

**IAS Mains Q&A**

**10 Years (2016-2025)**

# **SOCIOLOGY**

**TOPICWISE**

**PYQ SOLVED PAPERS**



**Topic-wise**  
**10 YEARS (2016–2025)**  
**SOCIOLOGY**  
**IAS Mains Q&A**

**PYQ Solved Papers**

This book features 10 years (2016–2025) of topic-wise solved papers for Sociology Optional IAS Mains. With detailed solutions strictly aligned to the UPSC syllabus, it helps aspirants master PYQs for Civil Services and State PSC examinations.

- **Answers Written Exactly as per the Demands of the Questions, Containing Additional Information related to All Aspects of the Topics.**
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*Edited by - N.N. Ojha*

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## **Syllabus-Paper I**

### **Fundamentals of Sociology**

#### **1. Sociology - The Discipline**

- Modernity and Social Changes in Europe and Emergence of Sociology
- Scope of the Subject and Comparison with Other Social Sciences
- Sociology and Common Sense

#### **2. Sociology as Science**

- Science, Scientific Method and Critique
- Major Theoretical Strands of Research Methodology
- Positivism and its Critique
- Fact, Value and Objectivity
- Non-Positivist Methodologies

#### **3. Research Methods and Analysis**

- Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
- Techniques of Data Collection
- Variables, Sampling, Hypothesis, Reliability and Validity

#### **4. Sociological Thinkers**

- **Karl Marx** – Historical Materialism, Mode of Production, Alienation, Class Struggle
- **Emile Durkheim** – Division of Labour, Social Fact, Suicide, Religion and Society
- **Max Weber** – Social Action, Ideal Types, Authority, Bureaucracy, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.
- **Talcott Parsons** – Social System, Pattern Variables
- **Robert K. Merton** – Latent and Manifest Functions, Conformity and Deviance, Reference Groups
- **Mead** - Self and Identity

#### **5. Stratification and Mobility**

- **Concepts** – Equality, Inequality, Hierarchy, Exclusion, Poverty and Deprivation
- **Theories of Social Stratification** – Structural Functionalist Theory, Marxist Theory, Weberian Theory
- **Dimensions** – Social Stratification of Class, Status Groups, Gender, Ethnicity and Race
- **Social Mobility** – Open and Closed Systems, Types of Mobility, Sources and Causes of Mobility

#### **6. Works and Economic Life**

- Social Organization of Work in Different Types of Society- Slave Society, Feudal Society, Industrial /Capitalist Society
- Formal and Informal Organization of Work
- Labour and Society

#### **7. Politics and Society**

- Sociological Theories of Power
- Power Elite, Bureaucracy, Pressure Groups, and Political Parties
- Nation, State, Citizenship, Democracy, Civil Society, Ideology
- Protest, Agitation, Social Movements, Collective Action, Revolution

#### **8. Religion and Society**

- Sociological Theories of Religion
- Types of Religious Practices: Animism, Monism, Pluralism, Sects, Cults
- Religion in Modern Society: Religion and Science, Secularization, Religious Revivalism, Fundamentalism.

#### **9. Systems of Kinship**

- Family, Household, Marriage
- Types and Forms of Family
- Lineage and Descent
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- Development and Dependency
- Agents of Social Change
- Education and Social Change
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# **Syllabus-Paper II**

## **Indian Society: Structure and Change**

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#### **(I) Perspectives on the Study of Indian Society**

- Indology (G. S. Ghurye)
- Structural Functionalism (M N Srinivas)
- Marxist Sociology (A R Desai)

#### **(II) Impact of Colonial Rule on Indian Society**

- Social Background of Indian Nationalism
- Modernization of Indian Tradition
- Protests and Movements during the Colonial Period
- Social Reforms

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#### **(I) Rural and Agrarian Social Structure**

- The Idea of Indian Village and Village Studies
- Agrarian Social Structure - Evolution of Land Tenure System, Land Reforms

#### **(II) Caste System**

- Perspectives on the Study of Caste Systems: GS Ghurye, M N Srinivas, Louis Dumont, Andre Beteille
- Features of Caste System
- Untouchability - Forms and Perspectives

#### **(III) Tribal Communities in India**

- Definitional Problems
- Geographical Spread
- Colonial Policies and Tribes
- Issues of Integration and Autonomy

#### **(IV) Social Classes in India**

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- Industrial Class Structure
- Middle Classes in India

#### **(V) Systems of Kinship in India**

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- Types of Kinship Systems
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- Household Dimensions of the Family

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- Green Revolution and Social Change
- Changing Modes of Production in Indian Agriculture
- Problems of Rural Labour, Bondage, Migration

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- Growth of Urban Settlements in India
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### **(IV) Politics and Society**

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- Emerging Issues: Ageing, Sex Ratios, Child and Infant Mortality, Reproductive Health

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- Violence against Women
- Caste Conflicts
- Ethnic Conflicts, Communalism, Religious Revivalism
- Illiteracy and Disparities in Education



## SOCIOLOGY – THE DISCIPLINE

**Q. What is common sense? How are common knowledge and sociology related to each other? Explain. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans:** Common sense is 'routine knowledge that people have of their everyday world and activities'. The common sense explanations are generally based on what may be called 'naturalistic' and/or individualistic explanations based on taken for granted knowledge.

- Poverty, from a commonsensical point of view is viewed as a result of indolent behavior, while a sociologist may view it in terms of structural inequalities and disabilities.
- Sociology has had its tryst with common sense for a long time and it has been accused of being no more than common sense right from its birth.

### Relationship Between Common Sense and Sociology

- Concepts in sociology are framed by taking into consideration the commonsensical knowledge. Common sense helps sociologists in hypothesis building.
- Commonsense provides raw material for sociological investigations. Sociology tends to answer questions generated from common sense knowledge. For example, common sense views on gender are widely studied in sociology.
- Common sense also helps sociology by challenging its conclusions and thereby enriching the discipline.
- According to Anthony Giddens, sociological knowledge also itself becomes part of common sense knowledge sometimes. For example, sociological research into marital breakdown has led people to believe that marriage is a risky proposition.
- When discipline moved closer to positivism, common sense was almost discarded.
- Anti-positivist on the other hand again tried to give importance to common sense. So, the relationship between the two is dynamic and even mutually reinforcing at times.

Thus, sociologists' perception towards common sense changed over time as the discipline evolved. Earlier when it was close to philosophy, common sense was seen as complementary.

**Q. What is the relationship (similarities and differences) between sociology and history in terms of their area of study and methodology? Discuss. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans:** History and Sociology have a very close relation. According to G E Howard, 'History is past sociology, sociology is present history'. Philosophy and history are considered as the mother of all social sciences.

- Karl Marx and Durkheim pioneered use of historical data in their sociological discourse. Karl Marx's historical materialism is pivoted around the historical evolution of modes of production.
- Weber's 'Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism' also uses a Historical Particular Ideal Type and Pitrim Sorokin's 'Social and Cultural Dynamics' also makes ample use of historical inferences.

### Differences between the two Disciplines

Historians, almost, as a rule, study the past, while, Sociologists are more interested in the contemporary or recent past and present.

- Historians, earlier were content to delineate the actual events, to establish how things actually happened. In sociology, the focus was to seek to establish causal relationships.
- History studies concrete details with an objective discussion of real events. Sociologists are more likely to abstract from concrete reality, categorize and generalize.
- History is descriptive while Sociology has normative elements also.

### Interaction between the two Disciplines

The interaction between two disciplines can be found in their subject matter. The subject matter of Sociology and History overlap to a considerable extent.

- The historian frequently provides the material which the sociologist uses.
- With the help of History, Sociology can get crucial information about the past.
- According to Radcliffe Brown, 'Sociology is nomothetic, while history is idiographic'. The historian describes unique events, while the sociologist derives generalizations.

However, nowadays, History is not only concerned

**Q. What is science? Do you think that the methods used in natural sciences can be applied to sociology? Give reasons for your answer. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Science can be summed up as 'use of systematic methods of empirical investigation, the analysis of data, theoretical thinking and the logical assessment of arguments to develop a body of knowledge about a particular subject matter'. This definition is closer to natural sciences than social sciences.

#### Scientific Method

- It refers to any systematic, rational and objective set of steps to explore the truth or new knowledge or for investigating phenomena or correcting and integrating previous knowledge.
- It is more generally associated with natural sciences and discovery of laws, which govern behavior of matter, is at the heart of scientific method. Specifically, it is a series of steps starting with definition, hypothesis building, testing and so on.
- To be termed scientific, a method of inquiry must be based on empirical and measurable evidence subject to specific principles of reasoning.
- To establish cause and effect, scientific method in natural sciences employs 'laboratory experiments' in a controlled environment in which variables can be changed.
- For long, the litmus test for any discipline to be scientific can be certain criteria like –
  - ✓ **Inter Subjective Reliability** – It is the extent to which other researchers are able to reach the same results if they were to replicate one's study.
  - ✓ **Objectivity**
  - ✓ **Quantifiability**
  - ✓ **Universal Testability and Theoretical Orientation**

#### Scientific Method in Sociology

- Scientific Method among sociologists became more popular in the 19th century when early sociologists were obsessed with science, but later it was contended that scientific method is not suitable for sociological investigations as sociology deals with

human beings who have consciousness and are not completely governed by external stimuli as matter in nature does.

- For this reason, scientific methods when used in sociology suffer from various shortcomings like – observer bias, non-response bias, social desirability bias and so on.

#### Criticism of Scientific Methods and Science

- **Demarcation and Probability:** Karl Popper in his 'The Logic of Scientific Enquiry' argues that science and scientific method face problems of demarcation i.e. what is scientific and what is not as there is subjectivity at times. He further says all scientific principles are based on probability and not 'finality'.
- **Limitations of Controlled Experimentation:** Due to its specific nature, 'laboratory experiments' cannot be conducted in sociology in a controlled environment. So, controlled experimentation is not possible in sociology to establish 'cause and effect' and hence there cannot be a discovery of fixed universal laws.
- **Influence of Value Judgments:** There are value judgments of observers which affect research in sociology. So, sociological research cannot have 'objective facts' as the final outcome of the scientific method if used in sociology.
- **Science as a "New Religion":** Adorno indicates that science is suffocating and kills creativity. Science becomes a new religion and blind faith in it negates human freedom which is an integral part of social sciences.
- **Restrictions and Quantifiability:** Scientific Method restricts the choices of researchers and sociological research should be liberating and not constraining. Also, a large part of human interactions cannot be quantified.
- **Elusive Objectivity:** Objectivity in social sciences is not possible as we deal with human minds which are difficult to decode.
- **Weber's Perspective on Meaning and Understanding:** Weber was one of the early scholars to identify this difficulty and he argued that 'There cannot be an objective science of society since social actions must be understood in terms of meanings that man attaches to them'.

**Q. What is a variable in social research? What are their different types? Elaborate. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Variables are those parameters whose value varies as situation changes and they are key elements of an experiment.

#### Types of Variables

- Generally, there are two kinds of variables. In any research method, there are always some 'dependent variables' and there are some 'independent or fixed variables'. The value of dependent variables depends upon the value of independent variables and other dependent variables.

