Hyderabad University, Hyderabad

Dr. Abhijit Kundu  
Department of Sociology  
Venkateshwara College, Delhi University

Dr. Archana Singh  
Discipline of Sociology  
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Kiranmayi Bhushi  
Discipline of Sociology  
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Rabindra Kumar  
Discipline of Sociology  
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. R. Vashum  
Discipline of Sociology  
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Shubhangi Vaidya  
School of Inten and  
Trans-disciplinary Studies  
IGNOU, New Delhi

## COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

Block	Unit Writer
<b>Block 1 India as a Plural Society</b>	
Unit 1 Unity and Diversity in India	Adopted from IGNOU, BDP ESO-12, Unit 1 pp. 9-22 by Dr. Archana Singh
Unit 2 Changing India	Dr. Ritu Sinha C.C.M.G, JMI, New Delhi and a Portion from IGNOU, BDP, ESO-12 by Dr. Archana Singh
<b>Block 2 Social Structures and Practices</b>	
Unit 3 Tribe	Dr. T. Gangmei, Delhi University, Delhi
Unit 4 Caste	Dr. Shailey Bhashanjali
Unit 5 Class	Adopted from IGNOU, BDP, ESO-12, Unit 23 pp.55 by Dr. Archana Singh
<b>Block 3 Social Institutions and Change</b>	
Unit 6 Family, Marriage and Kinship	Adapted from BDP ESO-12, Society in India Block 2 by Dr. Archana Singh
Unit 7 Religion	Dr. Kusum Lata C.C.M.G, JMI, New Delhi
<b>Block 4 Social Identities and Change</b>	
Unit 8 Dalit Movements	Dr. Ritu Sinha C.C.M.G, JMI, New Delhi
Unit 9 Gender Based Movements	Dr. T. Gangmei Delhi University, Delhi and a Portion by Dr. Archana Singh
Unit 10 Tribal and Ethnic Movements	Dr. Ajaz Ahmad Gilani, C.C.M.G, JMI, New Delhi
<b>Block 5 State, Society and Religion</b>	
Unit 11 Communalism	Dr. Amiya Kumar Das Tezpur University, Tezpur, Assam
Unit 12 Secularism	Adopted from ESO-15, Society and Religion, Block 3 by Dr. Archana Singh

## **COURSE COORDINATOR**

---

Dr. Archana Singh  
Discipline of Sociology  
IGNOU, New Delhi

## **GENERAL EDITORS**

---

Prof. Ehsanul Haq  
Retd., CSSS/SOSS  
JNU, New Delhi

**Editor (Content, Format & Language) :** Dr. Archana Singh

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**Cover Design :** Ms. Arvinder Chawla, ADA Graphics

---

### **Typing Assistant**

Ms. Sonia

---

## **Print Production**

---

Mr. Tilak Raj  
AR (P) MPDD  
IGNOU, New Delhi

Mr. Yash Pal  
SO (P) MPDD  
IGNOU, New Delhi

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

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Sociology as a discipline is considered to be the daughter of the Industrial Revolution. Like the other social sciences, it has developed with the development of modern industrial capitalism in Europe. The Enlightenment period and the consequent growth in science and technology revolutionized not only the way people lived and produced but also their ideas and ways of living. A general sense of transition and transformation of society set in motion radical changes in the European world. This subsequently influenced and dramatically impacted all societies globally; including India.

Sociology is the study of the ways in which human beings interact with each other. It studies the network of established social relations in which all customs beliefs, arts and crafts everything are subsumed. It can also be defined as the study of network or pattern of social relations in society. Thus, as a discipline, sociology attempts to study the nature of society; its social structure and functions or practices. It tries to explain the different social institutions in society and how social change impacts society. Sociology attempts to learn how the different social institutions change, such as, family marriage, kinship economy, polity etc., Continuous changes take place in all societies. Some changes are internal and some changes are due to external factors due to the impact of other societies and cultures, such as, the colonial rule in India. It is these changes in the different roles and statuses of people which are the very core of the subject matter of sociology. Thus, from the level of individual to the level of social groups and communities which link people and their perceptions in society sociology attempts to study them.

We have in this course on **Sociology of India**, attempted to explain to you in the first block, **India as a Plural Society** two units, Unity and Diversity in India and Changing India. In these units the overall nature and culture of society in India has been described. The first unit highlights the very unique aspect of India that is, its being a plural society with multiple cultures, communities, regional differences, languages etc. These have made India have immense social diversities. Yet, we bring to your knowledge about the cross cutting forces of unity in terms of its geographical boundaries, as well as other forces which unify India. With time everything changes and so does society in India. Therefore, changing India highlights these elements of changes in Indian society.

The Second block, **Social Structure and Practices** discusses three different aspects which define society in India. These are **Tribes, Caste and Class**. We explain to you the nature of tribes in India. How they exist and are assimilated in the larger society. The challenges that they face in their day to day life. Caste is another form of social stratification which is unique to Indian society. Unlike caste, class is an open form of social stratification and prior to Independence in India, we found that caste and class were subsumed with each other. However, due to Colonial impact and especially after Independence and the provisions of our Constitution, there has been rapid social mobility in society and this has led to the caste identities and class identities becoming separate from each other in society in India.

The third, block **Social Institutions and Change** tries to focus on the topic of family, marriage and kinship in India. We have provided different approaches and theories to explain these concepts with suitable examples Religion being one of the most sensitive but very significant institution of society has been sociologically analysed and explained to you so that society in India, being a plural society, can be understood.

The fourth block, **Social Identities and Change** has three units. Each unit explains the major social identities on the basis of which society gets stratified and hierarchically arranged. Many of the social stigmas and exploitations occur due to low social status associated with some of these identities giving rise to social movements. So we have described the dalit social movements, tribal and ethnic movements, and gender based movements in India.

The fifth and final block, **State, Society and Religion** highlights two related but different issues or concerns of society in India. First, is Communalism and second is Secularism. Here the historical, social and critical issues linked with both these terms have been described, discussed and analysed.



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## **Block 1**

### **India as a Plural Society**

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## **BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION**

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We have in this course on **Sociology of India**, attempted to explain to you in the first block, **India as a Plural Society** two units, Unity and Diversity in India and Changing India. In these units the overall nature and culture of society in India has been described. The first unit highlights the very unique aspect of India that is, its being a plural society with multiple cultures, communities, regional differences, languages etc. These have made India have immense social diversities. Yet, we bring to your knowledge about the cross cutting forces of unity in terms of its geographical boundaries, as well as other forces which unite India. With time everything changes and so does society in India. Therefore, changing India highlights these elements of changes in contemporary Indian society.



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# UNIT 1 UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN INDIA\*

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## Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Concepts of Unity and Diversity
  - 1.2.1 Meaning of Diversity
  - 1.2.2 Meaning of Unity
- 1.3 Forms of Diversity in India
  - 1.3.1 Racial Diversity
  - 1.3.2 Linguistic Diversity
  - 1.3.3 Religious Diversity
  - 1.3.4 Caste Diversity
- 1.4 Bonds of Unity in India
  - 1.4.1 Geo-political Unity
  - 1.4.2 The Institution of Pilgrimage
  - 1.4.3 Tradition of Accommodation
  - 1.4.4 Tradition of Interdependence
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 References
- 1.7 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you should be able to :

- explain the concept of unity and diversity;
- describe the forms and bases of diversity in India;
- examine the bonds and mechanisms of unity in India; and
- provide an explanation to our option for a composite culture model rather than a uniformity model of unity.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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This unit deals with unity and diversity in India. You may have heard a lot about unity and diversity in India. But do you know what exactly it means? Here we will explain to you the meaning and content of this phrase. For this purpose the unit has been divided into three sections.

