

INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITIONS



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Unit 3	Radhakamal Mukerjee	Adapted from Unit 5 of IGNOU course material: <i>Sociological Thought</i> (ESO 13) by Nita Mathur
Unit 4	G S Ghurye	Adapted from Unit 5 of IGNOU course material <i>Sociological Thought</i> (ESO 13) with contribution of Jyoti Raghavan, Kamla Nehru College, University of Delhi
Unit 5	Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji	Adapted from Unit 5 of IGNOU course material <i>Sociological Thought</i> (ESO 15) by Nita Mathur
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COURSE INTRODUCTION

For long the Discipline of Sociology has remained guided by western ideologies, concepts and theories. The situation was more gripping in India particularly under colonial rule. You might be aware that the objective of colonial administration was to document people's life, and collect information which could be used to classify them. Over the recent past, however, sociology in Independent India has witnessed a major turn towards examining the adequacy of western style in the Discipline. Many sociologists have felt the need for developing an understanding of society and culture in their own country using concepts and theories based on indigenous perspectives and Indian social reality. This course on Indian Sociological Traditions primarily provides perspectives of some of the Indian sociologists on these and other important issues.

The course is divided into three Blocks. First Block is on History and Development of Indian Sociological Traditions. It comprises two units. First unit informs the learner of major influences on Indian Sociological Traditions. Here we discuss in what way social thought was influenced in Pre-British and British periods, and how socio-religious, political and other movements influenced sociological tradition in the country. Second unit outlines the trajectory of sociological thought in India. The emphasis is on two main schools of thought: the Bombay school and the Lucknow school.

Second and Third Blocks are: Sociologists in India-1 and Sociologists in India-2 respectively. Each Block comprises five units. In all, we discuss the life and work of ten sociologists: Radhakamal Mukerjee, G S Ghurye, D P Mukerji, N K Bose, Verrier Elwin, Irawati Karve, A R Desai, M N Srinivas, Ramkrishna Mukherjee, and Leela Dube. Each unit presents the life and thought of a particular sociologist. We begin each unit with a biographical sketch of the concerned sociologist in order to inform the learner of the social and economic conditions under which the sociologist grew up and in what way these conditions influenced his/her intellectual thought. The biographical sketch is followed by a discussion of his/her central ideas. This brings to light his/her contribution to the Discipline of Sociology. Thereafter, we list out his/her important works. What comes out clearly in each unit is the concerned sociologists' struggle with the available concepts, approaches and theories. Such struggle enabled the sociologists to develop indigenous concepts and approaches to understand Indian social reality. The Units in Blocks 2 and 3 demonstrate that such a process was not an easy task. It required critical examination of prevailing western thought followed by deep understanding of social situation in India. Achievement of such understanding made it possible to develop relevant ideas and concepts pertaining to Indian social situation from a sociological perspective.

Block 1

History and Development of Indian Sociological Traditions

THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 1 MAJOR INFLUENCES ON INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITIONS*

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Social Antecedents of Indian Sociological Thought
 - 1.2.1 Social Thought in Pre-British Period
 - 1.2.2 Impact of the British
 - 1.2.3 Emergence of the Middle Classes
- 1.3 Socio-religious and Other Movements for Reform
 - 1.3.1 The Reformist Movements
 - 1.3.2 The Revivalist Movements
 - 1.3.3 Other Movements
- 1.4 Political Movement for Freedom after Freedom in India
 - 1.4.1 Social Background of Freedom Struggle
 - 1.4.2 Complementary Nature of Religious and Political Movements
 - 1.4.3 Political Movements related to Women, Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Tribes
- 1.5 Intellectual Antecedents of Indian Sociological Thought in India
 - 1.5.1 Dilemma between Tradition and Modernity
 - 1.5.2 Benoy Kumar Sarkar
 - 1.5.3 Ananda Coomaraswamy
 - 1.5.4 Some Other Intellectuals
 - 1.5.5 Structure of Modern Education in India
- 1.6 Emergence of Sociology and Social Anthropology in India
 - 1.6.1 Link Between Sociology and Social Anthropology
 - 1.6.2 Link Between Sociology and Indology
 - 1.6.3 Irawati Karve
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 References
- 1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to:

* Adapted from unit 4 of IGNOU course material: *Sociological Thought* (ESO 13)

- describe the social antecedents of sociological thought in India;
- discuss the socio-religious movements for reform;
- explain the political movement for freedom;
- describe the intellectual antecedents of sociological thought; and
- outline the emergence of sociology and social anthropology in India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we have discussed the social and intellectual antecedents of the history and development of sociology in India. We have also mentioned the impact of the British in bringing about the change in the way of thinking, style of living and behaviour of the upper strata of Indian people. The socio-religious movements were an attempt to rid society of its social evils and rigid values. Freedom struggle and the Indian leaders who participated in this struggle had a great influence on Indian society and culture. It is in the background of these social changes that sociology and social anthropology emerged and developed in India.

Section 1.2 describes the social antecedents of Indian sociological thought; section 1.3 discusses the socio-religious reform movements while section 1.4 gives the social background of the freedom struggle, as well as, the complementary nature of the religious and political movements. Section 1.5 describes the intellectual antecedents of Indian sociological thought and finally, section 1.6 outlines the emergence of sociology and social anthropology in India.

1.2 SOCIAL ANTECEDENTS OF INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

India has a history extending over nearly four millennia. Its cultural heritage consists of religious and philosophical works, which were composed in classical languages such as Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali. Besides, in the medieval period Bhakti literature was composed in regional languages such as Awadhi, Braj, Maithali, Bengali, Assamese, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. Then there are classical and folk forms of performing arts, architecture, sculpture that embody India's pluralistic tradition of socio-cultural formation, ranging from tribal groups to agriculturists and urban dwellers.

1.2.1 Social Thought in Pre-British Period

India is a complex civilisation especially where its literary tradition is concerned. The Indian philosophy consists of six schools of thought namely Yoga, Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Vedanta and Mimamsa. This is an important source of Indian thought. The thirteen principal Upanishads consist of philosophical enquiries into inner life and ultimate destiny of human beings. Besides these we have the Buddhist and Jain religions which

have many philosophical works. Generally, these schools of thought concern the evolution of mankind towards certain ultimate goals. Salvation, which in India means freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, is the objective of enquiry and cogitation in many of these philosophies. Indian society has all the same been changing and adapting itself to new conditions.

Indian social thought in pre-modern times was the articulation of a multi-ethnic society. We have had the impact of Islamic tradition which gave rise to the Sufi cult and had a wide ranging influence on the life style and values, especially in the North. The Sikh religion is a very good example of the mixture of Hindu and Islamic thought. All through, the freedom of enquiry prevailed in India and there was hardly any persecution of a group on grounds of belief. Hence, a tolerant attitude towards each other characterised the Indian social groups. While Indian religions thrived among the common populace, Indian philosophy was mainly cultivated among the literate, urban-based classes.

1.2.2 Impact of the British

The coming of British into India was an event which had far-reaching consequences for Indian society. The age-old traditions began to decline due to new social and economic forces. The classical languages such as Sanskrit and Persian declined and English became the official language. The traditional handicrafts in Indian country-side fell into decay as they were unable to withstand the competition of machine-made textiles and other goods brought by the British to the Indian markets from Manchester, Lancashire, Sheffield and London. The Indian villages were not able to continue as viable economic units under the colonial rule.

The British brought important changes in India by the introduction of railways, posts and telegraphs which facilitated communication between groups. Further, administrative and judicial services were extended to many parts of the subcontinent. Thus, India entered the modern stage. The schools, colleges and universities were started by the British rulers. Missionaries and Indian voluntary organisations also took steps to spread modern education in India.

1.2.3 Emergence of the Middle Classes

The erstwhile feudal classes such as, the Rajas, the Zamindars, the Talukdars, etc. were no longer in the center of the stage. Indeed, the middle classes, which emerged during the British period, are now prominent in nearly all spheres of social life in Indian society. The social thinkers discussed in this unit are drawn from the middle class base. Although castes are important in ritualistic and domestic spheres, classes have become significant in occupational, professional and public life. The term “middle class” is used here not as a pure economic category. The middle class is the product of both economics and culture. The members of the middle class not only share a common economic life but also a socio-cultural life.

1.3 SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS FOR REFORM

In the nineteenth century and the early parts of the twentieth century it is the members from middle classes who began to think in terms of reforming and modernising Indian society. The reformist attempts contained both religious and social components. Let us briefly discuss the reformist and revivalist movements of the nineteenth century India.