#### Classification of Variables

- Variables can also be further classified as – experimental variables, measured variables, discrete variables, continuous variables.

#### Dependent Variable vs. Independent Variable

- **Dependent Variable:** In any study, a generally measured variable is also a dependent variable.
- **Example:** In studying the educational level of an area, 'Education Level' is a dependent variable, which depends on other variables like – parental income, schools available, teachers' quality, cultural values and so on.
- **Situational Change of Dependent Variable:** A dependent variable in one situation can be independent variable in another research.
- **Example:** in determining the causes of unemployment, education can be an independent variable with unemployment as an independent variable.

#### Role & Relationship between Variables

- In any social experiment, the researcher first needs to identify the variables and then establish which of them are dependent and which are independent. After that, inter-linkages between these variables have to be established.
- In natural sciences, establishing correlations between variables is easy in controlled experimental settings through use of various 'controls' i.e. changing the values of independent variables and observing the effect of these on dependent variables. But in sociology, direct controls are not available and instead methods of indirect experimentations are used.

- The method used to establish and analyze the relationship between variables is known as 'multi-variate' or 'variable analysis'. In sociology, this was earliest used by Durkheim in his study of suicide in which he studied effect of various independent variables like religion, gender, marital status, etc. on dependent variable viz. suicide.

Therefore, proper weightage should be given to each variable according to its impact on outcome dependent variables.

**Q. What is sampling in the context of social research? Discuss different forms of sampling with their relative advantages and disadvantages. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Sampling is a method used in social research to identify a representative group (sample) of a population to collect data in an efficient way by saving costs and time. It is a condition for generalizability as it is not feasible to study entire populations.

The concept of sampling is the main factor in ensuring the validity and reliability of results.

Mainly sampling can be classified into probability and non-probability samplings:

#### A. Probability Sampling

##### Simple Random Sampling

- **Method:** Each unit is equally likely to be chosen (e.g., drawing lots from a list of voters).
- **Pros:** Large-scale generalization is possible; minimal bias; permits statistical procedures.
- **Cons:** Must have a detailed list of the population; expensive and time-consuming if the population is too large and/or spread out (e.g., rural India).

##### Stratified Random Sampling

- **Method:** The population is divided into homogeneous groups (e.g., urban/rural) and then random samples are taken from each.
- **Pros:** The representation of subgroups is guaranteed; precision is increased (e.g., caste-based analysis in NSSO surveys).
- **Cons:** It requires first-hand knowledge of the strata; it is complicated if strata overlap.

**Q. Highlight the main features of historical materialism as propounded by Marx. How far is this theory relevant in understanding contemporary societies? Explain. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Historical Materialism' is a conception of society in terms of evolutions from one stage to another, which Marx refers to as modes of production, and material or economic factors have a pivotal role in historical change. It is an inquiry into the nature of relations between man and man, and man and things as history proceeds.

#### Main Features of Historical Materialism

- **Materialist Background:** The economic base (mode of production - forces like machinery, relations like class ownership) is the determinant of the superstructure (law, politics, religion, ideology); for instance, the agrarian base of feudalism led to the rise of aristocratic superstructures.
- **Dialectical Progression:** The past is the story of the unfolding of the dialectics - contradictions prevail - quantitative ones (e.g., surplus accumulation) lead to qualitative ones (revolutions); the existing order (thesis) clashes with the class antagonism (antithesis) resulting in the new form (synthesis), for example, capitalism's internal crises.
- **Class Struggle as the Driving Force:** "History of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Communist Manifesto, 1848); class struggle (bourgeoisie vs. proletariat) has been the major impetus for the transitions from slavery to feudalism to socialism.
- **Evolution Stages: Successive Modes** - primitive communism (egalitarian), ancient slavery, feudalism (serf-lord), capitalism (wage labor), socialism (collective ownership), communism (stateless, classless); each mode harbors the seeds of its overthrow.
- **Alienation and Consciousness:** The estrangement of labor in capitalism causes the production of false consciousness, however, through praxis (revolutionary action) the class consciousness is enlightened which enables the change of the superstructure.

#### Relevance to Present Societies

##### *Historical Materialism Explains about the Global Capitalism's Crises*

- Historical Materialism explains the neoliberal injustices (e.g., Oxfam 2023: the richest 1% hold 43% of the global wealth)
- The exploitation of workers in the gig economy situation
- The deterioration of the environment as the antagonisms of a profit-driven production system.
- From the sociological standpoint, it unravels financialization as a source of alienation in urban India.

##### *Understanding of Social Issues*

- Using class-based analysis, one can better understand social issues such as labor unrest (e.g., 2020-21 Indian farmers' protests against corporate agrarian shifts) and anti-globalization efforts, as the latter show changes in the economic base (e.g., WTO policies) that lead to resistance.
- **Indian Context:** The materialist approach is useful in explaining the caste-class nexus phenomena in the following way - the Dalit proletarianization got rapidly intensified by the neoliberal reforms (1991) as per the Ambedkar-Marxist synthesis.

##### *Criticisms of Historical Materialism*

- It overemphasizes the economic aspects and leaves out factors such as culture, gender, and race (e.g., feminist critiques of unpaid domestic labor as non-class base);
- Moreover, in the post-materialist societies, the identity politics (e.g., #MeToo) that transcend class are dominant which makes HM a Eurocentric theory for the Global South which is ethnically and culturally diverse.
- Neo-Marxists (e.g., Gramsci's hegemony) bring the idea of historical materialism into the realm of the cultural superstructures thus keeping the theory alive for the hybrid modernities such as digital capitalism's surveillance alienations.

Therefore, historical materialism stays one of the most powerful frameworks when it comes to unraveling modern-day inequalities and changes, thus connecting the dialectics of base-superstructure with the praxis-oriented change.

**Q. Give an account of the recent trends of marriage in the Indian context. How are these different from traditional practices?**

**(CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Marriage in India has been a sacred institution embedded with the idea of familial ties, caste endogamy, and socio-religious norms. It is changing through urbanization, education, and digitalization. Recent indicators show that the institution of marriage is reflective of individual agency for inclusivity and sustainability. This is in contrast to strictly traditional beliefs that allow for a personal choice, but also continuity of tradition.

#### **Modern Trends of Marriage**

##### ***Delayed Unions***

- The average age for marriages in India has now stabilized at 28 years old for both love and arranged marriages.
- It has become more common to prioritize career and personal development.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006) has helped decrease child marriages in India, but the difference between rural and urban areas is still significant.

##### ***Wedding Industry***

- The wedding economy in India is valued more than 6 trillion rupees.
- In the wedding industry, many of wedding planning is made up of sustainable practices such as using eco-friendly materials for décor and diamonds that are lab-grown.

##### ***Partner Selection***

- In India, arranged marriages are still approximately 70%, although now dating apps such as Tinder are facilitating urban youth relationships.
- There has also been an increase in the permission of inter-caste marriages and the development of interfaith marriage.

##### ***Alternative Lifestyles***

- There is an increasing trend of live-in relationships and Dual Income No Kids (DINK).
- These lifestyles are now being supported through the court system (i.e. Domestic Violence Act).
- The decriminalization of homosexuality (2018) in India has provided support, with more people now having an opinion about same-sex unions.

- The divorce rate has also doubled in the urban areas over the last two decades, with one of the main drivers being women becoming financially independent and seeking egalitarian values in marriage.

##### ***Ceremonies***

- Ceremonies are increasingly incorporating both traditions and innovative practices (e.g. destination location weddings in locations like Rajasthan).
- North Indian weddings are changing from being more extravagant and focused on lavishness and dowry to being more experience-based and with less emphasis on debt.

##### ***Gender Dynamics***

- There has been a shift away from patriarchal norms and submissiveness for the role for women.

##### **Traditional Practices vs. Modern Trends**

- **Traditional:** Early marriages, ended up in forced connections and caste endogamy, joint families, heteronormative unions, indissoluble, driven by dowry.
- **Modern:** Individuals have autonomy, nuclear families, sustainability, divorce is increasing, and we are witnessing inclusivity.

Therefore, the marriage landscape is changing. This encompasses modern progressive thinking toward individual choice and experience, while allowing for burgeoning inclusivity. The changes are largely driven by education, technology, and legal change. The remaining challenges are disparities in rural and urban settings, including societal stigma that needs to be addressed. Wedding models will need to balance tradition with modernity, and be inclusive of a possible future.

**Q. In what way does queer kinship challenge the traditional kinship system? Substantiate by giving illustrations.** **(CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** The core of the traditional kinship system is based on heteronormative, biological, and reproductive aspects, which mainly focus on the patrilineal descent, nuclear/extended families, and gendered roles (Parsons' functionalist view). Queer kinship is new non-normative kinship networks of chosen families, same-sex parenting, and fluid affiliations, which challenge biological determinism and treat heterosexuality not as the kinship norm but as one of the options.

# STRATIFICATION & MOBILITY

**Q. Is the social stratification theory gender-blind? Elucidate. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Social stratification is a process in which social inequalities exist in form of structural hierarchical strata one placed above the other. It is defined by Sutherland and Maxwell as 'a process of differentiation which places some people higher than the others'. Stratification is viewed as a social process (social phenomenon) as well as a method (mental construct).

## Theories of Social Stratification

- **Marx:** Concentrated on the class (the relationship between economic power and the means of production) eliminating gender from the picture as a marginal issue.
- **Weber:** He brought class, status, and power to the forefront but did not include gender in his constructs or as a separate dimension.
- **Bourdieu:** He placed cultural and social capital at the center of his theories and hardly any engagement/direct reference to the gender issue.

## Gender-blind Aspects of Social Stratification Theories

- **Class-centric Focus:** Theories chiefly concern the structures of the economy, often regarding the issue of gender as part of the larger conflicts of class (e.g., women's oppression viewed as a consequence of capitalism).
- **Universalist Assumptions:** The frameworks of the past assumed that similar experiences existed within classes, thus ignoring inequality-specific to women especially in case of unpaid domestic labor.
- **Neglect of Intersectionality:** Limited merging of gender with race, caste, or ethnicity; thus, overlooking women with disabilities in India as a good example of compounded disadvantages.

## Gender-sensitive Developments

- Walby and Collins brought patriarchy and intersectionality into the discourse, claiming that gender is a separate stratification axis.
- The theory of patriarchy developed by Sylvia Walby focuses on gendered institutions (e.g., work, family) in addition to those based on classes.
- The idea by Kimberle Crenshaw focuses on the intersection of gender, race, and class, which adds to stratification theory (e.g., women of color receive lower wages).

- According to Gender Gap Report 2024 by World Economic Forum, there are still gender inequalities in income (global average gap: 21%), and leadership (women: 26% of corporate boards), which are not resolved by class.

While classical theories provide foundational insights, they remain fundamentally gender-blind. Feminist scholarship has been crucial in establishing gender as a pervasive, independent system of stratification rather than secondary to class. The future of social analysis and policy making should be a holistic framework that incorporates all identities, such as class and gender.

**Q. Does the structural-functionalist perspective on social stratification promote a status quo? Give reasons for your answer. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Structural-functionalist perspective is one of the sociological paradigms, which was mainly developed by Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton, **considers society as a system of interrelated parts where institutions and structures operate their functions to keep the system in balance and maintain social order.**

**Social stratification:** The description of the society in terms of the hierarchy of people arranged according to their wealth, power, and prestige.