In the first section, we will specify the meaning of the two terms, diversity and unity.

In the second section, we will illustrate the forms of diversity in Indian society. For detailed treatment we will focus on the four forms of diversity, race, language, religion and caste.

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\*Adopted from IGNOU, BDP ESO-12, Unit 1 pp. 9-22 by Archana Singh

In the third section, we will bring out the bonds of unity in India. These are geopolitical, the culture of pilgrimage, tradition of accommodation, and tradition of interdependence.

Above all, we will note that the unity of India is born of a composite culture rather than a uniform culture.

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## **1.2 CONCEPTS OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY**

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We begin by clarifying the meaning of the terms diversity and unity.

### **1.2.1 Meaning of Diversity**

Ordinarily diversity means differences. For our purposes, however, it means something more than mere differences. It means collective differences, that is, differences which mark off one group of people from another. These differences may be of any sort: biological, religious, linguistic etc. On the basis of biological differences, for example, we have racial diversity. On the basis of religious differences, similarly, we have religious diversity. The point to note is that diversity refers to collective differences.

The term diversity is opposite of uniformity. Uniformity means similarity of some sort that characterises a people. 'Uni' refers to one; 'form' refers to the common ways. So when there is something common to all the people, we say they show uniformity. When students of a school, members of the police or the army wear the same type of dress, we say they are in 'uniform'. Like diversity, thus, uniformity is also a collective concept. When a group of people share a similar characteristic, be it language or religion or anything else, it shows uniformity in that respect. But when we have groups of people hailing from different races, religions and cultures, they represent diversity. D.N. Majumdar wrote a book with the title, Races and Cultures of India. Mark the words in the plural: Races (not Race); Cultures (not Culture).

Thus, diversity means variety. For all practical purposes it means variety of groups and cultures. We have such a variety in abundance in India. We have here a variety of races, of religions, of languages, of castes and of cultures. For the same reason India is known for its socio-cultural diversity.

### **1.2.2 Meaning of Unity**

Unity means integration. It is a social psychological condition. It connotes a sense of one-ness, a sense of we-ness. It stands for the bonds, which hold the members of a society together.

There is a difference between unity and uniformity. Uniformity presupposes similarity, unity does not. Thus, unity may or may not be based on uniformity. Unity may be born out of uniformity. Durkheim calls this type of unity a mechanical solidarity. We find this type of unity in tribal societies and in traditional societies. However, unity may as well be based on differences. It is such unity, which is described by Durkheim as organic solidarity. This type of unity characterizes modern societies. Let us see it in a diagram.

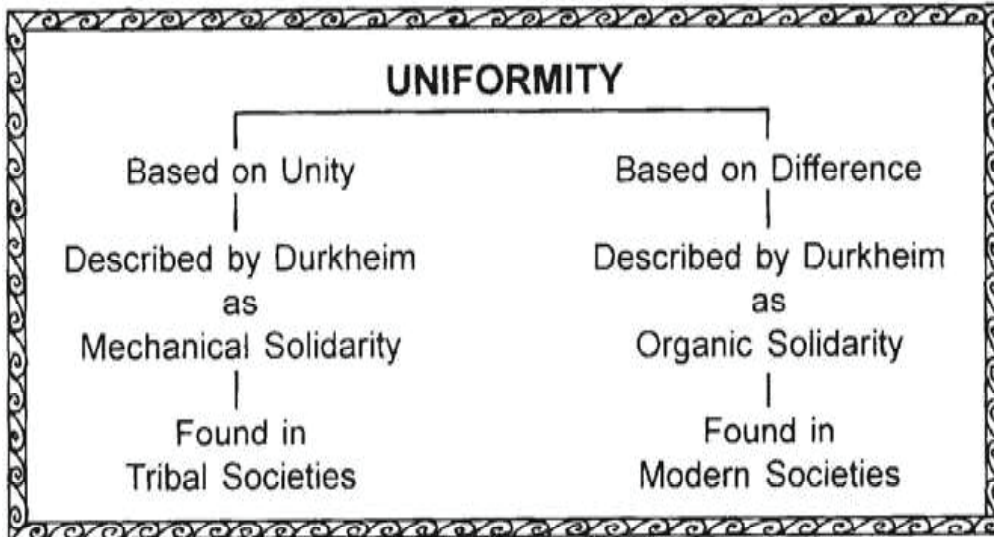


Figure 1.1: Two types of unity

The point to note is that unity does not have to be based on uniformity. Unity, as we noted earlier, implies integration. Integration does not mean absence of differences. Indeed, it stands for the ties that bind the diverse groups with one another.

### Check Your Progress I

- i) Mark which of the following is the correct meaning of diversity?
  - a) Differences between two individuals
  - b) Similarities among the members of a group
  - c) Dissimilarities among groups.
- ii) Mark which of the following is the correct example of social diversity?
  - a) Temperamental differences between men and women
  - b) Property differences between the two neighbours
  - c) Differences of religious belongingness between two groups.
- iii) Indicate which of the following statements are true and which are false.  
Use T for True and F for False.
  - a) Unity means absence of differences.
  - b) Unity is opposite of diversity.
  - c) Uniformity is a necessary condition for unity.
  - d) Unity in diversity is a contradiction in terms.
  - e) Mechanical solidarity is based on uniformity.
  - f) Unity signifies integration.

## 1.3 FORMS OF DIVERSITY IN INDIA

As hinted earlier, we find in India diversity of various sorts. Some of its important forms are the following: racial, linguistic, religious and caste-based. Let us deal with each one of them in some detail.

### 1.3.1 Racial Diversity

You may have seen people of different races in India. A race is a group of people with a set of distinctive physical features such as skin colour, type of nose, form of hair, etc.

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. These seven racial types can be reduced to three basic types—the Indo-Aryan, the Mongolian and the Dravidian. In his opinion the last two types would account for the racial composition of tribal India. He was the supervisor of the census operations held in India in 1891 and it was data from this census, which founded the basis of this classification. As, it was based mainly on language-types rather than physical characteristics; Risley's classification was criticised for its shortcomings.

Other administrative officers and anthropologists, like J.H. Hutton, D.N. Majumdar and B.S. Guha, have given the latest racial classification of the Indian people based on further researches in this field. Hutton's and Guha's classifications are based on 1931 census operations. B.S. Guha (1952) has identified six racial types (1) the Negrito, (2) the Proto Australoid, (3) the Mongoloid, (4) the Mediterranean, (5) the Western Brachycephals, and (6) the Nordic. Besides telling you what the various types denote, we shall not go into the details of this issue, because that will involve us in technical matters pertaining to physical anthropology. Here, we need only to be aware of the diversity of racial types in India.

**Negritos** are the people who belong to the black racial stock as found in Africa. They have black skin colour, frizzle hair, thick lips, etc. In India some of the tribes in South India, such as the Kadar, the Irula and the Paniyan have distinct Negrito strain.