1.3.1 The Reformist Movements

One of the early nineteenth century reformers was Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) of Bengal who believed that Indians could become progressive if they shed the superstitions and evil practices such as Sati, infanticide, etc. He advocated a new kind of religion which combined Christian teachings with Vedanta. He founded the Brahmo Samaj which was meant to be a spiritual forum, where monotheistic, non-idolatrous worship could be conducted by its members who had nothing to do with caste or superstition. Ram Mohan Roy's influence was mainly confined to urban, literate groups of Bengal. In the same century, Mahadev Govind Ranade, a jurist of Maharashtra, founded the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay. This was broadly modeled on the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal. The social reactions raised by the two movements were, however, quite different. The Brahmo Samaj by its insistence on Western-inspired liberalism gave rise to a stormy orthodox reaction. Ram Mohan's reforms were strongly opposed by orthodox Hindus led by Radha Kant Dev. Here was a confrontation between tradition and modernity. By contrast, the liberal trends initiated by Prarthana Samaj did not create a direct conflict between tradition and modernity. Unlike the members of Brahmo Samaj, its members did not lead a distinctive, anti-traditionalist life style. So, there was no sharp reaction from society.

1.3.2 The Revivalist Movements

Two revivalist movements may be also mentioned. The Arya Samaj launched by Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) was based on an appeal to people to shed the unhealthy features of Hinduism (such as narrowness of caste, superstition, ritualism, etc.) and go back to the pristine purity of Vedas. It sponsored a kind of education which had both traditional and modern components. The D.A.V. or Dayananda Anglo-Vedic Colleges spread education in North India on a wide scale. The Ramakrishna Mission founded by Vivekananda had a two-fold purpose: one, to make educated people in India to realise their responsibility to the weaker sections and take steps to remove poverty and social backwardness; second, to propagate Indian Vedanta to the Westerners. In regard to first, many schools and hostels were founded in urban, rural and tribal areas to improve education and employment prospects of common people. In regard to second, Advaita centers were established in many Western countries to bring about spiritual awakening among Western people.

1.3.3 Other Movements

Just as reformist and revivalist movements were precursors for social reforms in India and they gave impetus to scholarly activities related to socio-cultural awakening in Indian society., we find that in post-Independence period, degradation of environment and misguided development related movements have also influenced intellectual activity among shows sociologists who focus on the study of and problems related to deforestation, displacement, and unbalanced sex ratio in India. Most of these issues are products of movements taking place in different parts of the country.

Except this brief mention of such trends, we will not go into these details as these developments in Sociology will be included in the syllabus of course of master's degree in Sociology.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Name the six schools of thought found in Indian philosophy. Use about three lines to list them.
.....
.....
.....
- 2) Mention three of the important changes brought about in Indian society due to the impact of the British rule.
.....
.....
.....
- 3) Who founded the Brahmo Samaj? What does it stand for?
.....
.....
.....

1.4 POLITICAL MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM IN INDIA

Towards the end of nineteenth century, a political movement for the attainment of Independence arose in India. The National Congress, founded in 1885 by Octavius Hume, established a political forum for debates and discussions.

1.4.1 Social Background of Freedom Struggle

Most members of the National Congress were drawn from urban, literate groups. It's essentially middle class character persisted from 1885-1917. With

the coming of M.K. Gandhi on the scene, the Congress became a mass based political party, in which urban professionals, peasants, artisans and industrial workers formed the bulk of primary members. Broadly speaking, intellectuals in India did not have to face the type of persecution faced elsewhere for holding independent political opinions or agitating for freedom. However, numerous congress leaders and followers went to prison under the charge of sedition during the Swadeshi Movement, Non- Cooperation Movement and Quit India Movement. Several people were also executed for their participation in anti-state and termed by the British as terrorist activities. However, the distinctive mark of the Indian struggle for Independence was its non-violent approach.

Activity 1

Read one novel by famous Indian authors like Tagore, Premchand, Mulkraj Anand, Raja Rao, Venkataramani, or any other author. The background of this novel should be the freedom struggle in India.

After reading this novel write an essay of about two pages about (i) the kind of social institutions, such as family, law, political associations mentioned in the novel; (ii) about the values and norms represented through the actions of different characters in the novel.

If possible, compare your note with the notes of other students at your Study Centre.

1.4.2 Complementary Nature of Religious and Political Movements

While the religious movements indirectly contributed to political movements through education and reforms, the National Congress and other political parties directly participated in political activities. The former type of movement induced self-confidence, while the latter type created a political consciousness. Thus, the two types may be viewed as complementary developments in Indian society. We have so far discussed the social and cultural scenario that provided a backdrop for development of sociology in India. However, before we go on to discuss the topic of development of sociology in India and its major pioneers, let us discuss the intellectual climate which gave rise to its emergence.

1.4.3 Political Movements related to Peasants, Women, Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Tribes

The interface of social institutions and political processes has often given impetus to collective action with some degree of organisation. We find that in India desire for social change beginning with lobbying or advocacy has led to political movements with fairly clear objectives, action-plan and organisation. You may discuss such movements arising in India in the context of rising expectation of the masses, which are not fulfilled by current political set-up. (See Kothari 1960, Bailey 1962 and Desai 1965). Mukherjee (1977), Rao (1978) and Oommen (1977) have worked on theoretical and substraction

aspects of such movements in India. For enumerating examples of political movement in India, we may look at the Telangana peasant struggle movement between 1946 and 1951. It was led by the Communist Party of India (see Dhanagare 2002 (1983)). Similarly, various shades of communist parties have continued to organise the Naxal base movement of the 1960s today (see Bannerjee 2002 or 1980, 1996). Both the Telangana and Naxal bound movements have tried to change the existing agrarian relations.

The scheduled castes and tribes, being the most exploited and oppressed segments of Indian society, have quite a long history of protests, struggles and organised movements. Omvedt (2002 or 2001) has worked on the dalit movement after Ambedkar while Sinha (2002 or 1972) and Singh (2002 or 1983) have studied tribal movements. Women's movements in India and their links with the state are subject matter of studies by such scholars as Lingam (2002 or 1998), Jain (1984) and Desai (1988). Participation of youth in student movements has significance from the point of view of leadership formation that matures in the stage of later roles in regional or national politics (see Shah 2002 or 1979). The idea of mentioning these studies at this point is to take your attention to trends in current sociological pursuits. At the level of master's degree courses, such movements will be part of a full paper on sociology of social and political movements in India. (Please note that the year given after 2002 in the above references refer to first time publication of the articles which have been re-printed in the year 2002 publication, edited by G. Shah).

1.5 INTELLECTUAL ANTECEDENTS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN INDIA

We may make here a reference to the British impact on Indian elites. India had a classical literary tradition which lasted for centuries. The hallmark of elitism was knowledge of Sanskrit. But during the Bhakti phase (approximately from ninth century A.D.) there was the development of a high quality literature in regional languages. The Bhaktas, who inspired literary activity in regional languages, were either writers themselves or else their teachings inspired literary work. Mention may be made of Tulsidas and Surdas (Awadhi and Braj respectively), Kabir (variant of Hindu), Sankaradeva (Assamese), Chaitanya (Bengali), Namdev and Tukaram (Marathi), Narsi Mehta (Gujarati), Purandaradasa (Kannada), Nayanars and Alvars (Tamil) and many others.

While the Bhaktas remained pre-eminently folk-venerated figures in several regions of India, the elites continued to cling to Sanskrit as the ideal literary form. Prestige was attached to Sanskrit compositions. Even Rabindranath Tagore had to contend with the Bengali traditional elites who held that Sanskrit was much superior medium of instruction. There was a swift but partial change over to English among the Indian elites. According to Edward Shils, in spite of this shift to English there was a sub-conscious longing among the Indian elites for the older Brahminical tradition based on Sanskrit. In other words, the

modern English educated elites were more inspired by literary, humanistic tradition than by science and technology. This persistence was due to the hold of Sanskrit on the elites.

1.5.1 Dilemma Between Tradition and Modernity

In sum, the Indian intellectual of the twentieth century were caught in the dilemma between tradition and modernity. Tradition stood for the old customs, values, ideals etc. while modernity implied the impact of the Western ideals of rationality freedom, equality etc. Tradition and modernity should not be viewed as polar opposites, but some scholars (e.g. Edward Shills) have used them as a device to distinguish between the old and the new values. Coomaraswamy, a famous social thinker and curator of Indian art in U.S.A., almost veered to the rejection of practices. He meant by tradition the basic premises or core values which were common to both the East and the West. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, an eminent sociologist, took the other extreme of setting aside the traditions of India which were rooted in religion and spirituality. He tried to show the secular strength of India. Yet, he did not altogether reject tradition. He wanted to extract the secular component of Indian culture and use it for human progress.

