Social Science

Part-II

Social and Political Life
Indian society is full of diversities. As we have read that there is a unique similarity and unity amongst people of various castes and communities in India despite diversities. History of Indian society and culture is very ancient. Change is the law of the nature and according to this, Indian society also could not keep itself aloof. Indian society is a vibrant and dynamic society. One can find continuity along with variability here. Indian people believe in various traditional institutes and values. In this chapter we will discuss about contemporary situation of Indian society under different points.

**Marriage, Family and Kinship**

Marriage is considered as a sacred rite in Indian social system. But at present certain changes are taking place in its nature and format. Marriage has become an comprise instead of being a sacred rite. A lack of stability is seen in marital relationships. The practice of divorce, particularly in urban areas, is increasing even in Hindu society. The increasing influence of western education and culture is splitting up our joint families, urbanization, industrialization etc. can be considered the reasons behind these changes.

At present the primacy of urban life style is increasing. The urban living has weakened the very structure of joint family. The concept of nuclear and small family is increasing day by day. Kinship relations are becoming limited, although in rural areas such relationships are still stronger and closer than that of urban areas. Traditional family occupations are changing. Other occupations are being adopted in place of traditional occupations, like son of a farmer has started doing other job than farming.
many educated youth get new business opportunities, which were not available in their native places. Consequently they be come separate from their families. A number of youths from villages migrate to cities and from small cities to big ones. One thing is generally seen even today that despite of families living at different places it is tried that social duties towards parents and relatives are obliged.

Thus the joint family system still exists in its functional form the trend of taking self decisions instead of elder member of the family is growing. Members of family keep themselves engaged in occupations, education, entertainment and political life as per their own interest. People in cities are seen more dependent on their neighbours, friends and colleagues on various occasions for social and financial help instead of community and relatives.

**Social Customs**

The practice of Sati has been abolished from the society. In spite of legal restrictions the practice of dowry and to some extent, child marriage practice still exists in society. On one hand the extravagance and show-off in marriages and other celebrations is increasing and at the same time trend of collective wedding has also been started. A number of traditional beliefs and impractical customs have been left behind. Today, many traditional social taboos are being neglected. Social customs, festivals and traditions are changing because of the pressure of market and modernization.

**Activity:**

1. Make a list of all social evils prevailing in your village or city.
2. Talk to the elders of your family or neighborhood make a chart of changes which have taken place since their childhood.

**Impact of Education, Commercialization and Consumerism**

Education has broadened the horizon of people's attitude. They have started thinking about their rights and personal freedom. Social acceptance of scientific innovations has helped in rising the living standard of people and aspirations to achieve materialistic wellness is also encouraged. Changes in social values have taken place due to industrialization and emergence of middle class. Rational spirit is developed. Importance of ideology of individualism, equality and justice has increased. Women by getting education and employment are attaining more freedom through employment.
Commercialization is spreading. For example, 'Marriage Bureaus' have started playing vital role in carrying out even familial and social tasks like marriages after charging fees. Earlier the social skill and etiquettes were taught to the individuals by their family members whereas now-a-days the professional institutions are teaching curricula for 'personality development'. Around four decades back people did not even think about commercialization of water in the market, however today it is not a surprise that bottled water is available even in villages for sale.

Consumerism is growing in society owing to pressure of commercialization. In today's consumerist life style it has become a status symbol and directly linked with reputation in society for people that how you decorate your home, what kind of clothes you wear, what kind of entertainment you like, how you host celebrations like marriage, etc., which model of any commodity you use. To purchase more and more commodities, their use and show-off has become life style of people. Culture has also become part of the market. The impact of commercialization on the prides of Indian culture, viz. Yoga, Ayurveda and fairs like Pushkar, is evident.

The Caste System

Religious bases of castes are coming to an end, however the caste system is becoming stronger in the form of social organization. Politically there has been a rise in caste system. Social organizations have become strong. The tendency to establish domination has hurt social harmony. Caste has become basis of the electoral politics, whereas earlier the communal brotherhood had a decisive role in winning election. Electoral democracy based on universal adult franchise has given political power to those communities whose population is quite large. These communities are playing a pivotal role in politics and agricultural system.