The **Proto-Australoid** races consist of an ethnic group, which includes the Australian aborigines and other peoples of southern Asia and Pacific Islands. Representatives of this group are the Ainu of Japan, the Vedda of Sri Lanka, and the Sakai of Malaysia. In India the tribes of Middle India belong to this strain. Some of these tribes are the Ho of Singhbhum, Bihar, and the Bhil of the Vindhya ranges.

The **Mongoloids** are a major racial stock native to Asia, including the peoples of northern and eastern Asia. For example, Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, Eskimos, and often American Indians also belong to this race. In India, the North Eastern regions have tribes of brachycephalic Mongoloid strain. A slightly different kind of Mongoloid racial stock is found in the Brahmaputra Valley. The Mikir-Bodo group of tribes and the Angami Nagas represent the best examples of Mongoloid racial composition in India.

The **Mediterranean** races relate to the caucasian physical type, i.e., the white race. It is characterised by medium or short stature, slender build, long head with **cephalic index** (the ratio multiplied by 100 of the maximum breadth of the head to its maximum length) of less than 75 and dark (continental) complexion.

The **Western Brachycephals** are divided into the following three sub-groups: (1) The **Alpenoid** are characterised by broad head, medium stature and light skin, found amongst Bania castes of Gujarat, the Kayasthas of Bengal, etc. (ii) The **Dinaric** – They are characterised by broad head, long nose, tall stature and dark skin colour, found amongst the Brahmin of Bengal, the non-Brahmin of Karnataka, (iii) The **Armenoid**– They are characterised by features similar to Dinaric. The Armenoid have a more marked shape of the back of head, a prominent and narrow nose. The Parsi of Bombay show the typical characteristics of the Armenoid race (Das 1988: 223).

Finally, the **Nordic** races belong to the physical type characterised by tall stature, long head, light skin and hair, and blue eyes. They are found in Scandinavian countries, Europe. In India, they are found in different parts of north of the country, especially in Punjab and Rajputana. The Kho of Chitral, the Red Kaffirs, the Khatash are some of the representatives of this type. Research suggests that the Nordics came from the north, probably from south east Russia and south west Siberia, through central Asia to India. (Das 1988: 223).

### 1.3.2 Linguistic Diversity

Do you know how many languages are there in India? While the famous linguist Grierson noted 179 languages and 544 dialects, the 1971 census on the other hand, reported 1652 languages in India which are spoken as mother tongue. Not all these languages are, however, equally widespread. Many of them are tribal speeches and these are spoken by less than one percent of the total population. Here you can see that in India there is a good deal of linguistic diversity.

Only 18 languages are listed in Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution. These are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Out of these 18 languages, Hindi is spoken by 39.85 per cent of the total population; Bengali, Telugu and Marathi by around 8 per cent each; Tamil and Urdu by 6.26 and 5.22 per cent, respectively; and the rest by less than 5 per cent each as per 1991 census report (India 2003).

The above constitutionally recognised languages belong to two linguistic families: Indo-Aryan and Dravidian. Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu are the four major Dravidian languages. The languages of Indo-Aryan family are spoken by 75 per cent of India's total population while the languages of Dravidian family are spoken by 20 per cent.

This linguistic diversity notwithstanding, we have always had a sort of link language, though it has varied from age to age. In ancient times it was Sanskrit, in medieval age it was Arabic or Persian and in modern times we have Hindi and English as official languages.

### 1.3.3 Religious Diversity

India is a land of multiple religions. We find here followers of various faiths, particularly of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, among others. You know it that Hinduism is the dominant religion of India. According to the census of 1981 it is professed by 82.64 per cent of the total population. Next comes Islam, which is practised by 11.35 per cent. This is

followed by Christianity having a following of 2.43 per cent, Sikhism reported by 1.96 per cent, Buddhism by 0.71 per cent and Jainism by 0.48 per cent. The religions with lesser following are Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Bahaism.

While Hinduism saw a slight reduction in the percentage of their followers by the year 1991, most of the other religions increased their strength though by very narrow margin. According to the 1991 census the Hinduism has 82.41 per cent followers to the total population. 11.67 per cent followed Islam and 2.32 per cent followed Christianity. Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism followed by 1.99, 0.77 and 0.41 per cent, respectively. And 0.43 reported to follow other religions. (Census of India 1995, Series 1, Paper 1 on Religion).

Then there are sects within each religion. Hinduism, for example, has many sects including Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava. Add to them the sects born or religious reform movements such as Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Ram Krishna Mission. More recently, some new cults have come up such as Radhaswami, Saibaba, etc. Similarly, Islam is divided into Shiya and Sunni; Sikhism into Namdhari and Nirankari; Jainism into Digambar and Shvetambar; and Buddhism into Hinayan and Mahayan.

While Hindu and Muslim are found in almost all parts of India, the remaining minority religions have their pockets of concentration. Christians have their strongholds in the three southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and in the north-eastern states like Nagaland and Meghalaya. Sikhs are concentrated largely in Punjab, Buddhists in Maharashtra, and Jains are mainly spread over Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat, but also found in most urban centres throughout the country.

**Check Your Progress II**

- i) List, in one line, some of the major forms of diversity found in India?  
.....  
.....  
.....
  
- ii) According to Grierson, how many dialects and languages are spoken in India?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
  
- iii) What are the various religions found in India? Use two lines for your answer.  
.....  
.....  
.....

### 1.3.4 Caste Diversity

India, as you know, is a country of castes. The term caste is generally used in two senses: sometimes in the sense of Varna and sometimes in the sense of Jati. (i) Varna refers to a segment of the four-fold division of Hindu society based on functional criterion. The four Varna are Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra with their specialised functions as learning, defence, trade and manual service. The Varna hierarchy is accepted all over India. (ii) Jati refers to a hereditary endogamous status group practising a specific traditional occupation. You may be surprised to know that there are more than 3,000 jati in India. These are hierarchically graded in different ways in different regions.

It may also be noted that the practice of caste system is not confined to Hindus alone. We find castes among the Muslim, Christian, Sikh as well as other communities. You may have heard of the hierarchy of Shaikh, Saiyed, Mughal, Pathan among the Muslim. Furthermore, there are castes like teli (oil pressure), dhobi (washerman), darjee (tailor), etc. among the Muslim. Similarly, caste consciousness among the Christian in India is not unknown. Since a vast majority of Christians in India are converted from Hindu fold, the converts have carried the caste system into Christianity. Among the Sikh again you have so many castes including Jat Sikh and Majahabi Sikh (lower castes). In view of this you can well imagine the extent of caste diversity in India.

In addition to the above described major forms of diversity, we have diversity of many other sorts like settlement patterns – tribal, rural, urban; marriage and kinship patterns along religious and regional lines; cultural patterns reflecting regional variations, and so on. These forms of diversity will become clear to you as you proceed along this course. You will also learn about these aspects more elaborately in the next few Blocks.

#### Activity 1

What language do you speak and to which stock of languages does it belong? Find out what language/s/is/are spoken in the ten families living on the left side of your own family. Divide them according to the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian stock of languages. Write down all this information on a separate sheet. Compare your findings with those of other students at your study centre.