## Functionalist View on Stratification:

- **Davis-Moore thesis:** Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore argue that **social stratification is both an inevitable and a necessary phenomenon**, since the society is said to need a stratified allocation of roles in order to achieve the functions of complexity; **if unequals are rewarded, then this will motivate people to acquire the skills needed** to ensure the efficient allocation of roles (e.g., doctors vs. laborers) in society.
- **Equilibrium maintenance:** Conformity to social values is exemplified in the AGIL model of Parsons with stratification serving as a **vehicle for pattern perpetuation** since inequality serves as a stimulus for the continuation of the practices and adjustment to them, thus the society is prevented from falling into dysfunctions.

**Q. Critically analyze the sociological significance of informal sector in the economy of developing societies. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** The informal sector covers a variety of economic activities undertaken without formal regulation, monetized at a scale that is largely informal, such as street vending, domestic labor and micro enterprises, and often exhibiting low barriers to entry and exit without contractual obligations.

The informal sector is an essential economic and social safety net in many developing societies; it absorbs a large share of the working population but can also create conditions for economic exploitation.

#### **Sociological Significance of Informal Sector in the Developing Societies**

##### *Economic Contribution and Forms of Social Inclusion*

- **Provider of a Livelihood:** The informal sector supports many marginalized groups excluded from the formality of the paid working job economy; small scale forms of work provide an income basis for literally millions of low-wage workers in India, such as street vendors, rickshaw-pullers, and construction workers.
- **Social Inclusion:** Through the informal sector women, migrants, and low-skilled workers, e.g., women in SHG or community-level bank groups improve their economic agency.
- **Social Mobility:** Informal sector employment improves access to skill-building and entrepreneurship, e.g., small-scale enterprises.
- **Social Capital:** Knowledge produced through informal exchanges under societal networks in slums, such as community saving groups, enhances trust, builds community skills, and manages risk and adjustment during economic shocks.

##### *Reinforcement of Social Stratification*

- **Exploitation of the Workers:** Employees who are usually those belonging to the lower castes or are the most marginalized communities may suffer due to low wages.
- **Gender Disparities:** Women in domestic work earn 30% less than men (Oxfam India, 2023), which leads to the perpetuation of patriarchal inequalities.

- **Class Divides:** The absence of any social security system keeps these workers in poverty cycles that, in turn, makes it very difficult for them to gain access to education or have a chance of upward mobility.
- **The Gig Economy:** The informal sector, which has become the source of many modern issues, and in which workers on different platforms (for instance, Uber drivers) are subjected to algorithmic exploitation and have job insecurity, is among them.

##### *Cultural and Social Dynamics*

- **Cultural Preservation:** Local markets and artisans not only keep traditional skills alive (e.g., handloom weaving) but also help in the revival and reinforcement of those segments of culture.
- **Urbanization Threats:** The spread of global culture and consumerism through the use of cheap and easily available products are gradually breaking down the local arts and heritage.
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Immigrants through informal trade get firmly attached to urban economies, e.g., as slum Dharavi has become a center for small-scale industries.
- The informal sector builds social relationships, but at the same time, it is also subjected to exclusionary practices (for instance, caste-based networks) that can hinder access.

##### *Challenges and Policy Gaps*

- **Lack of Regulation:** The disappearance of legal identification denies access to credit, thus slowing the development of micro-enterprises.
- **Policy Failures:** Street Vendors Act (2014) is designed to protect vendors; however, only 10% of them are registered (MoHUA, 2023), thus, revealing the gaps between policies and their implementation.
- **Technological Disruption:** Automatization has become one of the issues that threaten informal jobs and later on, it will be necessary to reskill these employees in different areas.
- **Vulnerability:** The absence of pensions, health insurance, or any kind of legal support for workers only makes their socio-economic situations even more fragile and insecure.

Thus, the informal sector still remains a necessary economic tool and a means for social inclusion in the less developed countries; however, it is also responsible for the continuation of inequalities and vulnerable conditions.

**Q. Are pressure groups a threat to or a necessary element of democracy? Explain with suitable illustrations. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Pressure Groups are the organizations formed to promote specific interests and influence policies of the government, but not run for office. In India, trade unions, farmers' organizations, and NGOs push for governance and representation, with a crucial discourse around their impacts.

#### **Role of Pressure Groups as a Vital Part of Democracy**

- **Voice for the Marginalized:** Pressure groups provide a voice for those groups that are not adequately represented, e.g. Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), was at the forefront of the 2020-21 farmer protests that forced the government to repeal recent laws regarding farmers
- **Policy Improvement:** Pressure groups often provide input on specific topics, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), for instance, played a pivotal role in changing India's approach to its environmental policies and pushed for considerations related to sustainable development.
- **Check on the Government:** Pressure groups could act as watchdogs on behalf of the public for accountability, consider the work of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) as an example, they have championed the right to access voters' information on public information legislation to ensure transparency in elections.
- **Pluralism:** The collective representation of a diversity of interests defines democratic inclusion.

#### **Potential Danger of Pressure Groups Undermining Democracy**

- **Excessive Influence Models:** Some pressure groups could be said to exert undue influence to sway policy, a corporate lobby example may be the telecom lobbies, allegedly swaying governmental policy without consideration of marginal players.
- **Polarisation of an Electorate or while Governing:** Pressure groups that use extensive means of demonstrations or disruption can challenge the legitimacy of governing and its role in representing everyone in society.

- **Unequal Representation:** More durable groups in favorable situations contain the power to overshadow weaker groups, for instance, it can be seen that NGOs are often organized in urban areas, are resource-abundant, and tend to represent their interests over nomadic or rural collective action which has far less resources behind it.
- **Bypassing Democratic Procedures:** Non-parliamentary action, or pressure (Trade Union Strikes – trade union organizations like AITUC), can choke the authority of elected institutions.

#### **Balanced Role of Pressure Groups in India**

- **Constitutional Safeguards:** Article 19(1)(c) guarantees the right to form an association, which allows all pressure groups to operate legally, however there are still regulations governing foreign-funded NGO, the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act 2010 (FCRA), etc.
- **Judicial Control:** The Supreme Court has the authority to intervene when lobbying goes overboard and has ruled in favour of holding these lobbyists accountable, i.e. 2G spectrum allocation.
- **Democratic Deepening:** Working groups and organizations (like Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan-MKSS), were instrumental in mobilizing citizens to enact and apply new legislation, RTI Act, 2005.

Pressure groups can benefit a democratic polity or threaten it. They are valuable to enhance representation, accountability, and depth of policy like the BKU, ADR. By enhancing regulatory frameworks, create better internal democratic processes and work toward inclusive, pressing advocacy; change State/Union norms, while countering associated risks.

**Q. How can you assess the significance of social movements in the digital era? Explain. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** A social movement is defined as a sustained collective action aimed at bringing or resisting social change outside the sphere of established institutions.

#### **Significance of Social Movements in the Digital Era** *Enhanced Mobilization and Reach*

- **Rapid Amplification:** The use of online platforms has radically changed the landscape as it is now

**Q. What are the reactions of R.K. Merton to the functionalism of social anthropologists? Bring out the limitations of latent functions.**

**(CSE 2020)**

**Ans:** Merton was a prominent American sociologist known for his various path breaking concepts like – Middle Range Theories, latent and Manifest Functions, Anomie, etc. Merton was one of the biggest doyens of structural functionalism along with Parsons. Due to his modified functionalism, he is also known as ‘neo-functionalism’.

He particularly draws our attention to the reasons why functional theories of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski which were formulated to deal with the realities of a simpler tribal society, isolated from rest of the world, could not be applied to contemporary societies of our own time which are complex and where historical traditions have overlapped on social institutions over several centuries.

He modified earlier functionalist view and criticized the three fundamental postulates of earlier functionalist and suggested their modification in following paradigms –

- I. Modification to Postulate of Functional Unity:** Investigator has to study ‘dysfunction’ and ‘non-functions’ of a particular ‘social item’ as well. This idea was novel in the functionalist approach as earlier structural functionalists never looked beyond the pure functionalist perspective.
- II. Modification to Postulates of Functional Indispensability:** Merton argued that ‘social items’ are not indispensable in nature and there may be ‘functional alternatives’ i.e. the same function may be performed by different items as well.
- III. Modification to Postulates of Universal Functionalism:** Earlier functionalists believed that all existing social and cultural forms are invariably functional and fulfill some positive function. Merton argued that the context in which the ‘social item’ is studied should also be taken into account. The item may be functional in one context and dysfunctional in other context. He also distinguished between latent and manifest functions.

Latent functions are those functions which are unintended or unrecognized consequences of any social pattern. They are present but are not immediately obvious. On the other hand, the intended, conscious, or deliberate functions of the social policies or action which are created for the benefit of the society are called manifest functions. Manifest functions are generally expected from the institutions to be fulfilled.

Manifest functions are beneficial in nature, whereas latent functions can harm as well as benefit society. Latent functions therefore have the tendency to turn into dysfunctions. However, this is not always the case.

Dysfunctions are the latent functions which harm society, create social disorder and conflict. Latent functions often go unnoticed, unless they are dysfunctions or functions resulting in negative outcomes. It is not unnatural for manifest functions to be dysfunctional at times; in many cases, it is already known that policy or action might lead to some kind of a negative consequence. But, it is the latent dysfunctions which are of greater concern because being unknown and unpredictable, they tend to bear more harm to the society which is often irreparable.

**Q. Examine how social movements come to an end. Illustrate with examples. (CSE 2020)**

**Ans:** Social movements are purposeful, organized groups striving to work toward a common goal. These groups might be attempting to create change (Occupy Wall Street, Arab Spring), to resist change (anti-globalization movement), or to provide a political voice to those otherwise disenfranchised (civil rights movements). Social movements create social change. A social movement requires sustained collective action over time and hence totally spontaneous and ephemeral collective actions cannot be termed as social movements.

Collective action must be marked by some degree of organization and also has a certain ideology. This organization may include a ‘leadership’ and a ‘structure’ that defines how members relate to each other, make decisions and carry them out.

The two features of social movements, namely, sustained action and spontaneity operate simultaneously. These together distinguish a social movement from other collective actions. For example – trade union movements and cooperative movements are not social movements because they have a well-defined organizational structure.

# EDUCATION SYSTEM & SOCIAL CHANGE

**Q. Analyse the relevance of 'Pattern variables' in the study of social change. (CSE 2020)**

**Ans:** Pattern variables refers to a set of concepts, which reflects the 'properties of all action systems', in Talcott Parsons Theory of 'Social Action.' According to Parsons, in the performance of roles, individuals face 'dilemmas' which occur due to 'improper internalization of values' related to 'role -expectation.'

These strains in the 'role performance' are reflected in five sets of dilemmas, placed dichotomously, with each side representing one polar extreme. The social actor has to 'choose' one side before the actor can act.