1.5.2 Benoy Kumar Sarkar

Benoy Kumar Sarkar was a rationalist. He did not agree with the view that the West was materialistic, while the East was spiritualistic. Sarkar argued that Indian society had materialistic as well as secular components. India's past could be described in terms of positive, materialistic terms. He did not subscribe to the view that India was mystical or otherworldly. Sarkar welcomed the transition of India from a feudal, agrarian past to a capitalistic present. The colonial rule had broken up the isolation of India and brought it into the global mainstream, capitalism or bourgeois culture was the dominant force of contemporary times. In his search for the rationalistic basis of India, B.K. Sarkar resembled Max Weber, who developed sociology of capitalism. However, Sarkar focused on political aspects of capitalism, while Karl Marx discussed its economic aspects and Max Weber focused on bureaucracy.

In order to march along with the developed societies of the world, India needed self-confidence and poise. Sarkar was an atheist but he did not discard India's religious tradition. According to him, even India's religions had a secular basis. For example, the deities such as Shiva, Parvati or Ganesha were the creations of human mind rather than of divine origin. The Indian tradition with its undue emphasis on mysticism and renunciation could not help India's adaptation to changing times. It was appropriate, therefore, for educated Indians to reassert their rationalist, secular past and equip themselves for the challenges of an urban-industrial society. Sarkar, for example, was opposed to religious revivalism.

The bourgeoisie in the West had succeeded in setting aside their feudal past. The hegemony of the church with its mysticism and renunciation had receded

to the background in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. The individuals were no longer mere cogs in the wheel of collectivity. Not only new productive patterns but also new social attitudes were emerging in the new epoch. Individualism gained prominence in the industrial society of Europe. The individuals needed to be aggressive and motivated for action and achievement. The old collective identities were, therefore, buried and new individualistic goals and aspirations began to thrive.

Sarkar was inspired by the two political philosophers of Europe: Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. Niccolo Machiavelli (fourteenth century) wrote his political philosophy in the early days of emerging modern capitalism. The capitalist individual was aggressive, self-confident, and more interested in material gains. His prescription for political rulers was that they should seize hold the opportunity and act ruthlessly to achieve the goals. Thomas Hobbes (seventeenth century) was a later political philosopher. He proposed the theory of social contract. The self-seeking individuals depicted by Niccolo Machiavelli were no longer suitable for the more advanced capitalist society which required order and balance. Therefore, individuals must give up their selfish pursuits, enter into a social contract and abide by norms. This way the individual aggression would be kept under reasonable control. Sarkar stated that Indians should firstly give up their mystical attitude and secondly they should develop a social perspective suitable to the capitalist order. Important works of B.K. Sarkar are *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, 4 Volumes (published in 1914 and 1937); and *Political Institutions and Theories of Hindus* (1922). He taught economics at Calcutta University.

1.5.3 Ananda Coomaraswamy

Ananda Coomaraswamy was an early Indian social thinker whose works helped in the development of sociology in India. He was an **idealist**, i.e. a person believing in the abstract values of life like God, values of goodness, etc. In this he stood in contrast to B.K. Sarkar who wished to explore the material basis of Indian society. The first two or three decades of this century may be described as a period of Indian Renaissance. Notable personalities such as Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore were also trying to project an idealistic view of India. In essence all these men held that the greatness of India lay in its spirituality. Through the revival of her spirit, India could not only overcome its poverty and backwardness, but also bring solace to the West afflicted by materialistic greed and disrupted by war and violence.

Ananda Coomaraswamy extensively explored the evolution of art in India, especially architecture and sculpture. For him, Indian art in its myriad forms was not merely a decorative or aesthetic object, but it was the key to understand the Indian mind which recognises oneness of all in the universe or unity in diversity. It was an enduring testimony to a great civilisation and a culture. It embodied the ideals and values of the mankind. In a country where many people are not literate, the Indian art served as a visual medium of instruction; it depicted epics, puranas, and legends in stone, clay or marble for the instruction

of folks. Further, it treasured India's religious values and summed up India's recognition of oneness in all forms of expression. Viewed thus, the harsh and the tender, the ugly and the beautiful, the rational and the expressive were all part and parcel of the total artistic experience.

Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote many books interpreting philosophy of Indian art. In the West, India's achievements in the past had been known mainly through the Sanskrit texts. The West had only a vague notion of Indian art which had developed over nearly four millennia. Coomaraswamy held that Indian images were not merely anthropomorphic forms (i.e. folk beliefs transformed in human forms) but also veritable treasure houses of Indian ideals. The Shiva-Nataraja not only denoted a peak achievement in sculpture but also symbolised liberation. Shiva's dance ended the mortal limitations and freed the human soul from its temporal trappings. He noted that there were many parallels between the Indian art and the European Gothic art. Although there were many interpretations of Indian art previously by W.B. Havell, Percy Brown and others, Coomaraswamy presented for the first time a comprehensive philosophy of Indian art.

Ananda Coomaraswamy made a unique distinction between tradition and modernity. He held that tradition was the epoch anchored in values of collective life and qualitative achievement. As such it was common to all countries – East, Middle-East or West. This epoch was disrupted by the Industrial Revolution whose influence became world-wide. The competitiveness of the new age made human beings materialists and grasping. Ananda Coomaraswamy did not belittle science and technology. But he regretted that in modern times, the science and technology have been put to wrong uses; people became aggressive and selfish; the nations tried to dominate each other through violence and warfare.

In comparing East and West, he did not try to uphold India's superiority over the rest in spirituality and human values. He wrote extensively on the commonness of mysticism in European, Chinese and Arabic religious texts and documents. But he seemed to hold that the Western countries had smothered their mystical and spiritual traditions under the weight of materialistic achievements. Therefore, India could stimulate the spiritual regeneration of the West. India in a special sense stood for the whole of Asia. Although China was a great civilisation, much of its culture was moulded by Buddhism. The other Asian countries such as Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Cambodia too have been moulded by India's culture. In the final analysis, what mattered was the activation of core values which were common heritage of all her mankind. Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote: "The chosen people of the future can be no nation, no race, but an aristocracy of the whole world, in whom the vigour of European action will be united to the serenity of Asiatic thought".

In a similar vein, he wanted the nationalists in India, who were then struggling for Independence, to nurture broad visions. He wanted the young Indians to

aspire not only for independent India but for a better world free from strife and tension. Merely imitating the West in the name of progress was not going to help the emerging Indian nation. Indian women should redefine themselves in the Indian idiom; women should be true to themselves and exist on their own terms. If they merely compete with men, forgetting the core values, then they would not reach fulfillment. Ananda Coomaraswamy, in sum, did not advocate orientalising of the West nor did he desire a synthesis of the two. He stood for a return to “the first principles” by which he meant the moral values which were the basis of all humankind. His important works are: *The Dance of Shiva* (Indian edition, 1974); and *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (Indian edition, 1974).

1.5.4 Some Other Intellectuals

Radhakamal Mukerjee and G.S. Ghurye, two noted sociologists of Lucknow and Bombay Universities, respectively, were more directly influenced by India’s Sanskrit heritage. They looked at modernity as an instrument of adapting traditions to contemporary conditions. In comparison to them, D.P. Mukerji, another eminent sociologist of Lucknow, started off as a Marxist. He viewed tradition and modernity as confronting each other and shaping each other, but he rejected the final Marxist solution of an Utopian state. In other words, he went back to Indian tradition for reconstructing modern India. You will learn more extensively about the contribution made by these three pioneers of sociology in India. But before doing that let us first understand the structure of education in India during the British period. This has had considerable influence on the nature and type of sociology, besides other social sciences like economics, political science, etc. which developed in India. Sociology in India to a large extent became influenced by such developments primarily in Britain and then America and Europe. Therefore, to understand the structure of education in India is very important.

1.5.5 Structure of Modern Education in India

A few words may be said about the structure of Indian education. In the three British Presidencies, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, universities were established during the nineteenth century. In the princely states of India such as Baroda, Mysore, Hyderabad etc., institutions were established for modern education. While higher institutions had English medium, the lower schools had vernacular (i.e. regional languages) medium. The purpose of education was to train Indians in arts and sciences so they would help in the smooth functioning of British rule in India. The educated Indians were usually absorbed into the lower rungs of administration and judiciary.

