Concepts and Theories of Social Change

INTRODUCTION

Social change is a widely discussed subject but its theoretical position in sociology remains controversial. Interest in this area has also fluctuated because of many vexed theoretical problems, especially those relating to explanation or prediction of the course and content of social change. We may find a periodicity in the literature of Western sociology about its theoretical concern with change. In its formative phase (roughly 1875-1920, see Sorolkin 1965: 833) sociology was deeply attached to historical reconstructions and generalizations about social change. Such theoretical postulates were also reinforced by those from social anthropology and ethnology. The contributions of Spencer, Comte, Marx and Pareto about social and cultural evolution and its laws were oriented to historical reconstruction similar to those of Henry Morgan, McLennan, Bachofan and Henry Maine. Social change was, however, the central concern of sociology at this time. It also had a nascent ideological bias, that of universal progress of mankind, and unilinear course in social evolution for all societies following the Western model. There were slight variations on this theme, but by and large, this assumption permeated the sociological literature of the time.

This over-concern with social change got a setback in sociology roughly during 1920-58. The focus shifted from evolution of social forms to their function; the speculative and scholastic approach was replaced with an emphasis on field studies and collection of first-hand empirical data. Macro-sociological generalizations gave way to small-group studies and micro-sociological theorizing; system change remained no more the dominant focus of sociology; instead,

remained no more the dominant focus of sociology; instead, the interest shifted to system integration and boundary maintenance functions of social forms. This trend too had its origin in the West. It also reflected the growing methodological sophistication in sociology. Theoretically, the implied isomorphism of social system with organic system, and of social process with biological evolution (especially the irreversibility of evolutionary forms) of the earlier phase could not be sustained on empirical and historical grounds. Existentially, the social cost of industrialisation and the two world wars dispelled the optimism about the universal evolutionary progress of mankind, and the invariable laws postulated by utilitarian positivism.

During the decade following 1958, however, a revival in the study of social change can be observed in Western sociology. The theoretical presuppositions of functional analysis come increasingly under fire (see R. Dahrendorf, 1958; C. Wright Mills, 1959; C. G. Hempel, 1959; G. C. Homans, 1964) during this period. Moreover, the sociologists of functionalist orientation are now seen making heroic efforts to demonstrate the effectiveness of their model for the analysis of social change also (see, Smelser, 1959 and 1963; Parsons, 1964). The urgency for revival of interest in social change probably emerged also because of the process of decolonization of Asia, Africa and Latin America where, not continuity, but revolutionary change was the dominant national aspiration and ideology. The concern with change became a necessity for Western sociologists as they confronted a new younger generation in their own country which defied the status quo in quest of new values and a new social order. Consequently, the analysis of social change once again became a central concern of sociology. It rather assumed the overtones of sociological ideology (see, Dumont, 1964: 10) for the developing nations.

Social Change Theories in India

The theoretical growth of sociology in India has been deeply influenced by its development in the West, particularly the U.K. and the U.S.A. The fluctuations in the study of social change and its relevant theoretical formulations as seen in the West did, however, only partially exist in Indian sociology. Analytic descriptive studies of various social and cultural systems in India did engage the interests of the British and European scholars right from the eighteenth century, but comparatively the studies about the processes of social change went on continually. In contrast with the West, the Indian sociological tradition does not seem to have undergone theoretical fluctuations such as, evolutionary, functionalist and neo-evolutionary for the analysis of social change. Roughly, one might discern some

correspondence with these three major orientations in the sequence of Indian sociological studies but the concern with social change was always present. Even the functionalist studies were mainly focussed on the analysis of social change in India, as we shall show later. In fact, some of the most discussed concepts of social change in India have been developed by sociologists who are clearly oriented to the structural-functional method. The Indian sociologists have been more concerned with the processes of social accommodation and adaptation rather than with abstract theory building which is so much in evidence in the Western sociology of the past and contemporary times. The only clear exception in this regard where a systematic effort is made toward abstract theorization or model-building may be found in the writings of Radha Kamal Mukherjee. Otherwise, most sociological writings in India tend to be substantive rather than theoretical. Consequently, the analysis of change in one form or another, is inherent in most sociological writings right from its early days.

Our objective in undertaking a survey of literature on social change in Indian sociology is to review the salient conceptual and theoretical formulations about social change. We shall be mainly interested in analysing the nature of theoretical presuppositions and conceptual schemes that have grown through substantive studies of the structures and processes of changes in the Indian society from time to time. We would review the theories of social change and their implicit forms and formulations with regard to major sociological studies in India. Moreover, we would also like to evaluate the conceptual formulations of these theories in regard to their power and relevance.