The five pattern variables, as listed by Parsons are:

1. Affectivity versus affective neutrality
2. Self-orientation versus Collectivity orientation
3. Universalism versus Particularism
4. Ascription versus Achievement
5. Specificity versus Diffuseness

The Pattern variables, therefore according to Parsons, define the nature of 'role interaction' and 'role expectations' in the social system. It provides the overall direction in which most members of a social system choose their roles. It therefore gives us an idea about the nature of the social system. They help us to identify different types of 'structures of social systems'.

'Social structure', refers to the specific manner in which 'roles in an interaction situation are configured or composed'.

The Pattern - variables, can, thus help us to identify different types of structures of social systems, their social characteristics and their place in society.

For Example, the Universalistic -achievement pattern - It is a type of 'structure of social system' in whose roles those 'value orientations' are dominant which encourage achievement based on 'legal rational methods' among members of a society. Example: American Society.

However, in real life, the 'dilemma of choices' in terms of pattern variables is much more 'precarious' and 'full of strain' than, emphasised by Parsons. The empirical social systems as described by Parsons, may in real life settings, show variations example - Racism in American society, mobility in Indian caste system.

Social reality has however, become very complex, especially due to rapid pace of 'social change,' in the wake of an increasingly globalizing world. It is therefore, very difficult to identify social systems, with a pre-dominant 'cultural value' defining them.

**Q. According to Durkheim, "The major function of education is the transmission of society's norms and values." Discuss. (CSE 2020)**

**Ans:** Emile Durkheim argued that schools were essential for 'imprinting' shared social values into the minds of children. He believed schools would play a central role in forming modern societies. Functionalist sociologist Emile Durkheim saw Education as performing two major functions in advanced industrial societies - transmitting the shared values of society and simultaneously teaching the specialised skills for an economy based on a specialised division of labour.

According to Durkheim 'Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity: education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands'.

Durkheim argued that, in complex societies, school serves a function which cannot be fulfilled by either the family, which is based on kinship or friendship, which is based on personal choice, whereas being a member of wider society involves learning to get on with and co-operate with people who are neither our kin or our friends. Durkheim argued that a second crucial function for education in an advanced industrial economy is the teaching of specialised skills required for a complex division of labour.

Factory based production in modern industrial society often involves the application of advanced scientific knowledge, which requires years of formal education to learn, thus schools become much more necessary.

Marxists would be a bit more cynical about the relationship between school and work - according to Durkheim school is a neutral institution which simply transmits values and skills to individuals which enable the economy to run smoothly - according to Bowles and Gintis' Correspondence Principle, this is a much darker process - school teaches working class kids to be passive, making them easier to exploit in later life.

**Q. What is the nature of relationship between science and religion in modern society? Analyze with suitable examples. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Questions and confusions have always surrounded man and he sought answer to these in either religion or science. So, both acted as storehouse of complementary knowledge. It is generally agreed that religion predates science.

Classical evolutionary sociologists see evolution in a series of religion, magic and science:

- **Auguste Comte:** According to Comte, society moves from a theological stage to positivist stage. According to him, religion dominates traditional societies and science dominates modern societies.
- **Laurie Taylor:** He further glorified science and called science as infallible and embodies the spirit of modernity.
- **Herbert Spencer:** Another evolutionary theorist, he also saw religion and science at two opposing ends. As societies evolve, science becomes modern religion. In his book 'Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays, 1954' on his experience of Trobriand Islanders also distinguishes Sacred and Profane.
- **Bronisław Kasper Malinowski:** According to him, science, including art, craft, and economic activities of Trobriand islanders were cited as example of profane.

#### **Differences between Science and Religion**

- Science is considered as inquisitive, deliberative while Religion is considered as imaginative and speculative.
- Science drives man to shape his own destiny while Religion pushes man towards fatalism.
- Science believes in precision and measurement while Religion has no such provisions.
- Science brings the unknown to the level of observable reality while Religion often depicts God as beyond reach of normal human beings.
- Science is liberating and enlightening and promotes questioning of everything while Religion binds individuals and promotes status quo and tradition.
- Science is based on rationality while Religion is based on the belief in the sacred.

- Science promotes individual innovations, though team works are also there while Religion is more collectively oriented.
- Scientific knowledge and method are valid universally while Religious principles are accepted within a particular community only which believe in those principle.

#### **Similarities between Science and Religion**

- Both aim to provide answers to certain questions.
- Both have manifest as well as latent functions as well as dysfunctions.
- Both are a result of intellectual as well as emotional needs of human beings.

#### **Max Weber's Comparative Studies**

- It showed that religions across the world advocate values that differ and are invariably in opposition to rationality. Science on the other hand is empirical.
- So, he sees an opposition between the two.
- According to him, as rationality and scientific thoughts increase, secularism increases and the space of religion will decrease.
- Scientific ideas like 'Darwin's Evolution Theory' conflict with the view that God created man.

**Examples:** Due to the influence of science, many religions have also rationalized themselves. Many religious institutions are making ample use of scientific discoveries to make the reach of religion wider. Television and internet are profusely used by religious leaders to reach masses.

As Einstein aptly stated, 'Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind.' This wisdom holds particularly relevant today, given how much still lies beyond our comprehension, making the interplay of both essential.

**Q. Discuss the concept of animism and differentiate it from naturism. (CSE 2024)**

**Ans: Animism** means the belief in spirits/soul. Rather than focusing on the idea of ghost, Edward B Tylor emphasized on idea of soul in his 'Primitive Culture, 1871'.

- Animism refers to a given form of religion in which man finds the presence of spirit in every object that surrounds him.

**Q. Is humanity at the mercy of Nature, Science and Technology? Comment in the light of pandemic situation. (CSE 2020)**

**Ans:** The world is facing a global health pandemic as many countries battle the widespread transmission of COVID-19 that has already cost the lives of millions.

The healthcare community across nations is engaged in desperate attempts to save lives and stem this crisis, even while becoming highly vulnerable through continuous exposure to the dreaded infection.

Developed countries such as the US, Italy, France and Spain experienced an unprecedented health crisis as their national death toll increases on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Science, technology and innovation have played an important role in addressing this health crisis. The emergence of COVID-19 is a direct consequence of anti-people approaches to science and technology rooted in an unfair patent regime, evisceration of investments in public health, and the expansion of unregulated new frontiers that put people and planet in peril.

Big Tech companies have jumped into the fray, seeing a business opportunity in the current context, announcing that they will develop new apps for self-screening. This will only help them further amass data capital at the cost of privacy.

From drones that monitor people in cities to Facial Recognition Technologies that can see through helmets, wristbands that trace the movement of those home-quarantined and AI based video analytics that capture number plates of vehicles to monitor mobility, national authorities have deployed surveillance technology, violating by a huge margin, the necessity, proportionality and legality tests needed to track citizens.

The COVID-19 outbreak is but a reflection of a science and technology paradigm that has had little regard for social ethics and human wellbeing. Today, zoonotic epidemics have become the new normal, an indicator of a climate emergency born from capitalist greed that has destroyed habitats and natural ecosystems. The marriage of genetic and AI technologies, and the datafication of soil, forests and oceans by powerful Big Tech today creates great risks for the future of human civilization. The pursuit of such

research - in gene editing, for example - is carried out in utmost secrecy, without any public disclosure about potential harms.

While national epidemiological databases on COVID-19 are vital for enabling governments to take steps to effectively address the crisis, such data must also be pooled for furthering global public health research for the common good, ensuring future benefits are not cornered by corporations. Therefore, the global scientific community must continue to take part in the development of scientific and technological innovations not only to successfully combat the COVID-19 emergency, but also to contribute to knowledge societies that exist in harmony with nature and where individuals can lead prosperous and fulfilling lives.

**Q. Technology has accelerated the process of development and dependency. Discuss. (CSE 2020)**

**Ans:** Development as a social concept involves progressive change from one inferior state to a superior state of wellbeing or simply change in the desired direction. It is also defined as 'development is about removing the obstacles to the things that a person can do in life, such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, or lack of civil and political freedoms'.

Andre Gunder Frank (1971) argues that developing nations have failed to develop not because of 'internal barriers to development' as modernization theorists argue, but because the developed West has systematically underdeveloped them, keeping them in a state of dependency (hence 'dependency theory').

Technological globalization is speeded in large part by technological diffusion, the spread of technology across borders.

In the last two decades, there has been rapid improvement in the spread of technology to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations, and a 2008 World Bank report discusses both the benefits and ongoing challenges of this diffusion.

Rural and low-tech products such as corn can benefit from new technological innovations, and that, conversely, technologies like mobile banking can aid those whose rural existence consists of low-tech market vending. In addition, technological advances in areas

## SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN SOCIETY & DEVELOPMENT

**Q. What do you understand by sustainable development? Discuss the elements of sustainable development as proposed in the UNDP's Sustainable Development Goals Report-2015. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Sustainable development is a sociological paradigm for fair progress, it is about satisfying the current needs without harming the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs; it recognizes the economy, environment, and society as three inseparable aspects of the same problem and aims to solve the issue of structural inequalities such as class, caste, and gender that are the root causes of these divides (Brundtland Report, 1987).

**The Sociological Perspective:** Sees it as a means of social integration and empowerment, a way of opposing the exploitation by capitalism and the colonial past which is the main reason for the Global South's worsening situation.

**Social Inclusion and Equity Elements (Goals 1-5, 10)**

- **No Poverty (Goal 1) and Zero Hunger (Goal 2):** These are designed to eliminate multidimensional poverty, therefore, going to the root of social exclusion that leads to the elderly being looked down upon and the young being limited in their development; from a sociological standpoint, it is in line with Durkheimian anomie by creating a sense of shared welfare.
- **Gender Equality (Goal 5):** Breaks down the walls of patriarchy and helps women gain power through participation in decision-making; in India, it serves as a remedy for gender-based labor inequalities (NFHS-5: 57% anemia in women).
- **Reduced Inequalities (Goal 10):** Confronts the intersectional nature of the biases faced e.g., caste and migration and through the creation of inclusive institutions helps to reduce the asymmetries of power and increase social trust.

**Human Capital and Institutional Strength (Goals 3-4, 16)**

- **Good Health and Well-being (Goal 3):** Decreases health inequities which cause a vicious circle of deprivation; from a sociological perspective, it is the foundation of agency which is similar to the theory of cultural reproduction by Pierre Bourdieu.

- **Quality Education (Goal 4):** Is a means of acquiring critical consciousness (Paulo Freire), thus, allowing the marginalized groups to become aware of and challenge the dominance of the hegemonic structures; it is essential for social mobility in diversified polities.
- **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (Goal 16):** Provides for accountable governance, thus preventing elite capture; develops participatory democracy as the main feature of Weberian rational-legal authority.

**Environmental and Economic Sustainability (Goals 6-9, 11-15)**

- **Clean Water/Sanitation (Goal 6), Affordable Energy (Goal 7), Climate Action (Goal 13):** Recast the environment as a matter of class where the poor have to suffer the most – e.g. climate refugees; also, it champions environmental justice as a way of preventing social conflicts.
- **Sustainable Cities (Goal 11) and Responsible Consumption (Goal 12):** Means of fighting urban gentrification and, thus, preserving the rights that the city dwellers have amidst the process of urbanization; also, it disapproves of the consumerist individualism for the sake of communal harmony.
- **Decent Work/Economic Growth (Goal 8), Industry/Innovation (Goal 9):** Are efforts to merge the two ideals of prosperity and equity thus resulting in a decrease in labor exploitation; from a sociological point of view, it lessens the Marxist concept of alienation through the just distribution of resources among people.