In the arts and sciences, a limited number of subjects were taught. These included English, history, philosophy, economics, physics, chemistry, botany and zoology. Sociology came to be taught as a major subject only after the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Sociology developed as a discipline primarily due to the need felt by the

British rulers during the colonial period to understand the customs, manners and social institutions of the Indian people. For better administration they required to know the customs and practices of the people whom they were trying to govern. Thus initially it was the British administrators such as, Herbert Risley, J. H. Hutton, Wilson, Alfred Lyell, Baines, etc. who conducted extensive studies of Indian peoples, their cultures and races.

Sociology was introduced in 1914 in Bombay University. The Government of India gave a grant to the university for teaching of sociology and a course of lectures in sociology and economics was offered to the post-graduate students in the same year. In 1919, department of sociology and civics was founded under the leadership of Patrick Geddes who was a distinguished biologist and town-planner.

It was introduced in Calcutta University in 1917, in the Post-Graduate Councils of Arts and Sciences by Sir Brajendranath Seal. Seal was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University at that time; he was a Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta earlier. It was his efforts and the efforts of A.R. Wadia of the Mysore University, which helped establish sociology as a discipline in Indian universities. In Calcutta, sociology was taught by Radhakamal Mukerjee and Benoy Kumar Sarkar. Both these sociologists are the pioneers in their fields. Radhakamal Mukerjee later went to Lucknow, which became another center for sociological learning in India in 1921, besides Calcutta and Bombay. He along with D. P. Mukerji and D.N. Majumdar, one a Marxologist/sociologist and the other a social anthropologist helped found Lucknow an influential centre of teaching and research in sociology and anthropology.

We will discuss the emergence of sociology and anthropology further in section 4.6.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Fill in the blanks:

- a) The National Congress was founded in 1885 by
- b) The National Congress was meant to be a forum for debates and discussions.
- c) With the coming of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress became a political party.
- d) The socio-religious movements induced in the Indian people while the political movement created a consciousness in her people.

2) Describe some of the basic ideas of Benoy Kumar Sarkar.

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1.6 EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA

Major Influences on Indian Sociological Traditions

Sociology, as a discipline, came much after the contributions made by social thinkers, philosophers, administrators who worked at understanding the Indian society, in general, as well as studying some specific aspects of Indian society, such as law, family, religion, caste system and so on.

It is the contributions made by the Indologists, such as, Henry Maine, Alfred Lyell, etc. which helped the development of sociology in India. They emphasised the need to preserve the indigenous social institutions found in Indian society rather than destroying them and imposing an alien way of life on her people. They recognised the past glory of Indian cultural and literary tradition.

Besides Indologists, there were British administrators who made extensive study of Indian people, their races and cultures. Most of these studies helped generate a body of knowledge, preserved in the Census Reports, Imperial Gazatteers, District Gazetteers, etc. as well as in books and monographs, which are referred by social anthropologists and sociologists even today.

Sociology was better established on the continent i.e. in European countries like France, Germany, etc. than in England. It took even stronger roots in American universities where it has retained a dominant position till now. Alongside of sociology, anthropology was also developing in Indian universities. In the Indian context, it is just not possible to distinguish between anthropology and sociology except in terms of methodology. Generally, sociology has studied urban-industrial groups, while anthropology has focused on tribes, castes and communities. But the sociologists have also been anthropologists and vice versa. In fact, it is better to use the term “ethno-sociologists” to describe those writing in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Ethno-sociologists combine documentary and literary data with oral traditions and field data. Thus, in the Indian academic studies, we find that tribe, caste and region have been linked with each other in a variety of ways. Both sociology and anthropology in India have one thing in common: they are mainly based on empirical data. Both of them deal with aggregates of people in a number of locales, village, town and city. During British rule, a number of ethnographic works were written by J.H. Hutton, Edward Thurston, H. Risley, L.S.S. O’ Malley and others. There were also the writings of Sir Henry Maine and W.H. Baden-Powell on the village community in India. Besides, the many district gazetteers produced by the British officials provided ethnographic and economic data pertaining to Indian society. The Indian sociological works (e.g. G.S. Ghurye’s works) have often drawn upon these early books and documents written by British officials or observers.

In these two units, namely History and Development of Sociology in India Part I and Part II, references will be made to Indian writers who may be regarded as pioneers in Indian sociology. It may be observed that there was a difference

between Western and Indian intellectual developments. In the West, modern intellectuals strove to “secularise” the thought. They were reacting to the hegemony of church in doing so. By contrast, in India, the religions did not place a bar on free thinking. The stimulus to creative work in the Indian social sciences came from interaction with the West. Now let us examine briefly in the sub-section 1.6.1 the link between sociology and social anthropology, which as you already know are closely interlinked. Then we will discuss the link between sociology and Indology in Sub-Section 1.6.2.

1.6.1 Link between Sociology and Social Anthropology

As has been already mentioned, the link between sociology and social anthropology is very close in India. The emergence and development of both these disciplines was influenced by the growth of nationalism in India. The nationalist movement was itself a product of the impact of the West, especially British colonial rule in India. The repercussion of this impact was felt widely due to several reasons, such as great improvement in communications, transport facilities, printing press, etc.

Modern law and Western education generated a new self awareness in Indian people. The awareness of people along the lines of religion, sects, caste, tribe, region, etc. became more heightened on the one hand, while at a wider level a new sense of unity emerged. All these social changes gave rise to new problems (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 18).

The roots of sociology and social anthropology go back to the period when British officials realised that knowledge of Indian culture and social life was indispensable for them in their administration work. In 1769, Henry Verelst, the Governor of Bengal and Bihar, stressed in his directives to revenue supervisors the need for collecting information about the leading families and their customs. Besides the officials, the missionaries too, recorded valuable data about the society of that period. For example, Abbe Dubois, a French missionary in Mysore, wrote in 1816, a book entitled, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, which is very valuable even today. In this book he wrote about the life, customs and rituals of the people with whom he lived. He studied caste and interrelations between castes.

In 1817, the first all-India census was undertaken by the British government. In 1901, Sir Herbert Risley attempted to establish an ethnographic survey of India which was part of the census. The census data became an instrument of official policy. It became a method of creating barriers between Hindus and other groups like tribes, between the various castes, and so on. The British began recording the scheduled castes as distinct from the other Hindu castes as a policy (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 20).

We have already described the establishment of sociology and social anthropology in the Indian Universities. But even before this development, several Indian and foreign scholars such as Brajendranath Seal, Patrick Geddes, W.H.R. Rivers, L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and S.C. Roy contributed to this field.

B.N. Seal, a Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta University was one of the first scholars to draw the attention of the university world towards sociology. He was actively involved in refuting the unilinear evolutionary doctrines, which believed that society like an organism has evolved from a simple primitive stage to a more complex industrial stage (a good example of this doctrine is the one developed by the second founding father of sociology, Herbert Spencer. For more details refer back to Unit 2 of this block).

According to the proponents of this doctrine Indian society, like several others, in its various aspects represented the lower rungs of a ladder. The twentieth century European civilisation represented the highest point of this ladder. This was an ethnocentric belief of European scholars who believed that their society was the best and most evolved while the rest of the world was in various stages of evolution.

Sir B.N. Seal rejected this view and wrote and lectured extensively, in defense of Indian culture throughout his *Comparative Sociology* (Becker & Barnes 1961: 1142). Seal was responsible for introducing sociology in Calcutta University and later Mysore University.

In Bombay, Patrick Geddes was responsible for the introduction of sociology. A department of sociology and civics opened in 1919 headed by Geddes. This was a landmark in the development of sociology in India. Geddes was influenced by Le Play, an eminent sociologist. Geddes was interested in human geography (i.e. in the relation between culture and environment) and town planning with specific interest in the problems of urban deterioration. He studied the town planning of such cities, as Calcutta, Indore, and temple cities of the South which are of great value. Many Indian scholars were impressed by his work. G.S. Ghurye, Radhakamal Mukerjee show the influence of Geddes in their own sociological writings (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 25).