Sociology as distinct from historiography and social philosophy emerged slowly during the first quarter of the twentieth century in India. The pace in this regard was set by early British and European 'orientalists', 'missionaries' and 'administrators' turned ethnographers and cultural historians (see, Cohn, 1968: 3-28). In the Indian tradition itself one finds a metaphysical rather than sociological treatment of change. The major categories of thought that comprise the Indian tradition are 'hierarchy', 'holism', 'continuity', and 'transcendence' (see, Yogendra Singh, 1973) and change as such forms less than a central category in Hindu metaphysics and social philosophy. The concept of change has in this tradition an organic link with the differentiation of the Timeless and the Eternal. We find this reflected right upto the 20th century in the writings of Aurobindo Ghosh who cherished faith in the possibility of the emergence of the 'Perfect Man' following the battle against the evil (Kurukshetra) and thus rendered the specific concept of 'Avatar' into a diffuse

category, a 'world-form' that would permeate the human condition. Obviously, such formulations of the process of change in the Indian tradition, not without parallels in the West (see, Stark, 1958) have their limitations from a sociological point of view where the existential reality by rule of correspondence forms an essential component for verification in each postulated categorical or conceptual model. This rule of correspondence seems to be lacking in the traditional formulations of social change in India.

The Indian sociological formulations of the concept of social change find a beginning in the writings of the British and Indian scholars following the last quarter of the 19th century and onwards. Gradually, these concepts and formulations got differentiated and a variety of approaches emerged. For a brief survey these approaches could be classified into the following types (1) Evolutionary approaches: (2) Cultural approaches: Sanskritization-Westernization; Little and Great Tradition, and Multiple Traditions; (3) Structural approaches: Differentiation and Mobility Analyses and Dialectical-Historical approaches. This classification is purely heuristic. It represents the dominant theoretical or conceptual orientations found in the writings of the sociologists concerned.

Evolutionary Approaches

The village community, caste and family were the three themes on which studies were conducted by social ethnographers and sociologists in the late nineties and early twenties. Whereas a few students of these realities were struck by continuity in the Indian social system and tradition (see, Charles Metcalfe's *Minutes of the Village of Delhi* of 1830 and Dumont, 1966), most others, influenced by the evolutionary approach, concentrated on the stages through which institutions like caste, family, marriage and kinship and village community passed in the course of their growth in India. Cohn writes: "The data and their organisation implicitly reflect the work of Morgan, McLennan, Lubbock, Tylor, Starcke and Frazer. These men were concerned with the use of "customs" for example, marriage by capture, polyandry, or the levirate — to infer something about the origin of culture or as they termed it, "civilization". Similarly, religious practices were utilized as disparate bits of information to develop stages of the development of religion. The "customs" were reported and studied out of their contexts as hard facts which could be compared and classified as to the stage of development" (Cohn, 1968: 17).

The origin of caste and its racial composition formed the frequent themes for evolutionary speculations (see, Crooke, 1896; Ibbetson,

1916; Risley, 1915; N. K. Dutt, 1931; Ghurye, 1945 and 1952; Guha, 1937; Hutton, 1933 and 1946; etc.). In these studies emphasis was uniformly on the factors which contributed to the origin of the caste system. Even when comparative analyses were undertaken, the evolutionary perspective remained, that is, effort was made to find out institutions similar to caste in other societies based either on the racial, occupational, ethnic or other socio-cultural attributes. Data derived from myths, epics, history and folklore were adduced to confirm many speculative generalisations about the origin of caste and its future form. An evolutionary perspective was thus built into general statements about caste. One may of course find elements of departure in the writings of Hutton and Ghurye, but these sociologists too were deeply concerned with hypothesising about caste-origin and not only about its structure and function — the aspect of study which later replaced the evolutionary orientation.

The studies of villages and land systems were similarly oriented either to finding out the historical stage of growth or their comparative evolutionary sequence and succession of forms (see, Sir Henry S. Maine, 1890; Baden-Powell, 1892 and 1908). Maine was particularly concerned with placing the Indian village into an evolutionary scheme through which its linkages with the village communities in the West could be established. As Dumont rightly says, Maine "hardly ever looked at the Indian village in itself, but only as a counterpart to Teutonic, Slavonic or other institutions. India was to him little more than "the great repository of veritable phenomena of ancient usage and ancient juridical thought" (see, Dumont, 1966; 830). In his treatment of the process of 'feudalisation' Maine clearly postulates a transition from 'village community' to Manorial Group which succeeds in an evolutionary sequence universally. Baden-Powell too is concerned with the 'origin' and 'growth' of the village communities in India, and both in his treatment of the land systems and forms of village communities he comes very close to formulating an evolutionary process by which villages emerged in India from a communal-ownership to that based on joint sharing and single land-lord ownership. The severality, joint zamindari and jagirdari types of villages according to Baden-Powell could have evolved through a process of succession of dominant groups of conquest and settlement.