**Global Interdependence (Goal 17)**

- **Partnerships for Goals:** Shows the impact of transnational solidarity resulting from the technology/finance transfers between the two parties involved, thus, providing a solution to the North-South divides problem; from a sociological point of view, this is an indicator of the world being a closely-knit community whose members should work together for collective resilience.

The components of the UNDP 2015 Report incorporate the ideas of equity, agency, and resilience and thus, go beyond the economic aspect to bring about the emancipatory change. Sociologists call for more efforts

## INTRODUCING INDIAN SOCIETY

**Q. 'Textual perspective is important in understanding of Indian Social System.' Discuss.**

**(CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** In Indian sociology, the textual perspective is used to refer to the analysis of the ancient texts (Vedas, Upanishads, Dharmashastras like Manusmriti) with an aim to understand the social norms, the hierarchies, and the institutions; the approach, which was first invented by the Orientalists (e.g., Max Müller) and the indologists (e.g., P.V. Kane), considers the texts as the sources of "Great Tradition" (Redfield), in contrast with the empirical "Little Tradition".

"Textual perspective is a must-have knowledge for understanding the ideational base of India's syncretic social system, which is a collective conscience (Durkheim) based on dharma and karma, but it has to be judged for its dynamism (Weber's elective affinity).

**Textual Perspective gives insights into Structural Foundations**

- **Caste and Hierarchy:** Rig Veda's Purusha Sukta describes the varna system, thus clarifying the hierarchical principle; Dumont's Homo Hierarchicus (1966) refers to Manusmriti to derive the concept of "pure-impure" binary, which is used to explain the continuity of jati in spite of modernization.
- **Gender and Family Norms:** Manusmriti defines the pativrata ideals, thus manifesting the patriarchal stridharma; from the sociological point of view, it rationalizes the subjugation of women, however, the bhakti texts (e.g., Andal's poetry) also suggest the empowerments of the followers, according to feminist interpretations (Niranjana).
- **State and Economy:** Kautilya's Arthashastra is a good example where rajadharma and sreni guilds are depicted, thus indicating that the polity is closely connected with the social order; it is highly instrumental in revealing the residues of feudalism in the unorganized sectors of modern economies.
- **Limitations and Critiques of the Textual Perspective**
- **Static Idealism:** The texts tend to idealize varnashrama, thereby not taking into account the empirical fluidity (Srinivas' Sanskritization); according to Said's Orientalism these colonial misreadings (e.g.,

British codification) were responsible for the essentialization of caste.

- **Elitist Bias:** The Brahmanical dominance is that it refuses to acknowledge the subaltern voices; Ambedkar gives a critical appraisal of them as instruments of oppression, and thus he promotes empirical studies (e.g., NFHS data) for intersectional analysis.
- **Contemporary Disconnect:** The urban globalization is a factor that lessens the impact of the texts, however, Hindutva uses them for a political comeback, thus it energizes the identity conflicts.

So, the textual perspective unveils ideational platforms of the Indian social system, thus it complements the structural-functional analysis, however, the complete understanding of the issue demands the integration of the fieldwork data.

**Q. How would you appropriate to characterise G. S. Ghurye as a practitioner of 'theoretical pluralism'?**

**(CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Theoretical pluralism is a sociological approach that combines various paradigms (such as inductive empiricism, textual Indology, structural-functionalism) instead of following one single paradigm, thereby enabling a more flexible understanding of social realities.

Ghurye (1893-1983), the father of Indian sociology, is a good example of this as he used an eclectic approach in his research on caste, tribe, and urbanization, mixing the Western with the native.

**Eclectic Methodological Integration**

- **Indological-Textual Fusion:** Sourced the Vedic/Dharmashastra writings (e.g., Caste and Race in India, 1932) to reconstruct the ideal of varna, but also stayed true to the empirical surveys; such pluralism stands against the strict positivism, showing caste as a changing "cultural conscience" (Durkheimian echo).
- **Inductive Empiricism:** He focused on the fieldwork (e.g., tribal studies), showing through the census data how "backward classes" were, but was laissez-faire in theory – almost deductive structuralism (M.N. Srinivas' influence) – in order to illustrate the assimilation processes.

**Q. Which measures would you suggest for preventing caste conflicts in India? Justify your argument. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Caste Conflicts are the outcomes of structural inequalities that intersect with class and status (Max Weber), and are worsened by the uneven spreading of modernization (Yogendra Singh). Their prevention requires interventions that are handled in a holistic way—legal, economic, and cultural—that would create ‘social capital’ (Pierre Bourdieu) and diminish the identities which cause division.

#### **Measures Needed to Prevent Caste Conflicts**

##### ***Strengthening Legal Enforcement and Affirmative Action***

- Fast-track courts and community monitoring should ensure rigorous enforcement of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989).
- Rational-legal authority, as described by Weber, is a means to confront ‘honor’ cultures; Ambedkar’s constitutionalism (Articles 15-17) has played a major role in the decline of overt untouchability.

##### ***Economic Empowerment through Skill Development and Land Reforms***

- Diversify the Stand-Up India scheme for entrepreneurs belonging to Dalit/OBC communities and implement tenancy reforms to stop the absorption of agricultural land by urban areas.
- From a Marxist point of view, caste is the disguise of class; economic self-sufficiency breaks the patron-client relationships (Srinivas), examples like Bihar’s post-Mandal OBC upward mobility effect whereby Yadav-Rajput clashes have been reduced.

##### ***Education for Socialization and Awareness***

- Anti-caste content should be integrated in the school curriculum (NCERT revisions) and community sensitization through Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)-linked programs which are aimed at fostering inter-caste interactions.
- According to Durkheim, ‘moral education’ is a means to develop the collective conscience.

##### ***Political Decentralization and Representation***

- Besides implementing 50% women’s reservation in PRIs along with caste quotas, the diversity of party nominations should be also checked through audits; e.g., the EWS category could be extended apart from upper castes.

- Rajni Kothari’s ‘politics of participation’ is a means of democratization of power; reserved seats (84 SC Lok Sabha) have been instrumental in reducing the dominance of the elite.

##### ***Cultural Integration via Media and Festivals***

- Inter-caste discussions could be supported by the use of public media (Doordarshan campaigns) and syncretic events such as Bhakti-inspired melas.
- By providing people with symbols through which they can interact, Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ concept serves as a means for the fading of primordialism; to mention a few, the legacies of Bhakti-Sufi have always been instrumental in resolving conflicts.

These interlinked actions have the potential to tackle the problem of caste conflicts which is a structural issue and thus, they set a path from exclusion towards inclusion in India’s plural society. As per Dipankar Gupta, the real prevention is the process of ‘de-ritualizing’ caste through equality and not simply repression.

**Q. What, according to you, are the factors responsible for the continuance of caste system in India? Explain. (CSE 2024)**

**Ans:** India’s caste system endures because of a complicated interaction of political, social, religious, and historical elements. Despite attempts at modernity, this firmly established social order has been remarkably resilient.

#### **Factors Responsible for the Continuance of Caste System in India**

- G.S. Ghurye highlighted how endogamous marriage customs promote caste identities, which are absorbed from an early age.
- Caste networks, according to André Beteille, frequently create job possibilities and uphold economic interdependence.
- Through the ideas of karma and dharma, ancient Hindu writings such as the Manusmriti uphold caste standards.
- Louis Dumont emphasized how caste distinctions are upheld by ideas of cleanliness and defilement.
- In Indian politics, caste is a powerful mobilisation factor, and political parties frequently use it to forward their electoral agendas.

## SOCIAL CLASS STRUCTURE IN INDIA

**Q. 'Agrarian class structure has been undergoing changes due to modern forces.' Critically examine. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Agrarian class structure in the countryside is based on the ownership of land, the relations of labor, and the means of production. In India it has been largely characterized by landlord-peasant hierarchies (zamindari, ryotwari systems), which, from a Marxist point of view, represent opposing classes of exploiters and producers. Modern forces include the Green Revolution, the economic liberalization (1991 reforms), urbanization, and changes in the policy (land ceiling acts) that are sources of differentiation and proletarianization.

### Changes due to Modern forces in Agrarian Class Structure

- **Differentiation of Peasantry:** The small/marginal farmers are progressively renting their land to capitalist farmers, thus creating a rural bourgeoisie; for instance, the Green Revolution in Punjab has led to the emergence of mechanized 'bullock capitalists' (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987) who have shifted the area from subsistence to commercial agriculture.
- **Proletarianization of Labor:** The landless laborers are moving to urban jobs thereby breaking the traditional jajmani ties.
- **Rise of Intermediary Classes:** The agribusiness elites (e.g., contract farming in the grape belts of Maharashtra) are the new faces that blur the landlord-peasant binaries.
- **Decline of Feudal Remnants:** The dismantling of intermediaries (Zamindari Abolition Acts, 1950s) led to the disintegration of large estates and the rise of the middle peasantry; however, absentee landlords still hold lands thus maintaining the unbalanced power.

### Modern Forces as Catalysts

- **Technological and Green Revolution:** The use of HYV seeds and irrigation (1960s) led to an increase in productivity but also to the widening of the gap between two classes.
- **Globalization and Market Integration:** Exports led by WTO become the source of commodification of agriculture thereby turning smallholders into global chain players.

- **Policy and Urbanization:** The land reforms (e.g., ceiling laws) gave back only 2% land to the people but the dominant castes were the ones benefiting from it.

### Critical Examination

- **Positive Transformations:** The changes have widened the scope of actions and movement; For instance, under NRLM, SHGs provide Dalit women farmers with power, thus weakening the dominance of the patriarchal household (functionalist integration); on the whole, agricultural production has been tripled since the 1960s, which is a good famine prevention measure.
- **Persistent Inequalities:** The class-caste chavra system gets strengthened through them; capitalist farmers (upper castes) are the ones that benefit most from the subsidies.
- **Sociological Implications:** Loss of collective conscience (Durkheim) as a result of atomization is among the effects; however, it also leads to the emergence of the resistance (such as farmers' protests in 2020-21) which is one of the characteristics of Gramscian counter-hegemony.

Thus, it can be said that modern forces have changed agrarian structures to a large extent in terms of differentiation and market integration, but not in a uniform way, which has resulted in the continuation of neo-feudal inequalities; sociologically, it is a sign of reflexive modernization that can lead to social fragmentation.

**Q. Describe the main features of Indian new middle class. How is it different from the old middle class? (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Indian middle class is a social group (according to Max Weber) that stands between the elites and the masses, thus representing one of the main sources of cultural capital (Pierre Bourdieu) and playing a significant role in social mobility.

The 'old' middle class that came into existence during the colonial and Nehruvian (pre-1991) periods was characterized by a strong state presence and nationalism, whereas the 'new' middle class developed after the liberalization (LPG reforms, 1991) and reflected the neoliberal globalization.