Besides these noted scholars who helped establish sociology in India, the ones who developed it and provided a firm foundation to this discipline are D.N. Majumdar and N.K. Bose. D.N. Majumdar of Lucknow university was trained in anthropology at Calcutta University. He worked extensively in both the anthropological field as well as, social anthropology. He studied the races, tribes and cultures in various regions of India. His specific interest was in the study of problems of culture changes and adaptation of tribes and their social problems. He conducted one of the first village studies in India of a village near Lucknow. He also conducted a survey of the city of Kanpur.

N.K. Bose, also a student of Calcutta University, made a very significant contribution to the development of sociology in India. He was a political and social activist who worked as a personal secretary of Mahatma Gandhi during his Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) travels in 1947. He was director of the Anthropological Survey of India from 1959-64 and from 1967-70 he held the office of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Government of India. His contributions were basically in the study of Indian

civilisation and culture. He had a historical approach. He was influenced by the teachings of Gandhi and later wrote a critical analysis of Gandhism. His best work is believed to be the *Hindu Samajer Garhan*, which is in Bengali (Srinivas & Panini 1986: 31).

In this section we have described the links between sociology and social anthropology in the context of their growth and development in India. Let us now see the link between sociology and Indology in the same context. Both these aspects are not separate from each other. Many Indological writings are sociological or social anthropological in nature. It is only for the purpose of clarity that we are discussing them in different sub-sections. Before going on to the next sub-section, let us complete Activity 2.

Activity 2

Select two persons in your neighbourhood. One should be a Pundit or Moulvi or any persons who has knowledge of the religious scriptures of his/her religion. Choose another person who has received formal education at least upto B.A. in any of the social sciences, such as sociology, political sciences or economics.

Ask both these persons the following questions:

- i) Is Indian society materialistic or spiritualistic?
- ii) What are the guiding norms and values of our society?

Write a note of about a page on the opinions of these two persons in two parts, namely-

- i) Similar points
- ii) Different points

Compare your note, if possible with the notes of other students at your Study Centre.

1.6.2 Link between Sociology and Indology

The development of sociology in India owes deeply to the contributions made by the Orientalists, such as Sir William Jones, Henry Maine, Alfred Lyell, Max Mueller and others. These scholars studied the rich ancient cultural and philosophical tradition of India. It is for these reasons that they are known as the Indologists. Indology is the study of India and its culture.

Sir William Jones established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1787. Here he introduced the study of Sanskrit and Indology. One of the main tasks of this society was the publication of a journal devoted to anthropological and indological interests such as study of Sanskrit, comparative jurisprudence, comparative mythology, etc. Scholars like Max Muller learnt Sanskrit and helped in the translations of ancient epics and literature which had been long forgotten by the Indian people.

The knowledge of Sanskrit helped understand the great cultural and philosophical tradition of India. At a time when most educated Indians were facing ridicule at the hands of the British rulers, this knowledge helped revive the self-respect of the people. Ancient law and society came to be examined carefully by the Indologists. Henry Maine visited India and wrote *Village Communities in the East and the West* (1871). Besides these scholars, there are other who used Indian material such as Karl Marx reports to study religion (Srinivas & Panini 1988: 22).

As already mentioned, the Indological writings dealing with the Indian philosophy, art and culture are reflected in the works of most of the Indian scholars. Ananda Coomaraswamy, B.K. Sarkar, Radhakamal Mukerjee, G.S. Ghurye, D.P. Mukerji are some of the examples who have revealed this in their works. We discussed the first two thinkers in this unit but we will give you more details about the contributions of Radhakamal Mukerjee, D.P. Mukerji and G.S. Ghurye in the next units (5).

1.6.3 Irawati Karve

Besides these social thinkers there are others like Irawati Karve who has extensively used the Indological literature in her sociological writings. She was a student of G.S. Ghurye in Bombay. She came to head the combined department of sociology and anthropology which started in the late 1930s in Pune. She did extensive field-work in various regions of India. Her knowledge of Sanskrit helped her in understanding ancient literature like scriptures, law books and epics. She used this data to understand the kinship organisation in India. Her book *Kinship Organisation in India* (1952) is one of the best analysis of kinship system found in India (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 30). Irawati Karve belonged to an enlightened family and entered the family of Maharshi Karve as a daughter-in-law. That family had advocated reforms among the Brahmans to the extent of permitting widow remarriage. Her initial work was on the anthropometric measurements of various groups in Maharashtra: she distinguished social groups by their linguistic affiliations and was able to trace origins of different people following the same occupation (potters) and found how some of their groups were exogamous and formed 'castes'. On the other hand their 'cluster' (or village community) of occupation based castes was joining together of such castes.

Her major work was *Kinship Organisation in India* (1953) in which she divided India into four zones and attempted their comparison. The work starts with the genealogies of the characters in the Hindu epic, Mahabharata and incorporates field notes from different parts of India. She read the Mahabharata intensively. She wrote on Hinduism and gave a new interpretation. In her work she combined her interest in the study of classics (called Indology by the Western writers) with field studies.

She was awarded a special prize for her work, *Yugantar*, based on Mahabharata. It was originally written in Marathi and later translated in

several languages, including Hindi and English. Some of her literary pieces found a way into school books in Marathi. Those who have cleared their matriculation in Maharashtra know her as a litterateur and consider it an addition to their knowledge when they are told by their sociology teachers that she was also a sociologist. She laid the foundations of sociology and anthropology in Deccan College, Pune where great intellectuals in various fields were her contemporaries, for example, H.D. Sankhalia in Pre-History, D.R. Gadgil in Economics and so on. This academic climate led ultimately to the development of the University of Pune.

She was an engaging conversationalist and an eloquent speaker. She was also a brilliant teacher of the subject and of course, she was first in time and first in importance among the woman sociologists in India. She has been hailed as the first feminist sociologist of India (see Uberio 1993:96, and Jain).

Even today, the ancient Indian literature reveals a lot about the religion and society in India. Several sociologists are still making efforts to understand Indian society through its literature, art, etc.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Name the three British Presidencies in which universities were established during the nineteenth century. Use about 2 lines.

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- 2) Who introduced sociology in the Calcutta University? Describe in about 10 lines his contribution to sociology.

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- 3) What is meant by Indology? Name some of the Indologists. Use about 5 lines to write your answer.

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you learnt about social antecedents of Indian sociological thought. We have described the socio-religious movements for reform in India and the political movement for independence. Both the religious as well as political movements are complementary in nature. The freedom struggle was led by leaders who primarily belonged to the middle classes. Middle class, as a category, emerged due to the impact of the British rule in India.

We have described the intellectual antecedents of Indian sociological thought and provided in Unit 4 an outline of the emergence of sociology and social anthropology in India.

1.8 REFERENCES

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1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The six schools of thought of Indian philosophy are Yoga, Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Vedanta and Mimamasa.
- 2) Three important changes brought about in Indian society due to the impact of the British rule are
 - a) the old traditions and customs based on religion began to decline and new social and economic forces emerged.
 - b) The classical languages, like Sanskrit and Persian, declined and English became the official language.
 - c) Traditional handicrafts declined and were replaced by machine made goods produced in England.
- 3) Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1835) of Bengal founded Brahmo Samaj in the nineteenth century. It was a spiritual forum where a monotheistic (i.e. belief in one God), non-idolatrous (i.e. without worshipping a statue or image of God) worship could take place. It stood for a combination of Christian teachings with Vedanta.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1)
 - a) Octavius Hume
 - b) Political
 - c) Mass
 - d) Self-confidence, political

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- 2) Benoy Kumar Sarkar was a rationalist who tried to show the secular strength of India. He attempted to bring out the secular component of Indian culture in order to use it for human progress. He did not believe that Indian and western cultures were polar opposites, one being spiritualistic and other materialistic. According to him India had both materialistic and secular elements and it was not other worldly or mystical as popularly believed.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) The three British Presidencies where universities were established in the nineteenth century were Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.
- 2) Sociology was introduced by Sir Brajendranath Seal in Calcutta University in 1917 in the Post-Graduate Councils of Arts and Sciences. He was a Professor of Philosophy at this university and later went to Mysore University as its Vice-Chancellor. He was opposed to the unilinear evolutionary doctrine advocated by the European scholars who believed their society to be the most evolved while societies like India were at a lower rung. Seal conducted studies in what he called “Comparative Sociology”.
- 3) Indology is the study of Indian society, its culture, art philosophy, etc. Some of the noted Indologists are Sir William Jones, Henry Maine and Max Mueller.