We thus find a continuity in theoretical formulations about change in Indian sociology of the nineteenth century. Such evolutionary formulations also implied that social forms and traditions in India were at a lower stage of growth compared to the western forms and structures. Going through the writings, despatches, Census and Gazetteer reports of this time one would come across, sometimes

overt and sometimes hidden slant on this type of interpretation of the Indian social system and culture which naturally evoked a feeling of resentment among many Indian scholars. Sir Brijendra Nath Seal severely criticised the attempt of British anthropologists and Western ethnologists to classify Indian culture and social institutions at a lower level of evolution, through a phylogenetic method. He took an anti-evolutionary viewpoint in his lectures at Calcutta University during the first quarter of the twentieth century (see, Yogendra Singh, 1967). Radha Kamal Mukherjee responding to this issue wrote: "The attempt to force systems and methods of industrial organisation, economic arrangement and institutions which have admirably suited a different geographical environment would always be futile" (see, Yogendra Singh, 1967). These developments set a new trend in conceptual formulations about social change which also coincided with the rise of functional method in Western sociology.

During the second quarter of the twentieth century Indian sociology and social anthropology became essentially empirical. The analysis of field-data replaced speculative generalisations. Thus focus shifted from the process of change to that of integration and functioning of the system. Cohn says, "By 1940 the study of Indian society cumulatively had the following components: (1) a broad-scale humanistically oriented tradition which emphasised the relationship between textual studies and a static model of contemporary Indian society; (2) an administrative tradition centred on the census for the study of caste which sought to see Indian society as a collection of discrete entities whose traditions and customs could be classified and studied; (3) a tradition of economic study which sought to describe the working of village economics, with some attention to the social structure of villages; (4) an anthropological tradition centred on the study of tribal peoples; and (5) the historical administrative strain which centred on the general theory of village organisation in a broad comparative framework, but without an intensive ethnographic base" (see, Cohn, 1968: 23). Mann's surveys of Deccan villages and Wiser's studies of Jajmani system and rural social structure in U.P. were the beginnings of a new orientation in the Indian sociological analysis (see, Mann, 1921; Wiser, 1936).

Analysis of change in these studies ceased to be macroscopic and assumed a strictly empirical character, that is, change was analysed strictly in terms of observed deviations in the forms and functions of the systems concerned between two points of time. Such analysis had no significant conceptual category to offer for describing the processes of change. Even the diachronic element in the analysis was in fact merely "double synchronic" to borrow Dumont's phrase (see, Dumont, 1964: 9). The concepts of Sanskritization and Westernization

as formulated by M. N. Srinivas were the first systematic attempt to define the processes of change taking place in the Indian society.

Sanskritization and Westernization: A comprehensive theory of social or cultural change assumes that sources of change lie both inside and outside the system. The concepts of Sanskritization and Westernization postulated by Srinivas define these two types of sources of social change. Sanskritization represents actual or aspired for cultural mobility within the framework of the established 'Great Tradition' and stratification system of caste. Westernization implies change resulting from cultural contact with the West, particularly Great Britain. Srinivas defines Sanskritization "as the process by which a 'low' caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, ritual, beliefs, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a 'twice-born' (*dwija*) caste. The Sanskritization of a group has usually the effect of improving its position in the local caste hierarchy. It normally presupposes either an improvement in the economic or political position of the group concerned or a higher group self-consciousness resulting from its contact with a source of the 'Great Tradition' of Hinduism such as pilgrim centre or monastery or proselytizing sect" (Srinivas, 1966: 67-8). This definition of Sanskritization is by far the most comprehensive that Srinivas has postulated. Earlier he used the term "Brahmanization" for this process wherein the castes lower in hierarchy imitated the cultural and ritual practices of the Brahmins (see, Srinivas, 1952), but later on he found that there may not only be a Brahman model for emulation but many other models too as reported by various sociologists (see, Shah and Shroff, 1959; B. S. Cohn, 1955; D. Pocock, 1957; Rowe, 1963; Kalia, 1959 and others). Hence, Srinivas changed the contextual meaning of Brahmanization to Sanskritization first on the basis that "certain Vedic rites are confined to the Brahmans and the other 'twice-born' castes" (see, Srinivas, 1962: 42) and later broadened its reference context to any group higher in caste status, particularly the 'twice-born' castes.