## SYSTEM OF KINSHIP IN INDIA

**Q. What is kinship? Briefly explain G. P. Murdock's contribution to the study of the kinship system. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Kinship is the very foundation of social organization, which includes not only the networks of relationships created through descent, marriage, and adoption, but also the ones that have been culturally constructed and regulate inheritance, residence, and authority, thus uniting people socially in spite of their differences.

In India, it is evident in the phenomena of joint families and gotra systems. George Peter Murdock's functionalist input has been a turning point in kinship research by providing a framework for universal cross-cultural studies, thus correlating anthropology with sociology.

#### Sociological Definition and Features of Kinship

- **Relational Framework:** Kinship is the term for the most intimate kinds of human relationships that are both biologically based (blood: e.g., lineage) and through marriage (affinity: e.g., in-laws), and that inhere in affinal ties such as clans. These are the main vehicles of reciprocity and obligation.
- **Kinds of Kinship Systems:** There are unilineal kinship systems (patrilineal/matrilineal tracing one line) and bilineal ones (both parents); e.g. the Nayar matriliney in Kerala versus the North Indian patriliney.
- **Functions in Social Structure:** Kinship shapes where one lives (patrilocal or matrilocal), the economy (joint property), and the political sphere (alliance marriages).

#### G.P. Murdock's Contributions to Kinship Studies

- **Social Structure (1949) – Foundational Typology:** Murdock's main work examined 30 cultures and grouped kinship types in 6 major categories of terminologies, thus showing how the terms reflect the rules of descent and the degree of integration in society.
- **Cross-Cultural Functionalism:** Murdock, being a follower of Bronislaw Malinowski, argued that kinship meets a set of universal needs – the regulation of sexual relations, reproduction, and cooperation. His Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) served as a tool for the comparative method.

- **Alliance Theory Refinement:** By blending preferential marriage rules, such as cross-cousin marriages, as methods for equilibrium in bilateral societies, he argued against Levi-Strauss. Using this functionalist perspective, kinship was seen as playing the role of conflict resolution, e.g., the use of sororal polygyny for securing alliances.
- **Critiques and Legacy:** Although Murdock's research is ethnocentric (mainly focuses on the nuclear family), it has been a major empirical sociology engine that influenced the study of India, like the family surveys done by I.P. Desai. According to the structural-functionalism perspective, it demonstrated the flexibility of kinship; however, it failed to recognize the aspect of power.

Kinship, being a fluctuating social institution, is the core of both identity and solidarity. Murdock's detailed typology broke down the global nature of kinship, thus providing the tools for sociologists to analyze the interconnection between caste and kinship in India for the making of new policies (e.g., women's right to inherit).

**Q. Is patriarchy a key to understanding different forms of inequalities in Indian society? Elaborate. (CSE 2024)**

**Ans:** Patriarchy is defined by Sylvia Walby in her 'Theorizing Patriarchy, 1990' as 'a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate and oppress women'.

#### Patriarchy and Forms of Inequalities in India

- Patriarchy operates through multiple structures like – production relations in the household where women are subjected to unpaid labor, discriminatory allocation of occupations in the labor market, capture of political power by patriarchs, male violence, etc.
- Walby distinguishes patriarchy as private patriarchy which is practiced in households and public patriarchy which is the collective response of a patriarchal society to women.
- Within family, authority structure, inheritance rights and other entitlements, rituals, division of labor reflect it.

## RURAL & AGRARIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE

**Q. Who is said to be the pioneer of village studies in India? Illustratively describe contributions of some Indian sociologists on village studies. How their approaches are distinct from each other? (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** The village-focused research in Indian sociology gave birth in the 1950s as a reaction to the nation-building in the post-independence era. They depicted the village as the society's smallest unit, using functionalism and anthropology to understand caste, kinship, and change in the village. M.N. Srinivas is recognized as the first one who brought about a paradigm shift by his ethnographic immersion, shifting the focus from colonial generalizations to empirical, insider perspectives on rural India.

### Pioneering Role of M.N. Srinivas

#### *Ethnographic Immersion and Conceptual Innovation*

- Srinivas's *The Remembered Village* (1976, based on 1948 Rampura fieldwork) was the first to pioneer participant observation, providing an in-depth understanding of caste dynamics, rituals, and conflicts in the village.
- He developed the term 'Sanskritization' - the process through which a lower caste adopts the customs and rituals of an upper caste to improve its social status, and 'dominant caste' (Okkaligas in Rampura controlling resources) to show the rural social change at the same time as the modernization process.
- **Methodological Shift:** His work was different from the grand historical ones in that it focused on the micro-level and through a mixed anthropology-sociology bottom-up approach he was able to 'feel' village unity through jati networks which were instrumental in the implementation of land reforms.

### Contributions of Other Key Sociologists

- **S.C. Dube: Multi-Dimensional Structural Analysis:** In *Indian Village* (1955, Shamirpet, Hyderabad), Dube dissected the interdependent hierarchies - caste, class, and power - by demonstrating how one aspect of the economy (e.g., landlord-tenant) could be used to reinforce the social order through these economic ties.
- **D.N. Majumdar: Holistic Anthropological Integration:** As a pioneer of systematic research, Majum-

dar's *Rural Sociology in Northern India* (1958) took the comprehensive model that interlinked kinship, economy, and rituals to present villages as a dynamic 'folk-urban continuum.'

- **Andre Beteille: Caste-Class Dialectic:** Beteille's *Caste, Class and Power* (1965, Sreepuram, Tanjore) analyzed the Brahmin domination that transformed into class-related inequalities after the abolition of the zamindari. Incorporating Marxist elements as a base, he identified that through education, caste endogamy was breaking thereby new elites were forming.

### Distinct Approaches

#### *Structural-Functional vs. Conflict-Oriented*

- **Srinivas and Dube were followers of the functionalist paradigms** (Durkheimian), seeing villages as systems of equilibrium where Sanskritization or economic bonds could be the means through which the village community sustains itself;
- **Beteille**, on the other hand, used conflict theory (Weber-Marx) to reveal that power struggles and class antagonisms were the main sources of change in villages.

#### *Indigenous vs. Comparative Lenses*

- **Majumdar's holistic anthropological approach** was based on cultural universals (e.g., kinship universals) while at the same time, it was in **contrast to Srinivas's context-specific concepts** like dominant caste, which challenged the Western binaries.

#### *Static to Dynamic Transitions*

- The initial works (Majumdar, Dube) stressed on the descriptive aspect of stability; in the later works (Srinivas, Beteille) they were able to capture the changes brought about by liberalization with Srinivas concentrating on cultural agency and Beteille on structural contradictions.

The village studies led by Srinivas, have been instrumental in deepening the understanding of Indian sociology through the process of virtualization of the rural abstractions, in line with Yogendra Singh's modernization thesis. Their methods - functionalist integration against critical dialectics - are reflective of the larger debates on consensus versus conflict and hence, the need for the hybrid methods to address the current problems such as migration.

# INDUSTRIALISATION & URBANISATION

**Q. What are the major problems faced by the labour migrants while working in informal sectors of Indian States? Discuss. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Labor migrants in India's informal sector, which accounts for 90% of the workforce (ILO 2023), are "proletarianized" rural distress, according to A.R. Desai's Marxist analysis, as agrarian crises drive the mass exodus of seasonal workers from Bihar/Uttar Pradesh to urban centers like Delhi and Gujarat.

This migration generates "anomie" (Durkheim) due to the loss of social status (Weber) that leads to the further division of society along the lines of caste and region and intersection of these two. The root causes of the problems are economic precarity, social exclusion, and institutional neglect which, in turn, lead to the perpetuation of inequalities in the neoliberal states.

## Economic Exploitation and Precarity

- **Wage Theft and Insecure Livelihoods:** Migrants are paid less than the minimum wage and there is a complete lack of contracts through which the workers are allowed to arbitrarily deduct the money.
- **Absence of Social Security:** Migrants who do not have ESI/PF accounts experience medical emergencies without any solutions to their problems.

## Social and Cultural Alienation

- **Caste-Regional Discrimination:** As 'outsiders,' migrants go through stigmatization; for instance, North-Eastern workers in Kerala experience racial slurs and are refused houses, according to Dipankar Gupta's 'inter-group competition,' which leads to ghettoization and the escalation of violence.
- **Gendered Vulnerabilities:** Female migrants working in the apparel sector in Tamil Nadu face various forms of abuses such as harassment and wage disparities (20-30% lower), which ultimately leads to patriarchal dominance.

## Institutional and Spatial Challenges

- **Unsafe Working Conditions:** In the case of informal locations such as shipbreaking yards in Gujarat where workers have been exposed to dangerous situations without any measures taken for their safety, the structural violence (Johan Galtung) that the state is perpetrating becomes evident through its complicity by lax enforcement of laws.

- **Urban-Rural Disconnect:** The seasonal migrations cause interruptions in children's education and thus poverty is being passed on from one generation to another.

Thus the issues highlight how essential migration is for the maintenance of inequality and how it turns migrants into a "reserve army of labor" (Marx). According to Surinder Jodhka, it necessitates "embedded liberalism" - i.e. portable rights and anti-discrimination laws - as a means of creating space for integration. The absence of reforms in this area leaves room for social unrest threatening India's demographic dividend.

**Q. Discuss the trend of urbanization in India. Do you think that Industrialization is the only precondition of urbanization? Give you arguments. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Urbanization is a process that changes the structure of society by moving populations from the agrarian 'little communities' (Robert Redfield) to the heterogeneous urban milieus. It is not just a matter of the spatial concentration of the population but also the restructuring of social relations, socializing through a network of kinship-based solidarities, and moving to contractual individualism (based on the theory of 'urbanism as a way of life' by Louis Wirth).

## Trends of Urbanization in India

- **Accelerated but Uneven Growth:** The urban share of the population has grown by 2-3% per decade, on average, driven by rural distress and the lure of urban opportunities; the mega-cities absorb 40% of the inflows (Delhi, Mumbai) while regional disparities still remain, e.g., high in Tamil Nadu (48.4%) and low in Bihar (11.3%), that reflect the level of federal inequalities (Andre Beteille).
- **Migration-Driven Expansion:** 20-30% of the urban influx is of a permanent nature and originates from the decline of agriculture (e.g., the Green Revolution fall-out in Punjab) hence the term 'circulatory migration' is used (Jan Breman).
- **Service-Led Urbanism:** Whereas the manufacturing sector has been the dominant model for urban development for most of the past century, the IT-BPO and finance are now the main drivers of 'new urbanism'.

**Q. What do you mean by nation building? What is the role of religion in nation building? Elaborate your answer. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Nation building is the intentional way of creating a single national identity and the social network in a society that was either colonial or divided, thus making it possible for different groups to have a feeling of unity.

#### Meaning of Nation Building

- The term was largely attributed to sociologists like Benedict Anderson in 'Imagined Communities' (1983), and it means the establishment of shared symbols, narratives, and institutions that go beyond the natural relations (kinship, ethnicity) to a civic nationalism.
- **Constructed Social Process:** Nation building is not an organic evolution but rather a modernist project that is designed to create loyalty to the nation-state.
- **Integration of Diversity:** In plural polities such as India, it deals with 'vertical' (class) and 'horizontal' (ethnic/religious) cleavages.