## 1.4 BONDS OF UNITY IN INDIA

In the preceding section we have illustrated the diversity of India. But that is not the whole story. There are bonds of unity underlying all this diversity. These bonds of unity may be located in a certain underlying uniformity of life as well as in certain mechanisms of integration. Census Commissioner in 1911, Herbert Risley (1969), was right when he observed: “Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion which strikes the observer in India there can still be discerned ..... a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin”. We will describe the bonds of unity of India in this section. These are geo-political unity, the institution of pilgrimage, tradition of accommodation, and tradition of interdependence. We will now describe each of them in that order.



### 1.4.1 Geo-political Unity

The first bond of unity of India is found in its geo-political integration. India is known for its geographical unity marked by the Himalayas in the north end and the oceans on the other sides. Politically India is now a sovereign state. The same constitution and same parliament govern every part of it. We share the same political culture marked by the norms of democracy, secularism and socialism.

Although it has not been recognised till recently, the geo-political unity of India was always visualized by our seers and rulers. The expressions of this consciousness of the geo-political unity of India are found in Rig-Veda, in Sanskrit literature, in the edicts of Asoka, in Buddhist monuments and in various other sources. The ideal of geo-political unity of India is also reflected in the concepts of Bharatvarsha (the old indigenous classic name for India), Chakravarti (emperor), and Ekchhatradhipatya (under one rule).

### 1.4.2 The Institution of Pilgrimage

Another source of unity of India lies in what is known as temple culture, which is reflected in the network of shrines and sacred places. From Badrinath and Kedarnath in the north to Rameshwaram in the south, Jagannath Puri in the east to Dwaraka in the west the religious shrines and holy rivers are spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Closely related to them is the age-old culture of pilgrimage, which has always moved people to various parts of the country and fostered in them a sense of geo-cultural unity.

As well as being an expression of religious sentiment, pilgrimage is also an expression of love for the motherland, a sort of mode of worship of the country. It has played a significant part in promoting interaction and cultural affinity among the people living in different parts of India. Pilgrimage can, therefore, rightly be viewed as a mechanism of geo-cultural unity.

### 1.4.3 Tradition of Accommodation

Have you heard of the syncretic quality of Indian culture, its remarkable quality of accommodation and tolerance? There is ample evidence of it. The first evidence of it lies in the elastic character of Hinduism, the majority religion of India. It is common knowledge that Hinduism is not a homogeneous religion, a religion having one God, one Book and one Temple. Indeed, it can be best described as a federation of faiths. Polytheistic (having multiple deities) in character, it goes to the extent of accommodating village level deities and tribal faiths.

For the same reason, sociologists have distinguished two broad forms of Hinduism: sanskritic and popular. Sanskrit is that which is found in the texts (religious books like Vedas, etc.) and popular is that which is found in the actual life situation of the vast masses. Robert Redfield has called these two forms as great tradition of Ramayana and Mahabharata and the little tradition of worship of the village deity. And everything passes for Hinduism.

What it shows is that Hinduism has been an open religion, a receptive and absorbing religion, an encompassing religion. It is known for its quality of openness and accommodation.

Another evidence of it lies in its apathy to conversion. Hinduism is not a proselytising religion. That is, it does not seek converts. Nor has it ordinarily resisted other religions to seek converts from within its fold. This quality of accommodation and tolerance has saved the way to the coexistence of several faiths in India. Mechanisms of coexistence of people of different faiths have been in existence here for long. Take for example, the case of Hindu-Muslim amity. Hindus and Muslims have always taken part in each other's functions, festivities and feasts. How did they do it? They did it by evolving the mechanism of providing for a separate hearth and a set of vessels for each other so as to respect each other's religious sensibility. This always facilitated mutual visiting and sharing in each other's joy and grief. They have also done so by showing regards for each other's saints and holy men. Thus, both Hindus and Muslims have shown reverence to the saints and Pirs of each other. And this holds as well for the coexistence of other religious groups like Sikh, Jain, Christian and so on.

### Activity 2

Write the answers of the following questions on a separate sheet of paper and discuss them with other students at your study centre.

- i) Give, at least one example, in each of the following areas, to show the blending of Hindu and Muslim cultures in India.
  - a) architecture
  - b) literature
  - c) music
  - d) religion
- ii) Have you recently attended a wedding in a community other than your own? What has struck you as a markedly different feature, which is, absent during a wedding in your community?

#### 1.4.4 Tradition of Interdependence

We have had a remarkable tradition of interdependence, which has held us together throughout centuries. One manifestation of it is found in the form of Jajmani system, i.e., a system of functional interdependence of castes. The term "jajman" refers generally to the patron or recipient of specialised services. The relations were traditionally between a food producing family and the families that supported them with goods and services. These came to be called the jajmani relations. Jajmani relations were conspicuous in village life, as they entailed ritual matters, social support as well as economic exchange. The whole of a local social order was involved (the people and their values) in such jajmani links. A patron had jajmani relations with members of a high caste (like a Brahmin priest whose services he needed for rituals). He also required the services of specialists from the lower jati to perform those necessary tasks like washing of dirty clothes, cutting of hair, cleaning the rooms and toilets, delivery of the child etc. Those associated in these interdependent relations were expected to be and were broadly supportive of each other with qualities of ready help that generally close kinsmen were expected to show.

The jajmani relations usually involved multiple kinds of payment and obligations as well as multiple functions.

Here it will suffice to note that no caste was self-sufficient. If anything, it depended for many things on other castes. In a sense, each caste was a functional group in that it rendered a specified service to other caste groups. Jajmani system is that mechanism which has formalised and regulated this functional interdependence.

Furthermore, castes cut across the boundaries of religious communities. We have earlier mentioned that notions of caste are found in all the religious communities in India. In its actual practice, thus, the institution of jajmani provides for inter linkages between people of different religious groups. Thus a Hindu may be dependent for the washing of his clothes on a Muslim washerman. Similarly, a Muslim may be dependent for the stitching of his clothes on a Hindu tailor, and vice-versa.

Efforts have been made from time to time by sensitive and sensible leaders of both the communities to synthesise Hindu and Muslim traditions so as to bring the two major communities closer to each other. Akbar, for example, founded a new religion, Din-e-Ilahi, combining best of both the religions. The contributions made by Kabir, Eknath, Guru Nanak, and more recently Mahatma Gandhi, are well known in this regard.

Similarly, in the field of art and architecture we find such a happy blending of Hindu and Muslim styles. What else is this if not a proof of mutual appreciation for each other's culture?

Quite in line with these traditional bonds of unity, the Indian state in post Independence era has rightly opted for a composite culture model of national unity rather than a uniform culture model. The composite culture model provides for the preservation and growth of plurality of cultures within the framework of an integrated nation. Hence the significance of our choice of the norm of secularism, implying equal regard for all religions, as our policy of national integration.

The above account of the unity of India should not be taken to mean that we have always had a smooth sailing in matters of national unity, with no incidents of caste, communal or linguistic riots. Nor should it be taken to mean that the divisive and secessionist tendencies have been altogether absent. There have been occasional riots, at times serious riots. For example, who can forget the communal riots of partition days, the linguistic riots in Tamil Nadu in protest against the imposition of Hindi, the riots in Gujarat during 1980s between scheduled and non-scheduled castes and communal riots of 2002? The redeeming feature, however, is that the bonds of unity have always emerged stronger than the forces of disintegration.

**Check Your Progress III**

- i) List the bonds of unity in India, in the space given below.