It seems that the importance of castes has decreased among upper class and upper middle class who are benefitted by the developmental policies of the country. They do not have to face any steep competition. They have come in the position of privileged in the society. The educated class has started leaving extreme communal practices. They give value to individualism and ability. Because of urbanisation and collective living conditions in cities traditional format of the caste bond has become fragile. Inter-caste marriages are increasing. Now an individual born in a particular cast can easily change his occupation. Modern industries and technology have created new avenues of employment that does not require any condition of traditional caste and social rules which say that such and such work will only be done by persons from such and such caste. Generally richness and poverty don't have any link with caste any more. Today we can witness rich and poor people in each and every caste. The castes which have equal economic and social status have come close to each other. Inter-caste food prohibitions are becoming weak.

Tribal culture, society and the economy have also suffered from the impact of the modern policies and activities. When it comes to classes which are reserved and under other protections, we observe that in those classes a new educated and
powerful middle class has emerged. The demand of reservation is becoming stronger and it seems that it has now become a political issue.

**Activity:** Talk to older members of the family and discuss on the changes in marriage ceremonies since last 30 years. Make a list of all these changes.

**Growing Urbanisation and urban life style**

During the initial period of 20th century, only 11% of the total population of India was living in cities and towns, but in 21st century (according to 2011 census) 31.16% of the total population of India is living in cities. The main reason behind this is that the economic and social importance of agriculture based rural lifestyle is decreasing, whereas the effect of industry based urban lifestyle is increasing in society.

The share of agriculture in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is now decreased to one fourth from earlier share of more than half of GDP. Now maximum people who live in villages do not engage themselves in farming instead they are adopting occupation different from agriculture like transport service, business or construction. A large number of people from villages go to nearby cities or towns for work every day. The chances of earning cash income are continuously depleting in villages.

Rural people also come to know about urban facilities and ostentation through public relation and mass media like radio, television, newspaper etc. They also start thinking to live a life like that. Market forces have also dominated the rural areas. Increasing migration of people from small villages to big village or town and cities and mass media like television are bridging the gap between rural and urban lifestyle. The structure of Indian society is now becoming urban instead of rural.

**Literacy related inequality**

Literacy is an important tool for empowerment. Literate people are more conscious about their livelihood options and they participate in the knowledge-based economy. Literacy improves the health awareness and increases participation
in cultural and economic welfare amongst community members.

There is wide diversity in the literacy rate of various groups in India. In the country the male literacy is 82.14 percent, while the female literacy is only 65.46 percent. When it comes to Rajasthan, literacy of male is 79.02 percent whereas female are only 52.10 percent literate. It shows that half of the women are illiterate. Women of Schedule caste, Schedule Tribes and Other Backward classes are lagging in literacy.

**Declining sex ratio**

India is one of the youngest countries in the world because we have approximately 60.29 percent of total population of active population (15 to 59 years of age). Thus we have big and increased working human resources which benefits the national prosperity. But on the other hand, in contrast to this we have enormous disparity in sex ratio. According to the 2011 census, India has 943 women on per thousand men whereas in Rajasthan women are only 928 on same number of men. This situation reflects discrimination against girls.

Determining of a gender test is one of the responsible factors for this situation, to control and prevent this; a law has been made to punish the offenders. Apart from this, several other efforts are being made to improve the sex ratio. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao plan is also one such campaign, but for the success of this campaign there is a need of change in mind set.

We discussed contemporary trends of Indian society in this chapter. Despite the modernization, due to western influences and different arrangements, Indian culture will remain vibrant. We take pride in our past and will move forward in future with realistic assessment of the present.

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**Glossary**

- **Urbanisation**: A process of settling in town due to lack in the employment in village and charm of urban lifestyle.
- **Impractical**: not functional, unreasonable, and harmful
- **Kinship**: Arrangement of blood and marriage relations, Relationship
- **Commercialization**: Conversion of an object as a product, and the economic value of such service or activity that may trade in the market
1. Choose the correct option-
   (i) Working population of India is-
       (a) 60.29 %
       (b) 50.21 %
       (c) 45.01 %
       (d) 30 %
   (ii) Literacy rate of male in Rajasthan is -
       (a) 79.02 %
       (b) 62.15 %
       (c) 40.12 %
       (d) 34.12 %

2. Match the Column 'A' with Column 'B' -

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<td>(i) Alienation from ancestral work</td>
<td>Educated Class</td>
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<td>(ii) Transformation in social values</td>
<td>Pressure of commercialization</td>
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<td>(iii) Reason of increasing Consumerism</td>
<td>Distance from traditional business</td>
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<td>(iv) Separation from extreme caste</td>
<td>Effect of education and behaviour</td>
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