#### Positive Role of Religion in Nation Building

- **Fostering National Identity and Solidarity:** Religion is a 'sacred canopy' (Peter Berger) under which it offers moral structures for unity. In India, the Gandhian syncretism mixed the Hindu ethos with universalism making the freedom struggle and the post-independence secularism (Article 25-28) a natural consequence.
- **Mobilization for Social Reforms:** Being a value system, religion is the main driver of an ethical nation-building process. The Bhakti-Sufi movements were the historical precedents of constitutional equality that through their teachings abolished the caste system.
- **Legitimizing State Authority:** From a Durkheimian functionalism perspective, religion is a structure that helps to reinforce societal norms. For example, India's subsidies for pilgrimages (Haj, Kumbh Mela) under Article 27 are a way of promoting cultural federalism, which in turn, elevates state legitimacy.

#### Negative Role of Religion in Nation Building

- **Exacerbating Social Divisions:** Primordial attachments can lead to the rise of 'ethnic nationalism' thus creating a division between the different

groups that make up the society and hence a fragmentation of the civic ideal. Instrumentalization for Political Ends: One of the ways in which religious leaders use religion is for mobilization, and this eventually leads to the emergence of 'banal nationalism' (Michael Billig) which in turn is exclusionary.

- **Impeding Modernization:** With traditional communities, the orthodoxies are against the rational-legal authority (Weber), hence they hold back the reforms like Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

Thus, nation building is a continuous debate between structure (institutions) and agency (cultural symbols) where religion plays the role of both binding together and splitting apart. The question of successful nation building is largely dependent on the ability to turn religious diversity into a source of pluralism that is capable of maintaining social equilibrium in the face of globalization.

**Q. How do religious communities contribute to the cultural diversity of India? (CSE 2024)**

**Ans:** India's lively and diversified society is fostered by the religious sects that make up a substantial portion of its cultural variety. G.S. Ghurye's emphasis on India's unity through diversity, where various religions cohabit peacefully, is reflected in this diversity.

#### Religious Communities' Contribution to India's Cultural Diversity

- T.N. Madan emphasizes how religious rituals can be blended to enhance cultural displays. Two prominent instances of Hinduism and Islam blending to create common devotional music, poetry, and art are the Bhakti movement and Sufi traditions. By spreading ideas that cut across religious lines, saints like Kabir and Guru Nanak promoted an inclusive society.
- M.N. Srinivas's notion of Sanskritization demonstrates how cultural assimilation occurs when lower castes adopt higher caste traditions, which are frequently entwined with religious customs. In contrast, new cultural aspects were brought about by Westernization, which was inspired by Christian missionaries and colonial schooling. This resulted in a wider diversification of societal activities.

## TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN INDIA

**Q. How did Colonial Policies for the tribes affected their socio-economic conditions in India? Discuss. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** The British administration treated Indian tribes (adivasis) as “primitive” illiterate savages or “criminal” elements, and thus it enacted exclusionary measures that facilitated the exploitation of the resources while it simultaneously imposed “civilizing” missions.

### Colonial Policies and their impact on Socio-Economic Conditions of Tribes in India

#### Land and Forest Exploitation

- **Forest Acts (1865, 1878):** Designed to supply timber commercially, these acts led to the creation of reserved forests in which the exploitation of the tribes for the timber industry was legalized. For instance, in Central India, adivasis were deprived of 50% of the lands used for jhum cultivation.
- **Sociological Impact:** Deprived of their intimate relationship with nature (ecofeminist critique), the communities referred to suffered from a loss of moral guidance (anomie) according to Durkheim, and were forced to migrate, turning them into a labor force for the plantations.

#### Revenue and Administrative Imposition

- **Permanent Settlement (1793) and Ryotwari Systems:** These systems led to the imposition of cash taxes on tribal lands, as a result of which communal holdings were transformed into private properties.
- **Sociological Impact:** The mutual help system which was based on kinship was quickly destroyed thus the social stratification was deepened further. The tribes became “internal colonies,” and with the erosion of their culture through missionary schools heralded the spread of Western norms, their identity was gradually lost.

#### Criminalization and Isolation

- **Criminal Tribes Act (1871):** The Act targeted nomadic tribes which were “born criminals” and as such were subjected to the constant watch and forced settling. Restricting the mobility and trade, the Act was imposed on 200 tribes.
- **Sociological Impact:** The affected groups were socially stigmatized, thus their deviance became more visible due to the theory of deviance amplification

(Becker), which in turn led to their social exclusion. After 1857, the revolts (e.g., Munda uprising) were repressed, therefore the collective agency was suppressed.

The colonial policies not only impoverished the tribal people but also led to cultural hybridization and caused them to be marginalized, their literacy was at 50% as opposed to the national 74% (Census 2011); from a sociological point of view, these policies represent the coloniality of power that they caused but on the other hand, they also led to the tribal resistance which is the basis of today’s affirmative actions like FRA 2006.

**Q. What are the definitional problems involved in identifying tribes in India? Discuss the main obstacles to tribal development in India. (CSE 2024)**

**Ans:** Historically, tribes have been addressed by the different authorities and by different names like – Adivasi, aborigines, primitives, backward Hindus and so on.

### Definitional Problems Involved in Identifying Tribes

- Definitional problem of tribes deals with two inter-related problems –
  - (i) the problem of defining the tribes, and
  - (ii) evolving the understanding of tribes in the Indian context.
- During the British period, the word ‘tribe’ was used by administrators to understand the numerical strength of different cultural communities. Those living in villages and practicing agriculture were termed as ‘caste’ groups, while those living in forest practicing primitive occupations were termed as tribes.
- Hutton called them ‘Aborigines’ and famous anthropologist Elwin called them ‘Aboriginals’.
- Indian scholars however disagreed with the British and saw caste and tribe along a continuum. S C Roy contends that ‘Jana’ and ‘Jati’ existed in India for a long time.
- According to Mendelbaum also, there are no strict cultural differences between caste groups and tribes.
- Similarly, S C Dube asserted that the Great Tradition of Hinduism and Little Tradition of Tribes existed together for long.

**Q. How same sex marriages are responsible for population dynamics in India? Discuss.**

**(CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Population variation in India, which has a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.0 and young demographic dividend, has many influences that include fertility, mortality, migration, and socio-cultural variables.

Same-sex marriages' direct influence on population dynamics will remain small and indirect with an estimated 2-10% of the population identifying as Now Sexual and Gender Minority.

#### Legal and Demographic Context

- **No Recognition Limits Direct Contribution:** The Supreme Court in *Supriyo vs. Union of India* (2023) declined to recognize same-sex unions, stating that it was the legislature, not the judiciary, which could recognize them, while rejecting an appeal in January 2025.
- Same-sex couples are organized into an illicit union without spousal rights and cannot legally adopt, utilize surrogacy, estate planning related to inheritance, or similar "family" structures.
- Therefore, the status quo leaves little direct contribution to oncological metrics (fertility), unlike formal legal recognition in countries like the United States.

#### Immediate Effects on Fertility and Growth

- **Lowered Biological Reproduction:** Same-sex couples are unable to reproduce without an intermediary, which can lower aggregate fertility at scale. In the Indian context, this will be quite limited since total fertility rates (TFR) are already below replacement rates (2.1) due to female education and contraception.

#### Indirect Socio-Cultural Effects

- **Marriage Delay, Norm Change and Leap-frog Anthropological Effects:** A higher tolerance leads to likely delays in marriage from heterosexual couples.
- **Migration and Urbanization Synergies:** Queer migration into metropolitan areas (for example, within Mumbai's pink economy) contributes to decreasing urban fertility rates (TFR 1.6, versus rural areas at 2.2).

- **Gender and Equity Linkages:** Movement for same-sex rights squares with women's empowerment by promoting access to contraception and gender neutral policies.

#### Challenges and Global Comparisons

- **Stigma Amplifies Vulnerabilities:** 30% of queer youth are driven to become homeless by familial rejection, disruption of life cycles and fertility intentions follows. India's exclusionary framework dampens positive demographic contributions.
- **Overstated Concerns:** Discourses of population decline are inaccurate as LGBTQ+ acceptance does not decimate populations.

Same-sex marriages are not legally defined and therefore contribute to very little influence on India's population dynamics. Same-sex marriages can develop progressive norms which can influence achieving TFR stability and reduce fears of an aging crisis.

**Q. Discuss the nature of regional variations in sex ratio in India, stating reasons thereof.**

**(CSE 2023)**

**Ans:** In terms of demographics, the sex ratio is the number of females in a population per 1000 males. The unbalanced gender ratio in India, which favours men over women, has raised concerns. Significant geographical differences in India's sex ratio are a reflection of the nation's socioeconomic, cultural, and historical divides.

#### Regional Variations in Sex Ratio and Associated Reasons

- **Northern India:** Studies have repeatedly indicated a lower sex ratio in the northern Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. The deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and ideals that **favour male offspring over female youngsters** are mostly to blame for this. The **preference for sons** frequently leads to greater death rates through female feticide, female infanticide, and girl child mistreatment.
- **Southern India:** The sex ratio is greater in southern states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Higher rates of literacy, more health facilities, and a more equitable society where women are given equal position are all credited with this. In many areas of Kerala, the matrilineal method of inheritance has also led to a more advantageous sex ratio.

# RURAL & AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION IN INDIA

**Q. 'The transfer of land from cultivating to the non-cultivating owners is bringing about transformation in Indian society.' Justify your answer by giving suitable illustrations.**

(CSE 2025)

**Ans.** This shift of land which departs from the hands of those who till (small/marginal farmers) to the ones who do not cultivate the land (corporates, real estate developers, urban elites) is a clear example of 'primitive accumulation' in Marxist sociology, depicting how capitalist penetration is deepening in the agrarian India.

As the process had been made more intense after 1991 liberalization and LARR Act (2013), it brings about the changes in the social structures of the society and, hence, causes phenomena like class polarization, migration, and identity changes that can be explained from the perspective of Andre Beteille's study of rural inequalities.

## Economic Transformations in Indian Society

- **Proletarianization and Livelihood Erosion:** The cultivating families, mostly belonging to OBC/SC groups, are those who lose the means of production and thus the number of the landless labor force increases, which is quite the same as the transition from a 'semi-feudal' society into a capitalist one, as pointed out by Thorner, and thus agrarian distress is intensified.
- **Capital Concentration:** Non-cultivators are using these pieces of lands as the bases for setting up long-range projects like SEZs/industry that increase the GDP and the area's wealth but also create an economic duality that benefits elite groups in rural areas such as the case of Adani-led acquisitions in Gujarat in 2024 (500+ acres) for green energy displacing 2,000 Adivasi families and creating a rentier class while the rural population becomes impoverished.

## Social Transformations

- **Caste and Class Reconfiguration:** Upper caste intermediaries have been the ones to historically mediate these transfers; at present, Dalit landowners gain from corporate buyouts through distress sales but this leads to the deepening of their marginalization.

- **Gender Disparities Amplification:** Women who contribute the most to family farming (75% labor input) are faced with being left out of the inheritance following the transfer.

