

## SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION IN INDIA

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*Rural development and governance have shifted paradigms. new forces of modernization such as globalization and economic liberalisation had a huge impact on village society. The contribution of non-farm sector and services to family gross income has gradually increased. Youth migration to cities impacted village life. Interaction with the outside world improved exposure, income, and household assets and amenities. Joint families disintegrated, and western cultural values influenced Indian values, traditions, rituals, and customs. India's political and administrative institutions have been modernized to achieve democratic goals. To ensure social justice and equity, the focus of development planning has shifted from traditional top-down approaches. In it, people were encouraged to participate in decision-making and to priorities their local needs. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 empowered local governments to ensure local self-governance. In this context, the paper highlights the social change and transformation in India.*

### INTRODUCTION

Villages have long been studied sociologically in India. The modern forces of social transformation and development have shifted the paradigm in village life. Globalization, economic liberalization, and privatization also affect rural society. Communication, transportation, farm mechanization, constitutional and legal protection of weaker sections, and policy for reservation for SC/ST/OBC/Women have greater influence on village life. It has impacted livelihood, culture, social relationships, and social structure. Rural economic life has changed dramatically as agriculture's share of the economy has dwindled. Population growth and family breakdown have reduced average land size. The caste system and jajmani tradition are obsolete. But there is class stratification. With the rise of the service sector, the traditional jajmani system occupations have faded. The welfare

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and social security schemes, rural development programmes, green, white and blue revolutions have created employment and income opportunities for the masses. There is now surplus disposable income. Rural residents are becoming more interested in consumerism and owning electric and electronic devices. There has been increased exposure to electronic media. The increased exposure of Western culture through electronic media has influenced rural cultural life and values system.

Village life has changed dramatically. Less privileged sections and marginalized communities have improved their educational levels. The traditional joint family system is fading, and most families are becoming nuclear. This has harmed family values and bonds. Joint families are shrinking due to male outmigration and increased employment and income opportunities. The caste system is fading, but class stratification has emerged. As agricultural land holdings shrink, a new middle class has emerged. Agricultural share of economy has decreased, reducing the importance of peasantry. Sanitation, water, electricity and other social amenities have improved living conditions. Government health care services have become more accessib

### *Changing Rural Life:*

India is a rural country with a two-thirds rural population and a 70% rural workforce. Rural economies generate 46% of national income. Despite urbanization, over half of India's population will be rural by 2050. Thus, rural economic and population growth is critical to the countries overall growth and development. Rural economies and jobs have traditionally revolved around agriculture. The shift in output and occupation from agriculture to more productive non-farm sectors is seen as an important source of rural and total economic growth. Several scholars have noted that the Indian economy is undergoing a similar transition (Aggarwal and Kumar 2012; Maurya and Vaishampayan 2012; Papola 2012). In rural areas, female labour force withdrawal occurred in all types of households. It was followed by cultivators and non-farmers in terms of female withdrawal from the labour force. Only agricultural labour households had male withdrawal from work. Some scholars have proposed explanations

for female labour force withdrawal (Mazumdar and Neetha 2011; Rangarajan et al 2011; Kannan and Raveendran 2012; Abraham 2013; Rangarajan et al 2013; Chand and Srivastava 2014). The increasing reservation wage and lack of suitable work at that wage rate, manufacturing jobs away from the place of habitation, discouraging female participation, lack of skill to get well paid non-farm job, and rising tension between labour and employer in agriculture due to changing social relationship between them are some other reasons for workforce reduction (Chand and Srivastava 2014). Aside from labour force withdrawal, significant occupational shifts in workforce were observed. Rural areas have poor infrastructure and amenities. Similarly, many houses require renovation. Clearly, the rural construction sector has a lot of room to grow.

In society, a person's social status is determined by their current occupation. Generally, children of families follow traditional occupations, but occupational mobility is gradually changing. Doctors, teachers, government officials, and advocates have higher social status than wage earners, farmers, technicians, and mechanics. Economic status does not determine social status. Other factors determine social status. A dhaba owner may earn more than a junior high school teacher. The teacher's social status will be higher than the dhaba owner's. It is claimed that certain unexpected social changes since Marx, such as the separation of ownership and control, differentiation of the working class, and the rise of the so-called middle class, have been attributed to Marxian class and class conflict theory (Dahrendorf, 1959). Many sociologists define class by occupation and income (Packard, 1964). Another factor defines social class. According to Cooley, the relationship between employer and employee is primarily a matter of perspective (Cooley, 1902:98). According to Richard Centers, social class is a psychological phenomenon (Centers, 1949: 27). Jordan defines the term as distributive in the sense that it ceases to be a real and independent entity (Jordan, 1971:23).