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- ii) Indicate the mechanism of the following set of terms, in the space provided against each.
- a) geo-political unity .....
  - b) geo-cultural unity .....
  - c) religious accommodation .....
  - d) social interdependence .....

iii) Distinguish between great tradition and little tradition, in the space given below.

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iv) Distinguish between composite culture and uniform culture models of national integration, in the space provided below.

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## 1.5 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit you have studied that diversity refers to: i) patterned differences between groups, ii) socio-cultural variety, and iii) lack of uniformity. Unity means integration that may or may not be based on uniformity, a sense of oneness arising from the bonds that hold the members together or that bind the diverse groups with one another.

You have also studied that there are major forms of diversity in India: race, language, religion and caste.

Underlying all the diversities there is a remarkable measure of unity. We have noted four bonds of unity in India: geo-political, geo-cultural, religious accommodation and functional interdependence. Closely related to these bonds are four mechanisms of integration: constitution, pilgrimage, provision of a separate hearth, cook and kitchenware for members of other religious community, and jajmani.

Finally, we have noted that India has opted for a composite culture model of unity rather than uniform cultural model.

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## 1.7 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- i) C
- ii) C
- iii) Statements a, b, c and d are false. Statements e and f are true.

### Check Your Progress II

- i) Racial, linguistic, religious and caste-based.
- ii) 179 languages and 544 dialects.
- iii) Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Bahaism.

### Check Your Progress III

- i) Geo-political, geo-cultural, tradition of accommodation, interdependence.
- ii) a) constitution  
b) pilgrimage  
c) separate cook and kitchenware  
d) jajmani
- iii) Great tradition is sanskritic, based on sacred texts and scriptures, and elitist. Little tradition, on the other hand, is oral, village-based and popular.
- iv) Composite culture model provides for cultural pluralism while uniform culture model implies dominance of one culture.

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## UNIT 2 CHANGING INDIA\*

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### Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning and Nature of Social Change
  - 2.2.1 Three Aspects of Social Change
  - 2.2.2 Some Allied Concepts
- 2.3 Sociological Theories and Concepts of Social Change
  - 2.3.1 Development and Change as Interchangeable and Logically Related Terms
  - 2.3.2 Development and Change as Modernisation
  - 2.3.3 Social Change: Structural and Cultural
- 2.4 Understanding Change in India
  - 2.4.1 Factors of Change in India
    - 2.4.1.1 Industrialisation and Urbanisation
    - 2.4.1.2 Liberalisation, Privilisation and Globalisation (LPG)
    - 2.4.1.3 Mass Media and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
    - 2.4.1.4 Social Movements
- 2.5 Changing India: Challenges and Response
  - 2.5.1 Changing Rural India
  - 2.5.2 Changing Urban Spaces
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 References
- 2.8 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

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## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning and nature of social change;
- you will be able to describe the forms and processes of change in India by learning theories and concepts of change;
- examine factors that are at play in changing Indian society;
- provide a detailed explanation about the challenges faced by India and its responses and
- describe the nature in which India is changing structurally and culturally.

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the first unit of this course, unit 1, Unit and Diversity in India, Block 1 India as a Plural Society, you learnt about the aspects of unity in India along with the aspects of diversities cross-cutting each other. This unit deals with 'Changing India'. Like all societies, India is also changing, accommodating new changes and growing steadfastly. You must have often come across people saying that

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\*Dr. Ritu Sinha C.C.M.G, JMI, New Delhi and a Portion is adopted from IGNOU, BDP, ESO-12 by Archana Singh

India is changing. Elderly persons often point towards the unending changes since they were young and that everything around them is changing fast. If you can recall, it is often explained through stories, anecdotes, and exemplars, how the ways of living, practices, traditions, values, beliefs and even relationships have taken new shape over a period of time. They either grow or shrink with the passage of time. Changes are integral and inevitable to human societies.

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## 2.2 MEANING AND NATURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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Change is a very broad concept. Though change is all around us, we do not refer to all of it as social change. Thus, physical growth from year to year, or change of seasons do not fall under the concept of social change. In sociology, we look at social change as alterations that occur in the social structure and social relationship. The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Science (IESS 1972) looks at change as the important alterations that occur in the social structure, or in the pattern of action and interaction in societies. Alterations may occur in norms, values, cultural products and symbols in a society. Other definitions of change also point out that change implies, above all other things, alteration in the structure and function of a social system. Institutions, patterns of interaction, work, leisure activities, roles, norms and other aspects of society can be altered over time as a result of the process of social change.

### 2.2.1 Three Aspects of Social Change

From these and other definitions of social change, we can see that:

- i) Social change is essentially a process of alteration with no reference to the quality of change.
- ii) Changes in society are related/linked to changes in culture, so that it would be sometimes useful to talk about 'socio-cultural change.

Some sociologists, however, differentiate between social change and cultural change. Social change is defined as alterations in the social structure, (including the changes in the size of society) or in particular social institutions, or in the relationship between institutions. They feel that social change refers mainly to actual human behaviour. Cultural change, on the other hand, refers to variation in cultural phenomena such as knowledge and ideas, art, religion moral doctrines, values, beliefs, symbol systems and so on. This distinction is abstract, because in many situations it is difficult, or nearly impossible to decide which type of change is occurring. For instance, growth of modern technology as part of the culture, has been closely associated with alterations in the economic structures, an important part of the society.

- iii) Social change can vary in its scope and in speed. We can talk of small scale or large scale changes. Changes can take a cyclical pattern, e.g. when there is the recurrence of centralisation and decentralisation in administrative organisations. It can also be revolutionary. Revolutionary change can be seen when there is an overthrow of government in a particular nation. Change can also include short term changes (e.g. in migration rates) as well as long

term changes in economic structures. We can include in social change, both growth and decline in membership and size of social institutions. Change may include continuous processes like specialisation, and also include discontinuous processes such as a particular technical or social invention which appears at some point of time.

Change also varies in scope, in that it may influence many aspects of a society and Social Change can disrupt the whole social system. The process of industrialisation which affected many aspects of society is one such example. In contrast, the substitution of matches for rubbing sticks to start a fire had a relatively limited scope.

Some changes occur rapidly but others take a long time. Many of the Western nations took many decades to become industrialised, but developing nations are trying to do it more quickly. They do this by borrowing or adapting from those nations which have already achieved it.

Today most sociologists assume that change is a natural, inevitable, ever present part of life in every society. When we are looking at social change, we are focusing not on changes in the experiences of an individual, but on variations in social structures, institutions and social relationship.

### 2.2.2 Some Allied Concepts

Social change is seen to be a neutral concept. The two other terms that have often been allied with this concept are ‘evolution’ and ‘progress’.

- i) Evolution expresses continuity and direction of change. It means more than growth. ‘Growth’ implies a direction of change but essentially in size or quality. Evolution involves something more intrinsic, a change not only in size but also of structure.
- ii) Progress implies change in direction towards some final desired goal. It involves a value judgement.

All changes are not evolutionary and all changes are not progressive. Discussion of the direction of change need not involve any value judgements. The diminishing size of the family, and the increasing size of economic units, are matters of historical fact. ‘Social change’ is a value-neutral term, in the sense that the sociologists do not study social change in terms of “good or bad”, desirable or undesirable. One must admit, however, that it is a difficult task indeed to make a value-free critical analysis of changes taking place in the structure of a society

#### Check Your Progress I

- i) Define social change in two lines.