Sanskritization as a concept not only identified a very crucial aspect of the process of change in the Indian culture and its institutions but the use of this term soon led to the beginning of a debate in Indian sociology which has not yet come to a conclusion. Here was a concept which had an equal appeal for the Indologists, historians of Indian culture and sociologists and social anthropologists. It also satisfied those who had a special fondness for developing Indian concepts for analysing national socio-cultural phenomena. Historical context of Sanskritization received special attention by many scholars (see, Raghavan, 1959; Dev Raj Chanana, 1961; Harper, 1959; J. F. Staal, 1963). These historical evaluations not only provide additional

confirmation to the reality of the process of Sanskritization but also reveal contextual gaps and limitations in the formulation of this concept. Chanana, for instance mentions that in Punjab not only the Hindu but also Persian cultural contact characterized the model for imitation. Chanana also expressed doubts about Westernization as such. He says: "as regards the present (situation in Punjab), it would be better to say that Indianization is at work; by this we mean Westernization to a large extent in externals and the reassertion of largely Indian values, mingled with the humanitarian values of the West in matters of spirit" (Chanana, 1961: 414).

Similar suggestions have also been offered by other social scientists, for example, that Sanskritization as a process should be analysed in the context of the nature of socio-economic deprivations experienced by various groups in the social structure (H. Gould, 1963: 945-50). The urge to sanskritize may be a disguised attempt to raise social status ritually as a result either of a closure of economic means for status mobility or as a consequence of it. There is also a view that the imitation framework that Sanskritization suggests based on the hierarchy of the Great and Little Traditions or of levels of dominant cultural traditions might function in a circular rather than linear form. McKim Marriott observes that there is no clear process of Sanskritization "at the expense of" the "non-Sanskritic" traditions. Instead of there being a borrowing, he finds "Evidence of accretion and of transmutation in cultural form without apparent replacement and without rationalisation of the accumulated and transformed elements .... Sanskritic rites are often added on to non-sanskritic rites without replacing them" (McKim Marriott, 1955).

Sanskritization is also a term with many connotations. Srinivas writes that "Sanskritization is an extremely complex and heterogeneous concept. It is even possible that it would be more profitable to treat it as a bundle of concepts than as a single concept. The important thing to remember is that *it is only a name* for a widespread cultural process (M. N. Srinivas, 1962: 61, italics added). No doubt, the considerable literature that has now grown on this subject reflects this fact. Sanskritization is given varied interpretations. Not only have social scientists understood Sanskritization differently but they have appreciated or criticised it for contradictory reasons. Edward B. Harper, for instance, treats Sanskritization as a 'functional concept' as distinct from a 'historical' concept. It is, according to him, an interpretative category to understand the relationship among the changing elements within the tradition, than its historical construction (Harper, 1959). J. F. Staal writes, however, that Sanskritization describes a process and is a concept of change. It is not a concept at which synchronic analysis could ever arrive in order to explain

material obtained by synchronic analysis. Sanskritization is a meta-concept in this sense, and *all historical concepts are meta-concepts in that they are based upon concepts of synchronic analysis* (J. F. Staal, 1955-56: 15, 23-36, italics added). Here the natural implication is that Sanskritization is a historical concept or belongs to the concepts of the same species. Many more examples reflecting the contradictions of meanings associated with the term Sanskritization could be mentioned.

As Srinivas himself acknowledges the concept of Sanskritization helps one to identify the cultural or 'positional' and not the structural forms of social change. Sanskritization, however, presupposes the existence of structural constraints or pressures in the social system. That is why it is related to another important notion of Srinivas — that of 'dominant caste'. A dominant caste is one which enjoys a relatively predominant position in the caste hierarchy ritually, economically, numerically and educationally or as it really obtains on the basis of the combination of any of these four variables of dominance. The formulation of the criteria of dominance by Srinivas has been critically examined by many social scientists. No doubt, the complex nature of the term 'dominant caste' and its relationship with the power structure of groups is such as might call for further modifications (S. C. Dube, 1965; T. K. Oommen, 1970) but the phenomenon of dominance does render the concept of Sanskritization much more dynamic. It is the dominant castes or groups that offer themselves as models for Sanskritization by the groups lower in hierarchy. Thus cultural mobility is seen as a function of power.

Associated with Sanskritization are Srinivas' concepts of 'Westernization' and 'Secularization'. Westernization refers to all cultural changes and institutional innovations in India as this country came into political and cultural contact with the Western nations, primarily the U.K. Secularization is a counterpart of the process of Westernization specially as it emerged after Independence as a national ideology. This ideology calls for a spirit of religious and cultural tolerance and co-existence amongst the religious groups. It also refers to various legislative and constitutional provisions that have been made in India to reinforce its foundations. Srinivas has thus attempted to portray the most important processes of social change in India through these three concepts.