UNIT 2 MAJOR SCHOOLS OF INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITIONS *

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Social and Intellectual Antecedents of Schools of Sociological traditions in India
- 2.3 Bombay School
- 2.4 Lucknow School
- 2.5 Bombay School and Lucknow School: A Comparison
- 2.6 Let us sum up
- 2.7 References
- 2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective here is to tell the student:

- how and why two prominent schools of sociological thought emerged in India;
- whether there were other strands of consolidated thought that did not develop into prominent schools of thought;
- what were the theoretical underpinnings, central ideas/focus, and major contribution of each school; and
- how and in what way the two school compare and contrast with each other in presenting sociological tradition in India.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will explain to you the major 'Schools' of Indian Sociological traditions. First, a brief on what is meant by 'School' and 'tradition' follows. According to Cambridge Online Dictionary, the term 'School of Thought' means a set of ideas or opinions that a group of people share about a matter. People come together as a 'School' as their perspective about something and in this case, the society in India. The English word 'tradition' comes from the Latin *tradition*,

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the noun from the verb *traderere* or *tradere* (to transmit, to hand over, to give for safekeeping). Shills makes two points while analyzing the properties of tradition; first, the presentness of the past and second, the present as the reinforcement of responsiveness to the past (1971: 125-129). Thus, sociological traditions in India in this unit mean the intellectual traditions which reflect the pioneering contributions by the scholars in relation to society in India.

Section 2.2 reflects upon social and intellectual antecedents of schools of sociological traditions in India; Section 2.3 discusses the priorities of Bombay School; Section 2.4 discusses priorities of Lucknow School; Section 2.5 presents a comparison of Bombay School and Lucknow School. Finally, Section 2.6 provides the summary of this unit.

2.2 SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL ANTECEDENTS OF SCHOOLS OF SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITIONS IN INDIA

Sociology and Social and Physical Anthropology as a discipline and profession were introduced in India largely by the British scholars at the time when India was still Britain's colony. In a way it can be highlighted that these two disciplines were the offshoot of the India's 'colonial encounter'. In contrary to the European traditions, both these disciplines have been intertwined with each other both in colonial and post-colonial India. It can be safely argued that the beginnings of sociology and Anthropology in particular were crucially tied with the Indology studies done primarily by the British scholars, for instance, Sir William Jones (1746-94), a noted Indologist, founded the Asiatic Society of India in 1784. The colonial power understood and studied India as 'traditional' society.

Subsequently, with the emergence of nationalist movement, the scholars engaged in both the disciplines charted out their understanding of the society keeping the binaries of 'colony and colonial power', 'tradition and modernity', 'progress and backwardness' etc. in their mind. Srinivas and Panini have outlined three phases of the growth of these disciplines in India; the first, laying the foundations between 1773-1900; second, the period of professionalization 1901-1950 and third, post-independent times in which it spread across India due to variety of support mechanisms (1973: 180).

Dhanagare is of the view that the early writings by the British scholars on the colonial India 'helped' the colonial masters to 'make sense' of this vast land inhabited by numerous castes and communities and following innumerable 'ways of life'. It however does not mean the absence of any indigenous thought in India. It can be stated that the indigenous scholars taught and groomed in foreign universities were instrumental in establishing the earliest departments of Sociology and Anthropology (first at Bombay, then Lucknow and subsequently to other parts of the country), though with a 'push' from the British scholars. The process of institutionalization and professionalization of both the disciplines moved on its own and with the state support at fast pace after Independence. The departments of engaged with teaching sociology and anthropology at both

Bombay University and Lucknow University became the centres of the teaching-learning process of such a caliber that they began to be addressed as 'School'.

The term 'School' needs to be cautiously used as in stricter sense, neither Bombay nor Lucknow can be seen as School the way Chicago or Frankfurt are understood as they were distinct in their approach. It is explained through an example. If one locates A.R. Desai in spatial sense, he belongs to Bombay School and his sociological perspective is at best understood as being a Marxist. Thus, he belongs to Bombay School and is a Marxist in his writings. G.S. Ghurye belongs to Bombay School and his writings are 'Indological' in nature. Thus, we see that one can 'study' Desai and/or Ghurye (like other sociologists discussed in this unit) both in terms of their 'spatial location' and theoretical dispositions. Similarly, Irawati Karve pioneered family and kinship studies in India, yet she did not belong either to Bombay or Lucknow School. Similarly, if one looks at the analytical and pedagogical tools employed by the Lucknow school pioneers, then the term 'School' begets its critique. Radhakamal Mukerjee and D. P. Mukherji both were at the Lucknow School and can be considered as contemporaries. However, Radhakamal Mukerjee was a trained economist who experimented with social ecology and then arrived at sociology through his studies on value system in India. D. P. Mukherji, on the other hand was a historian who ventured into economics via tenets of Marxism being applicable to understand Indian society. Thus, the term 'School' in Indian context has two limitations; first, differences within the scholars located in a particular School; second, significant contribution by other sociologists and anthropologists who did not belong to any School.

Along with the Bombay and Lucknow Schools, some of the other important locales of sociology as discipline and profession were respective universities at Calcutta, Patna, Ranchi, Mysore, Pune and Baroda among others. Department of Sociology at Calcutta University deserves special mention. Similarly, Department of Sociology at Delhi University founded by M.N. Srinivas in 1959 was equally powerful centre of learning. His understanding of changes in Indian society in terms of Sanskritization and Westernization are significant. One can also look into other strands of consolidated thought that did not develop into prominent schools of thought in sociology. In this context one can look in to the life and contributions of Patrick Geddes (1854-1932), Irawati Karve (1905-1970), John Vincent Ferreira to name the few. Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) was founder head of department of sociology and civics at the University of Bombay from 1919 until 1924. Although trained in Biology, he significantly contributed in the fields of social geography and town planning. For instance, he was involved in town planning work in Baroda and Indore in India. His major writings are *Chapters in modern botany* (1893); *City Development: A study of parks, gardens, and culture institutes* (1904) and *Cities in evolution: An introduction to the town planning movement and to the study of civics* (1915).

India's first woman anthropologist and hailed as the first feminist sociologist of India, Irawati Karve became Head in 1939 of the newly established Department

of sociology and anthropology of the Deccan Postgraduate College and Research Institute, Pune. Her writings can be grouped under inter-disciplinary branches of anthropology: ethno-historical perspective – understanding Indian society; Paleo-anthropology – exploring physical features of the people in India; archeology and Indology and Social-Cultural Anthropology – understanding caste and exploring kinship structure across India. Her first-hand knowledge of Sanskrit literature was instrumental in understanding Hindu Indian society. *Kinship Organization in India* (1953) by Karve is both a pioneer and an exhaustive study of kinship among anthropologists in India. Karve (influenced significantly by Culture – Area hypothesis by Alfred Kroeber) analysed kinship organizations in northern, central, southern and eastern zones of India and highlighted differences between the North and South kinship. John Vincent Ferreira (1922-2010) in his writings forwarded his conception of ‘integral anthropology’ and defined anthropology as philosophical anthropology in his book *Totemism in India* (1965). Integral anthropology is based on four principles which are finitude, complementarity, dependence and proportionality. Influenced by the tradition of the Vienna School in anthropology, Ferreira argued for the term ‘anthropological sciences’ in place of ‘social sciences’.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Mention the authors of the following books:

(i) *Kinship Organization in India*

(ii) *City Development: A study of parks, gardens, and culture institutes*

(iii) *Totemism in India*

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2) Name the two major school of Indian Sociological traditions.

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2.3 BOMBAY SCHOOL

Department of Sociology in University of Bombay, Bombay(today’s Mumbai) was established in 1919 with Professor Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) as its first Head of the Department. G.S. Ghurye (1893-1983), A.R. Desai (1915-1994), Kanailal Motilal Kapadia (1908-1967), J.V. Ferreira (1922-2010) and D. Narain (*Hindu Character*, 1957) established academic traditions which in due process of time spread throughout the country in different universities and colleges. The theoretical orientations of Bombay ‘School’ varied from Indology (Ghurye), Integral Anthropology (Ferreira), Marxist (Desai) and urban sociology / ecology

(shared by Geddes and Ghurye) along with Hindu kinship by Kapadia. The single most contribution of Ghurye is his leading role in the institutionalization and professionalization (earlier by him and later by his students) of the discipline in the country. Another notable figure of Bombay School was K.M. Kapadia who in *Hindu Kinship: An Important Chapter in Hindu Social History* (1947) which was based on the Indological sources emphasized on the structural aspects of family.