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ii) What are the main characteristics of social change? Use four lines for your answer.

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iii) Differentiate between the following terms:

Change, Evolution and Progress. Use six lines for your answer.

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### 2.3 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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The discourses on progress and development of societies and human beings are intrinsically linked to incessant change experienced by human society. It is evident that human societies are always in transition, experiencing variety of dynamic changes and passing through old stage to enter into new. They are ever changing; they grow, decay, expand technologically and develop. In this process they experience modifications in values, ideologies, the institutions and populations, undergo variation over the period of time. Therefore the study of society is intimately associated with the concept of change. Sociology from its inception recognized the themes of change as central to its subject matter. The founders of the discipline namely, August Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx, in their own ways interlaced this theme to the subject matter.

In the early sociological writings, the terms and notions of development and change are used interchangeably. A clear distinction could either not be made, or if made, they were treated as logically related terms. In many of the early sociological theories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the notions of ‘change’, ‘development’, ‘evolution’ and ‘progress’ are sometimes confused or combined in a single term. In the mid twentieth century the terms ‘change’ and ‘development’ were primarily viewed in the context of ‘modernisation’. Let us now look at the perceptions of some social thinkers on development and social change.

### 2.3.1 Development and Change as Interchangeable and Logically Related Terms

We will look at the perceptions of thinkers like Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber and Marx.

- i) **Auguste Comte:** Auguste Comte tried to understand social changes that occurred in the early years of the industrial revolution as an evolutionary process. Evolution implies gradual transformation or change through a series of stages. The theory of evolution explains that societies pass through a number of stages starting from a simple form and becoming more complex as the process of evolution progresses. Auguste Comte put forward the idea of evolutionary change and also related the idea of progressive change through the development of intellect, in particular the scientific thought. He was of the opinion that the human mind, human society and human knowledge all went through a process of development and change, from metaphysical (non-scientific) to positivism (scientific).
- ii) **Herbert Spencer:** Herbert Spencer treated human society as a biological organism and, therefore, tried to study 'development' in the sense of change from within. In his opinion, social bodies are like living bodies. Thus, with increase in size, their structural complexity too increases. Spencer propounded an analogy between society and an organism and between social and economic growth.
- iii) **Emile Durkheim:** Durkheim conceived society in terms of an evolutionary scheme. He talked about social solidarity. By solidarity he meant the moral beliefs and ideas which defined the commonness underlying social life. Like a social evolutionist, he opined that in pre-industrial societies, mechanical solidarity was based on agreement and identity among people, while in post-industrial societies organic solidarity derived from agreement to tolerate a range of differences, conflicts being moderated through a variety of institutional arrangements. Division of labour was almost absent in pre-industrial societies, while it is highly specialised and categorical in modern societies. Durkheim tried to explain social change as the result of changes in the bonds of morality, which he called social solidarity. He also laid emphasis on the processes of social evolution. According to him, alterations in the modes of functioning of societies as organic wholes could be studied scientifically.
- iv) **Max Weber:** He examined the question of development and change in the context of his study on capitalism. According to him, culture (people's beliefs and values) is the key element in development. Unlike Durkheim, he tried to find as to what it was in people's religious and ethical beliefs that had enabled societies which started with similar technological endowment to develop and change in quite different ways.
- v) **Karl Marx:** Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in contrast to Durkheim and Weber argued that the processes of social change and development were in their nature not gradual and evolutionary; rather they were characterised by conflict of interests among classes in society. They essentially talked about disequilibrium between the productive potential of a society and the distribution of goods and services among its members. Therefore, according

to this view, social change arises out of potential struggles and radical breaks in continuity, rather than from gradual evolution. Class struggle has been recognised as the driving force of social change and development.

### 2.3.2 Development and Change as Modernisation

We will look into the contributions of W. Moore, Mc Clelland and critics of the modernisation theory.

- i) **Wilbert Moore** (1951) understood social change as total transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into a technology-dependent social organisation, generally found in the advanced, economically prosperous and relatively politically stable nations of the western world. He described the general conditions for industrialisation which include change in values, institutions, organisations and motivations. According to the modernisation theory development takes place from within a society and follows essentially the same pattern in all societies. The end-result of development, according to the modernisation theorists, is prosperity and relative political stability.
- ii) **David Mc Clelland** (1961), like Max Weber, emphasised that internal factors like the values and motives of the persons provide opportunities to shape their own destiny. Thus, the problems of backwardness, poverty, malnutrition etc. are vitally linked to traditional and non-traditional thought. Therefore, educational programmes and technical aid aimed at increasing the 'need for achievement' of the people of backward areas are needed to solve these problems. Mc Clelland's idea of the need for achievement crystallises this view of the motive force in social change in general and the industrialisation process as a particular case of social change. He concluded that modernisation or development could be achieved through a process of diffusion of culture, ideas and technology.
- iii) **Critics of the Modernisation theory:** A.G. Frank (1967) opined that the modernisation theories are inadequate from the policy point of view, because they fail to define correctly the kinds of social and economic processes at work in the developing countries. Rejecting the western model of development, he asserted that it is not necessary that development would occur in all societies if they adopt the economic policies and parliamentary democracy on the pattern of west.

#### Check Your Progress II

- i) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true F for false against each statement.
  - a) All change is development.
  - b) Early sociological theories by Comte, Spencer and Durkheim viewed development and change as interchangeable and/or logically related terms.
  - c) According to modernisation theorists the end result of development is prosperity and political stability.
  - d) Development refers to unplanned process of social change in modern times.

- ii) How did Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels view social change and development? Answers in about five lines.

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- iii) Tick mark the correct answer of the following question. Who among the following viewed human society as a biological organism?

- a) Herbert Spencer
- b) Max Weber
- c) Emile Durkheim
- d) Karl Marx

- iv) Write any two criticisms of modernisation theory. Use seven lines for your answer.

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### 2.3.3 Social Change: Structural and Cultural

Therefore because of the limitations of these terms a more neutral term ‘social change’ is widely used to denote change or transformation in the structure and function of any society. Social change is an important aspect of larger cultural change. It appears to refer to almost all changes other than those that can be defined under political or economic change. But sociologists struggled to provide precise meaning. **Social change** means modifications in the social institutions, behaviour of people or in social relations in a group, community and societies. This will include **Structural changes** that are overall changes in the structure and institutions of society. Change in structure can also be small in scale for short span. Bottomore (1986:297) defined social change as ‘change in social structure including the size of the society, or in social institutions or in the relationship between the institution.’ Davis (1981:622) explains it as change in structure and function of any society. The causes can be economical, political, cultural, technological and even environmental. **Cultural change** on the other hand would mean ‘variations in cultural phenomena, like, beliefs, ideas, creative expressions attitudes; religious, social and economic organizations; science and technology and every physical object created by humans (Dube, 1996:13). It is much broader and subsumes natural, social and psychological change.

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## 2.4 UNDERSTANDING CHANGE IN INDIA

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We can understand that India is changing if we unravel the processes and factors of change in India. 'Changing India' would literally mean experiencing difference in Indian society over a period of time. It will mean Indian society is in transition, continually transient and undergoing constant process of change. It implies idea of constant change is intrinsic to contemporary Indian society. It is imperative to find out the reasons for this unceasing change. Indian socio-economic and historic-cultural contexts provided basis for exploration of specific factors to understand change both at the cultural and structural levels in Indian context.