The lower caste people who migrate from rural to urban areas face unique challenges due to their different behavior from their peers and urban dwellers. Because of the high cost of living, lower caste people who work and run small businesses usually live in slums.

Thus, their interaction with other city dwellers is not very cohesive. Migration is a decision that affects the household, community, and ultimately the economy (Azam and Gubert, 2006). The remittances that migrants send home are perhaps the most tangible and least contentious link between migration and development (Ratha 2007). In addition to increasing domestic savings, migrant remittances also improve financial intermediation (Aggrawal et al. 2006, Toxopeus and Lensink 2007)

Migration also shapes gender roles within the household (Ghosh, 2009). Men are more likely to engage in reproductive activities such as caring for children and the elderly than women (King and Vullnetari 2006). When men leave, women gain more power to participate in community decision-making, control their own income, and expand their domestic role (Deshingkar and Grimm 2005:39). A higher emphasis on girls' education and a higher marriage age can also filter from the destination country to the sending society (Fargues 2007). Migration affects family planning decisions and causes differences in fertility rates between migrants and non-migrants (Singley and Landale, 1998, Fargues, 2007). Studies show that migrants' fertility is more similar to that of natives at destination due to social adaptation or self-selection by fertility preferences (Kulu, 2005; Chattopadhyay et al., 2006).

The village economy is changing. The land holdings are shrinking due to population growth and family breakdown. Villagers' main source of income is no longer agriculture. Agricultural and non-agricultural sectors still employ large numbers of people. Rural salaried class is growing, while self-employment and petty business have gained importance. Village migration has been massively reported. Most families have had at least one member migrate. The migration level was high among General Caste and low among Scheduled Caste. As a result of this, General Caste people can afford to migrate to major cities like Surat, while Scheduled Caste people find work in nearby areas. Notably, MGNREGA has helped create jobs for Scheduled Caste people. The village's cropping pattern is changing as modern agriculture, irrigation, and farm mechanisation change. Coarse cereals are replacing valuable crops. With increased access to banking services and microfinance institutions, informal

loan dependency is decreasing. Receiving credit was high among weaker sections. The government provided most of the credit.

Rural power structures change, and the development process and social transformation become the focus of village studies. Globalization, economic liberalization, and privatization ushered in new realities, affecting village society and its agrarian economy. Changes in communication, transportation, and consumerism impact village social life. The rural-urban interface, industrialization, and western culture influenced village life. As a result of the new changes, more men from rural areas are migrating to urban areas. Due to shrinking land holdings and agricultural productivity, male migration increased over time. Due to the migration, joint families disintegrated and a gradual shift of new value system resulted in conflict between family members on issues of individual interest and traditional value system.

The government's 1992 New Panchayati Raj System paved the way for decentralised rural governance. Reservation for SC/ST/OBC/Women ensured equal opportunity in decision making in grassroots political institutions and implementation of rural development programmes. So a new discipline called political sociology was born, and studies were conducted in rural India. Modernization has a long-term impact on village society based on two basic characteristics: institutionalization of modern values and adoptability. Rural people's mindsets changed as democratic systems promote secular values that promote social harmony, national integration, and coexistence. Modern forces of change discouraged traditional values, social organizations, cultural traditions, rituals, and practices.

Migrants have a big impact on village. Migrating is a decision made by the whole family, including women. Family women actively encourage and facilitate male migration. Poverty, better job opportunities, income opportunities, debt, and other economic reasons drive migration. But migration also exposed people to new cultures. The impact of migration on the family is fluid and changes with the migrant's stay. Women gradually assume more responsibility for household management, child care, education,

and financial management. With new contacts and networks with institutions, new opportunities for social and economic empowerment for women emerged.