Indology is the scientific study of any society through its classical sacred 'texts'. Though Indological perspective is tied to the contribution of the Orientalists like William Jones, Henry Maine, Max Muller among others yet it is markedly distinct from the Orientalism as discussed by Edward Said. For Dhanagare, Indological approach assumed that 'historically Indian society and culture are unique and that this 'contextual' specificity of Indian social realities could be grasped through the 'texts' (2008: 36). Govind Sadashiv Ghurye (1893-1983) was a major figure in Bombay School who adhered to the perspective of indology in his teachings and research. He studied Indian society from indological and anthropological perspectives and utilized Sanskrit literature in sociological studies with his profound knowledge of Sanskrit literature. Ghurye was writing at the time when the nationalist discourses were being consolidated and debates on tradition and modernity were also going on. Thus, he took upon himself to reflect upon the unity and antiquity of Indian civilization through merging Orientalism and nationalist discourse. His major books are *Caste and race in India* (1932, 1969); *Culture and society* (1947); *Family and kin in Indo-European culture* (1955, 1961); *Anatomy of a rural and urban community* (1962); *Scheduled tribes* ((first published as *The Aborigines So-called and their future*) (1943, 1959, 1963)); and *The Burning cauldron of north east India* (1980). His background of Indology and rigorous training in Sanskrit is markedly visible in these writings.

In *Caste and Race in India* (1932, 1969), Ghurye studied caste (emergence, history and functional significance) through textual interpretation of ancient texts and arrived at its structural and cultural connotations. He highlighted six structural features of caste system which are segmental division of society, hierarchy, pollution and purity, civil and religious disabilities and privileges of different sections, lack of choices of occupation and restrictions on marriage. He viewed endogamy as the most important feature of the caste system. Caste is also linked with kinship through caste endogamy and also clan (*Gotra*) exogamy. In his writings on tribes in India, he highlighted them being 'backward caste Hindus' due to their imperfect integration into Hindu society. He gave examples of Santhals, Bhils, Gonds, etc., who live in south - central India. Secondly, he was worried about the 'disturbances' in the north-east and sought to explain it in terms of 'schisms' in the nation-building process. Thus, not only did he argue that tribes are not distinct from caste but also emphasized for the assimilation of tribes in socio-cultural and politico-administrative sense in to Indian nation-state.

Marxist approach to study society in India is based on the tenets of Marxism. Marxism views society in terms of its material base reflected in mode of

production. The society is composed of basic structure as the base and super structure as its cover. Basic structure is mode of production and the super structure consists of social institutions like polity, religious practices and social relations. The class which owns and controls base structure is the one who determines the super structure through its dominant ideology. Scholars like D.P. Mukherji, D.D. Kosambi, A.R. Desai, P.C. Joshi and others have studied Indian society from Marxian perspective by applying the dialectical-historical approach. A.R. Desai (1915-1994) was a key figure in Bombay School who was in line with the Marxian tenets in his orientation. His main works are *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (1948), *Recent features of Indian Nationalism* (1960), *State and society in India* (1975), *Peasant struggle in India* (1979), *India's path of Development* (1984) along with an anthology on *Rural Sociology in India* (1994). Desai was of the opinion that the Indian state has 'chosen the capitalist path of development', by applying Marxist method to study Indian society. For him, Marxist method of analysis includes delineating nature of means of production, the techno-economic division of labour, and social relations of production of the given society.

A heuristic three-fold classification of Desai's works is attempted here to locate his perspective. The first set of his writings can be seen as writings on 'rural society in transition' so as to understand agrarian structure and/or class formation in rural India during and after British colonialism. Account of the organised struggle of the peasants across rural India are depicted in *Peasant Struggles in India* (1979) and *Agrarian Struggles in India after Independence* (1986). His second set of writings *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (1948) and *Recent Trends in Indian Nationalism* (1960) focused on the emergence and subsequent formation of the Indian State. The structure of agrarian economy and cottage industry was transformed to the core with the coming of the British rule. As the post-independent state followed the path of modernization, it became a facsimile of capitalist state. *Violation of Democratic Rights in India* (1986) and *Repression and Resistance in India* (1990) bring forward the 'true' character of the Indian 'bourgeoisie' 'class' state which violently represses those who oppose its capitalist agenda. The struggles of the poor and the marginalised against the state are crushed to protect the interests of propertied class. Thus, we see that the major concern of Desai was to discuss the emergence of state and its base along with its changing nature from welfare and democratic state to the oppressive and capitalist State.

2.4 LUCKNOW SCHOOL

Radhakamal Mukerjee, D.P. Mukherji and Awadh Kishore Saran are considered as the triumvirate of Lucknow School.

Radhakamal Mukerjee (1889-1968) joined the Lucknow University as the founder-Head of the Department of Economics and Sociology and continued there till 1952. One can locate writings by Radhakamal Mukerjee on economics, demography, sociology and ecology in the ongoing anti-colonial nationalist

movement. The writings of Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Brajendranath Seal and Patrick Geddes influenced him in formulating his initial ideas. He academically blended economics, history and sociology and thus argued for multiplicity and plurality of knowledge (his formulation of Indian economics as a sub-discipline). He strongly argued that the economic theorizations and models of the Western countries are not suitable (both at the levels of knowledge and practicality) for India. It was a genuine critique of the Eurocentric approach to development. It is so because Indian economy is still agrarian and is rural in its orientation. The Western economic models of growth are not suitable to address the economic backwardness and mass poverty rather they will disastrously result in rural unsettlement and decline of agriculture. Such arguments found echo in *The Foundation of Indian Economics* (1916) and *Border-Lands of Economics* (1925) which along with his other writings stand out as critique of western modernity in the name of progress. He argued for the traditional organic village built on mutuality between agriculture and industry. He contributed immensely to the sociology of values through *The Social Structure of Values* (1949) and *The Dynamics of Morals* (1951) wherein he focused on justice, love, solidarity and goodness as intrinsic and universal values of the human being. In formulating his 'alternative' view to progress and development, Mukerjee highlighted the uniqueness of both, the Indian history as well as Indian value system. The villages of India given the right kind of state support mechanism can overcome its slow growth. For him, the communal / collective / communitarian ownership of the natural resources stands in stark opposition to the 'private' nature of the property as practiced in the Western countries. The 'private' nature of property is exclusionary in its approach whereas the traditional cultural ethos is not. He emphasised on the indigenous cultural concepts to be employed to study Indian society and thus attempted to counter the ethnocentrism of the western social theories.

Another key figure of the similar stature though having different research interest was D.N. Majumdar who was anthropologist by training and became Head of the newly established Department of Anthropology in 1951 at Lucknow University.

Dhirendra Nath Majumdar (1903-1960) was another scholarly figure who was at Lucknow University during the life and times of the triumvirate of Lucknow School. He was an anthropologist by training and was influenced by both Malinowski and Sarat Chandra Roy ('founder of Indian ethnological tradition'). He joined the Economics and Sociology Department of Lucknow University as a lecturer in anthropology in 1928. He wrote his doctoral dissertation in Cambridge University on culture change among the Hos. He received his doctorate in 1935. The dissertation was later published as *A Tribe in Transition* (1937). He founded the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society and subsequently the scholarly journal *The Eastern Anthropologist*. In 1950, a separate Department of Anthropology was established and he became its Head. Distinctive mark of his fieldwork was biometrics method in anthropology i.e. use of statistical techniques in the analysis of anthropometric data. Some of his major

works are *Races and cultures of India* (1944), *The Affairs of a Tribe: A Study in Tribal Dynamics* (1950), *Social Contours of an Industrial City: Social Survey of Kanpur, 1954-56* (1960 [often seen as the first urban study by an Indian anthropologist]) and *Himalayan Polyandry, Structure, Functioning and Culture Change: A field study of Jaunsar-Bawar* (1963) among others. Majumdar's areas of interest were physical anthropology, pre-historic archeology, and cultural anthropology with a focus on descriptive ethnography. He saw social change as a result of contact of cultures and argued for 'creative or generative adaptation' for the tribes when they come into contact with other culture/s. He argued for the holistic approach to the problems of development and emphasized role and contribution of sociology and Anthropology in directed and planned change.