### 2.4.1 Factors of Change in India

You know Indian society is unique in its own ways. The vastness of plurality of traditions and the caste system makes it different on the world map. The changes of both cultural and structural types specific to Indian society are due to several factors. Contemporary India is a developing economy where there is a gradual shift from the established patterns of traditional society towards modernization through Industrial growth and development of modern technology, equipment and scientific knowledge. It is experiencing processes of economic growth, industrialization, urbanisation, and globalisation. Since these processes are still unfolding, India is experiencing continuous change both culturally and structurally. Let us learn about these processes briefly.

**Colonisation** is a process when technologically dominant people temporarily conquer other people, inhabit their land and exploit them for political, military and economic expansion and power. In India British took control over to establish their own empire. Alongwith technology they also transported modern legal and administrative system from Britain. The new system ushered changes in our political, economic and social structure. The impact of Colonialism therefore is far more than can be imagined. The far-reaching structural changes due to the impact of colonisation that also initiated cultural changes can be experienced in contemporary period too.

The unintended changes inherent in colonization were **Modernization and Secularization**. They are crucial factors in understanding the ongoing cultural changes in India. The western impact and rise of education lay the foundations for modernization in India during colonial period. M.N. Srinivas's **Westernization** explains the western impact at two levels. It includes all changes that happened with intellectual growth due to the spread of western education, liberal ethos and rise of middle class along with those that reflected in western ways of dressing, eating and adoption of cultural traits. Colonial encounters brought ideas of individualism, nationalism, ideas of freedom, rational and objective thinking. The basic application of such principles of modernity is modernization. Modernization in simple terms would mean a "process denoting a movement from traditional or quasi-traditional order to certain desired types of technology and associated forms of social structure, value orientations, motivations, and norms" (Dube 1996: 112). As Rudolph and Ruloph would argue 'this would mean adoption of universal and scientific thinking over the parochial and non-rational.' Modernization is when along with technological expansion; people's lives are regulated by choices and not by birth. **Secularization** is the process that emerges with modernization where religion is not the guiding

framework for human action and is less influential in the lives of ordinary people. Modern thinkers believed education, critical thinking and scientific advancement will contribute towards decline of religion and will give birth to scientific temperament in human societies. This did work so well in the Indian context.

#### 2.4.1.1 Industrialisation and Urbanisation

In India, after Independence, Industrialisation was seen as key to achieving economic growth and development. Industrialisation is a process that ensures the growth of industrial society in contrast to the agriculture one by restructuring the economic system for manufacturing goods and services. Sociologically societies of industrial types were considered as developed where the human beings controlled the technological and natural growth, with extreme division of labour and prosperity. Or let us say societies that have experienced processes of modernisation, industrialisation and technological expansion. These are seen in contrast to the traditional societies, which are based on agriculture, less prosperous and rural in nature. Closely linked to processes of industrialization and modernisation is the process of **Urbanisation**. It is growth of cities and movement of people from rural areas to urban areas, such as towns and cities, where in place of agriculture, employment opportunities are linked to trade, manufacture and Industrial production. In comparison to villages, you must have noticed, cities have better educational facilities and increased economic activities. This is because they have definite cultural patterns, advanced economic, political structures and modern bureaucratic and administrative systems. Urbanisation explains the level of cultural change based on modernisation and are also structural by being an index of economic development. It amounts to change in patterns of behavior, modes of thinking, relationships and social institutions. Colonialism created new ones and ended earlier existing urban centres of India and industrialisation.

#### 2.4.1.2 Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG)

The process of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation are processes that you must have heard in your school. Popularly known as LPG these are inherent in the logic and processes of economic growth and reform in India. The new economic phase in India began with Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. **Liberalisation** is the shift in the whole range of economic policies of a country, resulting into privatisation and Globalisation. The state opens up its economy to the world market by reducing control over the economic activities to improve the efficiency and growth of the economy. It was carried out in India to resolve the economic crisis that country was facing in 1990s. The opening of the markets to private players, especially foreign companies and investment in the areas where mostly government invested like, education, power, civil aviation, etc., came to be known as **Privatisation**. Essentially it is transfer of control from public to private sector. **Globalisation** is free flow of goods and services, ideas, information, technology and people across the globe. At present this flow of goods is mostly from the first world to third world countries when they open up their market for global trade. According to Albrow (1990:45), “Globalisation refers to all those processes by which people of the world are incorporated into a single world society.” It is to develop interdependence amongst societies, culture, economies, nations and people. It means to go beyond the boundaries of nation state and to develop global interconnectedness. Giddens (1990:65) says, “Globalisation is the intensification of world-wide social relation which link

distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa.”Globalisation has economic, cultural and political dimension. Economic and financial dimension includes Liberalisation and Privatisation. The process involves rise in multinational and trans-national companies that seek global profit. It is a process of transformation that is still unfolding differently in different parts of the world.

### **2.4.1.3 Mass Media and Information and Communication technology (ICT)**

This is the crucial factor of modernisation and development in India. It has both personal and social consequences. You know that the advent of technologies of communication in India was during the British period. Printing, telegraph, postal services, telephone, radio and even cinema, all came during this period and were instrumental in bringing about unforeseen changes like rise of public spheres that is the rapid spread of communication and awakening of people to the fact of being exploited by the colonial masters etc. and political struggle for freedom. Television came up in early decades of independence with broadcast rights with the government and emerged as a powerful political, cultural and economic tool. The coming of computers and later mobile phone made us enter in a new era of social media and digital communication. After LPG, the mass media entered into a different phase and there is massive rise of information and communication technology (communication satellite, fibre Optics, cables etc.). Information technologies one of the major processes of network society and interconnectedness in the global world. Knowledge and Information led global market allowed Multinational corporations like Murdoch’s News Corp to completely transform the scenario in India and in the entire south. Mass media and information technologies play crucial role in creating the dominance of developed nations. Matos argues that mass media has caused ‘cultural imperialism of the west by importing their formats and genre, cultural values like individualism and capitalist consumerism’ (2012:2). This enormous shift in mass media overall has transformed the economic, political and cultural practices in India.

### **2.4.1.4 Social Movements**

**Social Movements** caused change in multiple ways in the past as well as in the present. They occur due to certain societal conditions and aims at improving it by bringing transformation in the social structure. Broadly, any organised and sustained collective action with shared ideology and objectives aiming to bring change in society can be called as social movement. In colonial period movements demanded reform in existing social practices, expressed assertions of indigenous culture over the western, community rights and identity and freedom from colonialism. In post Independent India, movements demanding social justice and equal distribution of power in the past, social and economic inequality, marginalisation of women and weaker sections, issues related to community and religious identity, cultural and also social problems; have existed. Some of the famous movements are like the Bhakti movement; movement against sati pratha or for wider remarriage, Peasant movements in northern India and so on. There are three types of movements as Rao (2000) suggests, reformist, transformatory and revolutionary. Shah (2008:30) classifies them on the ‘basis of socio-economic characteristics of the participants and issues involved.’ They are Peasant, Tribal, Dalit, Backward caste, Women’s, Industrial working class, Student’s and Middle class movements.

i) Explain the meaning of modernisation in one line.