## Cultural and Spatial Transformations

- **Rural-Urban Continuum Disruption:** The transfers accelerate the process of detraditionalization that is characterized most prominently by the joint families and village solidarities fading away (Durkheimian anomie).
- **Protest and Agency Emergence:** The resistance serves as a vehicle for subaltern mobilization which can be exemplified by the tribal coalitions that formed after the Great Nicobar trunk road acquisition (2025, 500 acres) following the Singur (2006) pattern but with the added factor of digital amplification, which gave birth to eco-feminist movements.

Thus, such a land transfer acts as a major societal change, ones that take society from being embedded in agrarian relations to becoming fragmented under neoliberalism. It is crucial to have policy measures like tenancy reforms that aim at alleviating the inequities and allowing for a just transition.

**Q. Bring out various factors responsible for declining of village Industries in India.**

(CSE 2025)

**Ans.** India's village industries, which include artisanal crafts, handlooms, and agro-based units, served as the self-reliant rural economy as per Karl Marx's Asiatic mode of production, where caste-based guilds not only produced but also maintained social cohesion.

The fall of these industries, which accounted for 25% of the pre-colonial exports and now contribute less than 5% (MSME Ministry 2024), is a sociological rupture: the 'disembedding' of the economy from society (Karl Polanyi), which is the result of colonial capitalism and neoliberal changes.

## Colonial Exploitation and Deindustrialization

- **Drain of Resources and Market Flooding:** British policies (1813 Charter Act) opened up the market to free trade and flooded villages with inexpensive Manchester textiles, which led to the destruction of handlooms.

## SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA

**Q. Justify that the Indian traditions are modernizing. Also discuss its contributing factors. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Modernization of traditions refers to the adaptive change of cultural practices that come under rationalization (Weber) and reflexivity (Giddens). Indian traditions sociologically blend not only the past but also the present to create new hybrid identities under globalization.

### Factors Showing Indian Traditions are Modernizing

- **Changes in the Family Institution:** The practice of arranged marriages has changed to “love-cum-arranged” (Srinivas, 1966), where more than 70% of urban youth say that compatibility is more important than caste, thus indicating reflexive agency in kinship.
- **Adjustment in Rituals:** The festival of Diwali is taking steps towards the environment, such as LED diyas instead of crackers, thus minimizing pollution. Similarly, Ganesh Chaturthi is dominated by community service (seva) rather than the display, which is in line with civic pluralism.
- **Fluidity in Caste:** Varna-jati hierarchies have become less rigid due to urbanization, for instance, inter-caste marriages increased, Dalit professionals are challenging Upper caste dominance etc.
- **Reconfiguring Gender:** The traditional sari is now a fusion wear style; women’s involvement in sabhas (e.g. Carnatic music) is breaking the purdah system and, thus, they are becoming feminists by redefining dharma.

### Factors Contributing Modernisation of Indian Traditions

- **Globalization and Media:** Digital platforms are hybridizing myths, thus promoting reflexive narratives. The diaspora remittances are the sources of modern temples that are built with sustainable architecture.
- **Urbanization and Education:** The rise in literacy (80.9% -PLFS 2023-24) is creating the need for critical consciousness. Urban migration has led to the breaking up of joint families into nuclear families with the practice of egalitarian chores.

- **Policy Interventions:** The main beneficiary of Affirmative action (e.g. RTE 2009) is the marginalized who are enabled for Sanskritization-Westernization (Srinivas). The NEP 2020 is combining vocational skills with cultural curricula.
- **Empowerment of Women:** The increase in FLFPR (41.7% in 2023-24) is the main factor that challenges patrilineal systems, and with the help of SHGs, the community is being redefined through collective agency.

Thus, modernisation of Indian traditions is a process of selective retention and innovation, not mere erosion. It is a sign of socio-cultural resilience of syncretism, which serves to reduce anomie (Durkheim) and at the same time position itself within the inequalities, however, it still risks the commodification of traditions and thus calls for the adoption of fair policies for the emergence of inclusive hybridity.

**Q. Do you think that in a society like India orthogenetic changes take place through differentiation? Do you observe continuities in the orthogenetic process? Elaborate your answer with suitable examples. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Orthogenetic changes refer to endogenously caused transformations that come from within a society’s cultural traditions and thus, lead to its internal differentiation (increased structural complexity and specialization) instead of being externally imposed (heterogenetic changes). Robert Redfield conceptualized these in the folk-urban continuum.

### Orthogenetic Changes Through Differentiation

- **Differentiation Method:** The internal cultural dynamics of the society give rise to the specialized sub-structures; for instance, the Vedic varna system has evolved to 3,000+ jatis (endogamous sub-castes) each with occupational niches (e.g., artisan castes like Lohars), thus the functional division of labor (Durkheim) has been deepened without any colonial disruption.
- **Caste Assimilation and Mobility:** The process of Sanskritization enables the lower castes to imitate the higher ones in the performance of rituals, thereby changing the differentiation of hierarchies;

**Q. According to you, which social reform movement has played the most effective role in uplifting the status of women? Explain.**

**(CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Women's status improvement has been a worldwide goal, with numerous social reform movements challenging patriarchy, legal inequalities, and cultural norms. The 19th-century Indian social reform movements led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy (Brahmo Samaj), Swami Dayanand Saraswati (Arya Samaj), Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Jyotirao Phule, are most notable for the rise of women's status. These movements broke down patriarchal structures through ideological and legal support, thus they contributed to women empowerment and questioned caste-gender intersections.

#### **Role Social Reform Movements in Uplifting the Status of Women**

##### *Elimination of Sati and Reform for Widows*

- **Raja Ram Mohan Roy:** Fought against Sati, leading to its abolition in 1829. The Sati Regulation Act terminated the ritual of burning widows, considering it Brahmanical oppression (Marxist base-superstructure).
- **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar:** Championed women's education and established 300+ girls' schools. He was instrumental in the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 which gave the rights to widows, making them less economically alienated and allowing them to marry again.

##### *Women's Education and Empowerment*

- Jyotiba Phule's girls' schools (1848) and Savitribai's promotion of literacy were the main factors in breaking the functionalist stereotype of women as only homemakers (Parsons).
- Female literacy doubled by 1901, which led to the formation of new self-identities (Giddens).
- A decrease in the number of girls marrying before the age of 13 (from 80% to 50% by the 1940s).

##### *Legal and Cultural Changes*

- The campaign supported the passing of the Age of Consent Act (1891), which increased the minimum age of marriage to 12, thus reproductive exploitation was partially stopped.

- These movements gave louder voices to the subalterns against the hegemonic dharma, as the dowry deaths have been gradually decreasing over decades.

Social reform movements drove a structural transformation that shifted women from a state of oppression—characterized by Durkheimian anomie—toward integrated agency. Viewed through the lens of M.N. Srinivas' concepts of Sanskritization and Westernization, these movements not only secularized traditional rites but also synthesized Western liberalism with indigenous critique. Although an inherent urban-elite bias limited the reach of these reforms in rural areas, they nonetheless laid the critical groundwork for 20th-century feminism, such as the ecofeminism seen in the Chipko movement.

Social reform movements were the most powerful reforms due to real, measurable legal victories and cultural change through reflexivity, thus women were raised from being mere objects to subjects.

**Q. How Dalit movements in India have facilitated their Identity formation? Analyze.(CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** Dalit movements in India, as a reaction to the caste oppression that has persisted for thousands of years, have been a major factor in the social and cultural changes. The movements have led to the change of the SCs from a group that has internalized its stigmatization into one that has self-respect and self-recognition.

These movements, which includes Phule's reformism, Ambedkarite radicalism, and BSP's electoralism, have created a politicized Dalit consciousness that combines the revival of the culture with the fight for the structural changes.

##### **Historical and Ideological Foundations**

- **Self-Respect and Cultural Reclamation:** The Satyashodhak Samaj of Jyotiba Phule (1873) was the first to lead the way for the people to reclaim their identity by refuting the Brahminical myths and presenting the Shudras as the first inhabitants (bahujans).
- **Ambedkar's Intellectual Mobilization:** The formation of the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (1924) and the Mahad Satyagraha (1927) were moments in history when the oppressed took a stand against the oppressor, they changed the status of the untouchables from being oppressed to being active citizens.

## CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

**Q. Do you think that law has been able to abolish child labour in India? Comment. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** India's child labour is a clear example of the social structures of the society that heavily overlook the economic exploitation factor of the problem. According to A.R. Desai's Marxist critique of capitalist underdevelopment, the exploitation of one group of people is deeply intertwined with factors such as caste, gender, and kinship.

Laws are an expression of Weber's 'rational-legal authority' and they are designed to bring modern standards to traditional societies, but they have not been able to end child labour which still remains at 138 million children in 2024 (ILO). They have only been able to regulate the phenomenon.

### Legal Framework and Intent

#### Prohibitory Measures

- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, modified 2016, prohibits employment of children under 14 in hazardous sectors (e.g., mining, fireworks) and permits the regulated employment of 14-18 year-olds, which is in line with ILO Convention 182.
- The Constitution's Article 24 bans the use of children for labor, and 39(f) directs the government to take care of children's welfare.

#### Enforcement Mechanisms

- The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) is an initiative that works towards the eradication of child labor through education; 44,902 children were rescued in 2024 (according to Ministry data).

#### Sociological Barriers to Abolition

- **Poverty and Familial Imperatives:** Child labour in rural areas is a means to support the family (50% are engaged in agriculture where they contribute to the household income- UNICEF 2024).
- **Caste and Gender Hierarchies:** While those from the upper caste benefit from the networks that keep them away from both the market and the informal sectors and the inspection services, Dalit girls, on the other hand, are subject to the exacerbation of vulnerabilities e.g., domestic work in the urban areas of Delhi).

- **Enforcement Deficits and State Apathy:** The failure of labour inspection and bribery causes the perpetrators to be able to evade handcuffs; the 2016 amendments have paradoxically increased labour by allowing the continuation of family enterprises.

#### Implications and Transformations

- **Unintended Consequences:** The prohibition of child labour has led to a decrease in children's wages, which forces more children to be engaged in unregistered work in hidden sectors (e.g., post-2016 Sivakasi fireworks), thus creating an underground market for child labor as well as an increase in children disengaged from schools.

Therefore, on the one hand, laws have limited the most blatant types of exploitation but have not managed to eliminate completely child labour, as they are in conflict with deeply-rooted social structures, according to dependency theory. The comprehensive approach—universal basic income, caste-aware education—has to root legality in equity, thus changing law from being a tool of repression to a tool of liberation.

**Q. What are the Private and Public network and support systems operative in Indian society for the aged? Suggest measures to curb down the challenges before care givers of the aged. (CSE 2025)**

**Ans.** According to sociology, aging in India signifies the change of social support system from the traditional joint family (M.N. Srinivas) to individualistic nuclear families because of urbanization, which makes the elderly socially isolated and vulnerable.

While the private networks rely on the concept of family reciprocity, the public ones feature the Weberian rational-legal authority for welfare. Caregivers, mostly women, are under the impression of role strain (Talcott Parsons), thus there is a need for introducing supportive and sustainable aging measures targeted at them.

#### Private Networks and Support Systems

- **Familial Care as the Leading Factor:** The emotionally, financially, and physically (through daily/household help) nurturing joint/extended families are based on a core principle of filial piety (dharma).