D.N. Majumdar passed away on 31 May 1960. At the time of his death, he was head of the department he founded and Dean Faculty of Arts, Lucknow University

Taking A.L. Kroeber as his ideal, Majumdar's areas of interest were physical anthropology, pre-historic archeology, and cultural anthropology with flair in descriptive ethnography. He studied Ho (Bihar) and the Khasa (Jaunsari of Uttar Pradesh), Korwa and the Tharu (both of Uttar Pradesh), the Gond (Bastar), and the Bhil (Gujarat). His study on the residents of Jaunsar-Bawar, detailing its kinship, political organization and formal leadership is considered to be a classic in kinship studies. Majumdar did extensive anthropometric and serological surveys among the tribes of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat. He was also involved in the decennial census of 1941 and he carried out an anthropometric and serological survey for the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh). It is important to note that his studies in physical anthropology through anthropometric and blood analysis were not in line with the caste/tribe and race thesis. He was averse to the idea that the racial elements in a way are responsible for caste to emerge.

Dhirendra Nath Majumdar argued for the holistic approach to the problems of development and emphasized role and contribution of sociology and anthropology in directed and planned change. Such an understanding he widely held during being a member of the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission (Government of India). Majumdar's study on the Ho tribe residing at the Chhota Nagpur plateau (present day Jharkhand) is an important study on Ho tribe within the framework of 'tribes in transition' as a result of contact with non-tribe caste Hindu culture. With the tribal people taking up new occupations and leaving their own there emerges a middle class in them which was hitherto unknown to them. He argued for 'creative or generative adaptation' for the tribes when they come into contact with other culture/s. Interestingly, his studies on Ho is also marked by statistical astuteness.

Major figure in Lucknow School having Indological perspective was Awadh Kishore Saran (1922-2003) who joined University of Lucknow in 1946 and worked there till 1966 when he tendered his resignation. There upon he was Professor of Sociology (1973-78) at Jodhpur University. He was awarded D.Litt. (*Honoris Causa*) by Agra University in 1987. He passed away in 2003. Ananda

K. Coomaraswamy (1877-1947, Sri Lankan art historian and critic) deeply influenced his perspective which was metaphysics. Saran's major books include *On the Intellectual Vocation* (1996), *Traditional Thought: Toward an Axiomatic Approach: A Book of Reminders* (1996), *Sociology of knowledge and Traditional Thought* (1998), *Hinduism in Contemporary India* (2007) and *On the Theories of Secularism and Modernization* (2007). In his relentless criticism of the modernity he reflected his lifelong commitment to tradition. Modernity for him results in the total annihilation of tradition and provides a homogenous Eurocentric view. Precisely due to this, for him synthesis between tradition and modernity was neither tuneable nor desirable. Key recurrent themes in his writings were the crisis in moral order, 'de-spiritualization' of the day-to-day life and blind support of the modern values.

One significant feature of Saran's writings is that while critiquing the idea of modernity and possibility of its alternatives, he found his distinguished predecessors at Lucknow University lacking. He argued that though both Radhakamal Mukerjee and D.P. Mukerji engaged with the modernity question and harped back on the uniqueness and usefulness of the glorious Indian traditions, they could not transcend the powers of modernity. For Saran, the only person to do so was Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Critiquing the works of Radhakamal Mukerjee, Saran argues that the delineation by the former in terms of a fourfold typology of groups arranged in hierarchical series cannot be overcome by transcendental love and knowledge. Similarly, the contribution of D.P. Mukerji should be seen more in the light of his pedagogical exercises wherein he exhorted his students to be critical and open minded rather than blindly following his writings. It is important to understand that the writings by Saran are by no means easy and seamless to understand and comprehend. It is so because he questioned the idea of social science in India itself as it was the product of the colonial modernity. Again, as it questioned the practice of finding the 'midway' between tradition and modernity, it becomes difficult to escape from this situation. His perspective being that of metaphysics dealing with the complex and fundamental issues of what and who is man and how reality can be comprehended somehow finds less supporters in the field of sociology and anthropology. None the less, his criticisms of both Radhakamal Mukerjee and D. P. Mukerji do hold some ground.

Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (popularly referred to as D.P.) (1894-1961) belonged to the 'Lucknow School' and was one of the founding figures of sociology in India. He followed Marxism as a method of analysis of both the past and present of the Indian society. He preferred to call himself 'Marxologist' rather than 'Marxist'. His major writings are *Personality and the social science* (1924), *Modern Indian Culture: A Sociological Study* (1942), *Views and CounterViews* (1946), *Diversities* (1958), *On Indian History: A study in Method* (1943) among others. Themes of his work vary from personality, Indian culture and traditions, and middle class among others. The dynamics of tradition and modernity in terms of persistent dualism was a recurring theme in his writings. His plea that the

traditions are equally important as modern values and practice as the synthesis of both will help India develop accordingly. However, the modernity was not to be embraced blindly rather it should be filtered and synthesized with the traditional values. As an ardent believer in the Indian traditions, he was equally committed in suggesting ways in which the values of modernization (example: modern education) can be beneficially harnessed for the welfare of the people at large. He laid emphasis on economic factors in the process of cultural change. He perceived the social world in terms of dialectics and argued that the twin forces of tradition and modernity have been intermingled since long time. It can be viewed in terms of the dialectic between tradition and modernity i.e. thesis (tradition) – anti-thesis (modernity) - and finally resulting in to - synthesis (both traditional and modern values aligned to each other thus leading to cultural assimilation and thus acting as an engine to move ahead). Such a synthesis between tradition and modernity was essential for the progress of the society. It was all the more important because merely by copying the western values, society cannot develop and progress. Seen in this way, D.P. Mukerji noted that the historiography of the Indian society needs to be built on by critically looking at the traditions. For him, the advent of British colonial power was both a crisis for India as well as an opportunity to the Indian middle class to forge solidarity and to harness its benefits. Drawing from Marx, D.P. in his dialectical approach, argued for a meaningful progressive synthesis between tradition and modernity.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Fill the blanks in following sentences.
 - i) G S Ghurye adhered to the perspective in the study of society.
 - ii) A R Desai's major concern was with in transition.
 - iii) D N Majumdar founded the
 - iv) Main themes of D P Mukherji's work are, ..., and
- 2) Write one line on the following:
 - i) Main critique of A K Saran on modernity
.....
.....
 - ii) Distinguishing feature of D N Majumdar's fieldwork
.....
.....

2.5 BOMBAY SCHOOL AND LUCKNOW SCHOOL: A COMPARISON

Both Bombay School and Lucknow School were the pioneers in the inter-linked process of professionalization and institutionalization of Sociology and Anthropology in India. Scholars in both the Schools were rigorously trained by

both the Indian and foreign teachers. The pioneers of both the Schools were writing at the time of nationalist movement. The nationalist fervor reflected in the writings of some of them. These writings harped upon the glorious traditions of Indian culture and employed the classical texts in their writings. Mention can be made of G.S. Ghurye at Bombay School and both Radhakamal Mukerjee and Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji at Lucknow School. One can also see an urgent and intense plea on their part to rejuvenate traditional values not in terms of revivalism rather to employ these aptly in the modern times. Similarly, one can locate certain theoretical strands which were common to both the schools. For instance the Marxist approach by A.R. Desai falls in resonance with the Marxological approach taken by Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji. Though the latter did not approved of 'dogmatic Marxism'. The theme of tradition and modernity is present in both the Schools though in different forms. Some like Ghurye and Saran were completely opposed to the modernity which they perceived as colonial; the others like Radhakamal Mukerjee and Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji argued for a cultural synthesis between the two.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the major schools of Indian sociological traditions. We have presented in brief the socio-historical background in which both Sociology and Anthropology emerged in India and subsequently were institutionalised. Then we discussed major schools of Indian sociological traditions which are Bombay School and Lucknow School. The unit discussed the contributions of major figures in each of the 'school'. In doing so, we have given a short description of his/her biography. Then we have presented to you some of the central ideas of respective scholars. Towards the end of the unit both the Schools are compared so as to highlight their divergent contributions in sociology and anthropology. Some 'lone rangers' who did not belong to either of the School were also discussed in terms of their life and significant contributions.

2.7 REFERENCES

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2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1)
 - i) Irawati Karve
 - ii) Patrick Geddes
 - iii) John Vincet Ferreira

**History and
Development of Indian
Sociological Traditions**

- 2)
 - i) Bombay School
 - ii) Lucknow School

Check Your Progress 2

- 1)
 - i) indological
 - ii) rural society
 - iii) Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society
 - iv) Personality, Indian Culture and Tradition, middle class
- 2)
 - i) Modernity for him results in the total annihilation of tradition and provides a homogenous Eurocentric view.
 - (ii) Distinctive mark of his fieldwork was biometrics method in anthropology, i.e. use of statistical techniques in the analysis of anthropometric data along with ethnographic details.



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