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ii) Is adoption of western ways of thinking and living westernisation?

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iii) What is LPG?

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## **2.5 CHANGING INDIA: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE**

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It must be clear to you that sociologically societies are never static and are for ever changing. India cannot be unchanging if understood sociologically. Contemporary India is a developing economy where there is a gradual shift from the established patterns of traditional society towards modernisation through Industrial growth, development of modern technology, equipment and scientific knowledge. It is experiencing ongoing processes of industrialisation, urbanisation, and globalisation. Since these processes are still unfolding, India is experiencing continuous change both culturally and structurally.

In a society like India that underwent colonialism and achieved independence through freedom struggle, Singh (1996:1) argues, concept of social change was ideological where it ceased to be a process but was desirable to be achieved.



Here change became synonymous to growth and progress. Therefore, since Independence change was visualised as economic growth and progress, and the expansion of education and it was believed that scientific thought process will gradually bring social and cultural changes. Such ideas of transformations encapsulated the vision of the western paradigm of modernisation and capitalist model of economic growth. Therefore the responses to factors of change are complex and pose immense challenges. Let us have a closer look.

The rise of western liberal values of democracy, social justice and nationalism during colonialism led to the framing of Constitution for independent India. Firstly, social change was promised by constitution as part of modernisation process. It recognised that India is multi religious and multicultural. It attempted to bring unity in diversity through core values of democracy and democratic institutions. India aimed to become developed industrial society on the foundation of such constitutional framework and set out to fight structural inequality and provide justice for all sections of society. The changes were both orthogenetic and heterogenetic in nature. Let us briefly throw light on how have the villages and urban spaces changed since independence.

### 2.5.1 Changing Rural India

Rural India has undergone several changes since independence. The agrarian reforms along with development were the goals of Indian government. Reforms caused end of bonded labour, change in the mode of payment from kind to cash and the rise of free wage and agricultural labourers that according to Breman (1974) caused a shift from 'patronage to exploitation'. Villages are merging into towns under massive sway of urbanisation and globalisation, are no more 'Little Communities'. There is decline in traditional occupation and increased commercialisation has led to newer interconnections with rural and urban economies. This urban-folk continuum has given rise to diverse occupation and circulation of labour or seasonal occupation. The great traditions of the literate elites seem to control the little traditions of rural folks and there is continuous process of communication in two traditions in some areas. Agriculture is no more the single occupation for rural people. Amidst all this there are significant changes since state's support for agriculture has reduced and agricultural issues are not capturing the attention of media and wider nation. The farmers are no more celebrated in the national culture of India since India after LPG is more service driven and less dependent on agriculture. More than seventy percentage of GDP is coming from the service sector after the 1990's than from agriculture sector

Have you heard about farmer's suicide that started amongst cotton growing farmers of Vidarbha and later in parts of Uttar Pradesh and gradually in rest of India? These suicides reflect on the changes in the economic policies and changing rural India. Lets try to understand this phenomena. The land revenue system of colonial India led to huge variation in agrarian structure across India. This was encountered by agrarian reforms in independent India under planned development. Reforms like Green revolution in 1960s and 70s brought uneven growth with increased inequality among the farmers. Later Liberalisation and Globalisation established the norms of World Trade Organisation. The crops were grown for the commercial market leading to increased commercialization of agricultural produce since it had to compete in the global market. The excessive persuasion

of development model based on modernisation and industrialisation has led to decline in indigenous methods and technology, causing greater difficulty in affording the new technology.

Marginalisation of agriculture and disintegrated movements has changed the trajectory of rural social structure. The hegemony of the elites and upper castes continues and inequality persists at all levels.

### 2.5.2 Changing Urban Spaces

The urban spaces have undergone massive changes. The industrialisation caused expansion of cities, technological revolution and rise in mass media. This has altered the ways of living massively. The mixed economy policy was followed in independent India leading to government control of some sectors like power, transportation, etc. and some opened to private industrialists. It also supported small-scale industry policy. Post LPG, the rise of service sectors have resulted in the growth of urban middle class and also urban poor that mostly constitute people from rural places, mostly lower castes and class mainly less educated.

The development and globalisation has changed the landscape of cities. The rise in new material culture is evident in the cities and cultural transformations are huge. The skyscrapers, multinational companies and commercial complex showcasing international standards are the new reality of the urban spaces. The dominance of private corporations and less intervention of government has altered labour conditions, giving rise to structural inequalities of gender, caste and class, increasing insecurity and steep competition. This has caused change in values, beliefs and norms. Modernisation has given rise to education, skill based profession and high degree of specialisation leading to division of labour to suit the capitalist model of development.

The process of Sanskritisation has led to rise in education and growth of majoritarian culture and middle classes. It is still much visible amongst the newly educated sections and in urban poor. The tension between the 'cognitive elements of western culture and Indian minds rooted in traditional Indian social structure persists and there is slow change in the 'ideo-structure' of society. Modernisation and its encounter with tradition in urban spaces, like rural India, is visible in cultural contradictions but mostly in hidden ways. Mukherjee's dialectical approach explains this contradiction. He says these contradictions have given rise to conflict as well as cohesion or synthesis. This cultural contradiction and synthesis defines the culture of society at present. Cultural contradictions in food, occupation, fashion, gender relations, ritual practices and festivals and many such areas is much visible.

#### Check Your Progress IV

- 1) State true and false for the following statement.
  - a) Agriculture is still the main part of economy
  - b) Villages are shrinking with increase in Urbanisation.
  - c) Skyscrapers are part of rural change
  - d) Liberalisation is change in range of policies.

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we learned about changing India by understanding the meanings of change by various concepts, approaches and theories.

We learned that societies are in different phases of change due to varying external and internal reasons. Changing India involves understanding of several factors. Some of these are continuous processes. Since it aims to experience progress like developed nations, it is evident, that here change is bound with human knowledge, power of science and technology and the process of modernisation that entails changes in views, beliefs and ideals towards more universal ones. There is uneven development and slow process of modernisation in India as it is still grappling to overcome the conflict between tradition and modernity and therefore even after massive urbanisation and globalisation India is ridden with structural problems.

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## 2.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- i) Social change refers to the alterations that occur in the social structure, and social relationships in a society.
- ii) Social Change is essentially a process of alteration, with no reference to the quality of change. Changes in culture are related to changes in society. Changes also vary in scope and speed.

- iii) Evolution expresses continuity and direction of change, implying change not only in size but also of structure. Progress implies change in a desirable directions. Change on the other hand is considered to be a value neutral concept which refers to alterations in both structure and social relationships in a society.

### Check Your Progress II

- i) a) F  
b) T  
c) T  
d) F
- ii) According to Marx and Engles social change and development are characterized by conflict of interests among classes in society. They argued that social changes arise out of potential and radical breaks in continuity, rather than from gradual evolution.
- iii) a
- 2) Modernisation theories argue that each society's development problems can be understood only in relation to its place in the world system. But it is not proved that all developing countries follow the same path of development of already developed countries. Modernisation theories fail to define conclusively the kinds of social and economic process at work in the developing countries.

### Check Your Progress III

- i) Following principles of modernity in most basic sense is modernisation  
ii) Yes  
iii) Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation

### Check Your Progress IV

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

### Further Readings

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