The land reforms changed rural agrarian life. Due to shrinking land holdings, agricultural productivity, and family disintegration, male members were forced to migrate urban centres. The surplus land distribution among the weaker sections allowed for land based occupations, but the distributed land could not support a family for long due to its small size. Land fragmentation impacted traditional land use and cropping patterns. Small and marginal land holdings for a large population could not provide enough agricultural produce for families. Increasing non-farm sector and service share in village economy gradually reduces reliance on agriculture. Occupational shifting and surplus disposable income increase. A significant use of labor-saving devices has resulted. Village life has become increasingly mobile (Sharma, 2014). Many academic studies in India now focus on village studies. Gilbert is a village studies pioneer. Village studies, which lasted until the 1970s in anthropology, were declared dead by Huller and Spencer. Dipankar Gupta (2005) focuses on the village's declining social significance. According to Singh (2005), other factors of production are replacing land as a source of livelihood and dominance in village affairs. According to Harrish (2012), political-economic change has gradually shifted high-cost dominance in village.

Change is universal. Nature is always changing. Society evolves. The term social change refers to changes in human interactions and relationships. They argue that since society is a web of social relationships, change in the social system entails change in the social system. These relate to social processes, interactions, and organization. Sociologists not only describe society's structure but also its causes and effects. Morris Ginsberg defines social change as a shift in social structure. Social change is any change in societal composition, including culture. Change means a change in observation over time. Change, according to Fictor, "means variations from previous state or mode Change is always driven by society, for a variety of reasons. Changes in culture, demography, technology, etc. affect society. Change occurs at varying rates. Change occurs quickly due to rapid

industrialization and urbanization. Social, economic, political, and religious forms exist. Change in one part of society affects the rest.

Yogendra Singh applied an integrated approach or paradigm mix to explore cultural resilience in India. Singh proposes looking for the causes of social change both within and outside the social system or tradition. In other words, both heterogenic and orthogenetic sources of change are vital. Singh bemoaned the fact that most Indian studies of social change either focus on “social structure” to the exclusion of “tradition” or on the latter without proper treatment of the former (Singh 1973). Singh researched India’s modernization of tradition. Because modernization is not universal, historiography constructions are required to establish the Indian tradition’s cognitive-structural attributes (Singh 1973). Singh argues that after five years of independence, India’s social change has taken two distinct forms. First, a substantial change in social structure has occurred without a structural change in society. It has caused tensions and social crises. Second, there has been a shift in people’s perception of social change. Singh realised that the traditional occupational structure of castes and tribes is rapidly changing. The link between caste or community and hereditary occupation has been severed as these groups relocated. At the same time, non-agricultural occupation is increasing in the countryside, owing to improved connectivity with cities/towns and changes in lifestyle due to increased use of consumer durables like bicycles, motorcycles, jeeps, and electronics. Singh correctly asserted that despite recent qualitative changes, Indian culture’s resilience and adaptability remain intact.

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tradition are obsolete. But there is class stratification. With the rise of the service sector, the traditional jajmani system occupations have faded. The welfare and social security schemes, rural development programmes, green, white and blue revolutions have created employment and income opportunities for the masses. There is now surplus disposable income. Rural residents are becoming more interested in consumerism and owning electric and electronic devices. The increased exposure of Western culture through electronic media has influenced rural cultural life and values system.

### **CONCLUSION**

Decentralized governance and New Panchayati Raj gave rural people new political power. Making village panchayat committees and sub committees mandatory, allowing reservation in elected positions, and involving Panchayati Raj Institutions in rural development programmes changed the social and political power structure. The public respected and acknowledged the elected officials. They took part in development plans. The public paid close attention to them because they were the link between the public and government officials, as well as the gatekeepers for government-sponsored development programmes. Elected officials also implement, monitor, and supervise government programmes and schemes. The determinants of voting behaviour have shifted significantly. Electoral issues related to development became important due to the adult franchise, secular values, and modernization of traditional institutions. Election malpractices and corruption have drastically decreased, and people are freely voting in the national interest. Due to the constitution and legal provisions protecting vulnerable groups, violence, crime and exploitation of vulnerable groups by peasantry or landowners have decreased. The government's positive discrimination in education and employment has increased participation of weaker sections and others in rural development programmes. Changes in value systems, modernization, globalisation, and economic liberalisation have gradually shifted attitudes towards social, economic, and political issues.



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