Little and Great Tradition: The process of social change in India has also been studied and analysed with the help of the concept of tradition and its social organisation. The approach emanates from the works of Robert Redfield in Mexico. For societies having deeper historical past and civilizational maturity, Redfield postulated a series of cultural and social organisational levels at which the process

of change should be analysed (Redfield, 1955-56). Each civilization consists of traditions, one of the elites or the reflective few where it is formally articulated, and the other of the folk or the unlettered peasants. The former he called 'Great' and the latter 'Little' tradition. Each tradition has its own social organisation, that is, institutionalised roles, statuses, and personnel. Both traditions taken together symbolise a world view which represents the unity of civilization.

These traditions, however, are not impervious to changes originating from within and without. Each tradition develops first, in terms of its own internal creative urge, in orthogenetic process. But simultaneously, traditions also come under external impact, of traditions outside their own civilizational matrix. This may happen through historical contact, war and political domination or migration or communication. Civilizations and their social structures also change through these external contacts or heterogenetic processes. It is assumed by Redfield that all civilizations begin with orthogenetic or primary process of growth and keep on transforming themselves through heterogenetic contact. Presumably, at some point of time the heterogenetic contacts among civilizations might lead to a universal form of civilization.

Redfield's frame of analysis has been applied to study the Indian reality of social change by Milton Singer, McKim Marriott and their associates (Milton Singer, 1959; Marriott, 1955). Milton Singer formulates a series of statements about cultural change in India. He writes: "(1) that because India had a 'primary' or 'indigenous' civilization which had been fashioned out of pre-existing folk and regional cultures, its 'Great tradition' was continuous with the 'Little tradition' to be found in its diverse regions, villages, castes and tribes. (2) that this cultural continuity was the product as well as the cause of a common cultural consciousness shared by most Indians and expressed in essential similarities of mental outlook and ethos. (3) That this common cultural consciousness has been formed in India with the help of certain processes and factors ...... i.e., sacred books and sacred objects ...... a special class of literati (Brahman) and other agents of cultural transmission ...... (4) That in a primary civilization like India's cultural continuity with the past is so great that even the acceptance of "modernizing" and "progress" ideologies does not result in linear form of social and cultural change but may result in the 'traditionalizing' of apparently 'modern' innovations (Singer, 1955-56). Singer concludes that the resilience of the Indian tradition is such that changes take place in it through selective adaptation rather than basic transformation.

This view has also been supported by McKim Marriott in his studies. He characterises the mode of interaction between the 'Little'

and 'Great' traditions in the Indian village as 'parochialization' and 'universalization'. The first is when elements of the 'Great' tradition percolate downward and become organic part of the 'Little tradition' losing thereby their original form. The second process operates when elements of the 'Little' tradition (deities, customs, rites, etc.) circulate upward to the level of the 'Great' tradition and are 'identified' with its legitimate form. Marriott gives many examples of such circular processes of change from his observations in India. Sanskritization, according to him, does not proceed as an independent process, it is superimposed on non-Sanskritic cultural forms through accretion rather than simple replacement (Marriott, 1955).

The dichotomization of traditions ('Little' and 'Great') as formulated by Singer has been criticised by many sociologists. Dube holds the view that analysis of cultural changes with the help of 'Little' and 'Great' traditions framework would be insufficient because traditions in India are organised not in a bipolar but multi-polar system. He writes: "As far as 'Little' and 'Great' traditions are concerned, there is apparently no precise definition ...... Where there are more than one Great or near-Great Traditions, each with its canonical texts and ethical codes, the situation becomes all the more confusing ...... It may also be added that the Great Tradition-Little Tradition frame of reference does not allow proper scope for the consideration of the role and significance of regional, Western and emergent national traditions, each of which is powerful in its own way" (S. C. Dube, 1965: 421-423). Dube alternatively postulates a sixfold classification of traditions which, according to him, are more representative of the Indian cultural realities and offer better framework for analysis. These are: the classical tradition, the emergent national tradition, the regional tradition, the Western tradition and the local sub-cultural traditions of social groups.

This classification, however, does not eliminate the basic limitations of the traditions approach to the study of social change. Firstly, it does not formulate explicitly the definitive criteria of traditions that may be logically consistent, exhaustive and exclusive. For instance, the classical tradition is not a singularity but consists of many traditions. Secondly, Dubes' approach too does not go beyond a nominalistic or schematic formulation of categories to understand change. Finally, this alternative is mainly helpful in analysing cultural and not structural changes in the Indian society, a weakness that this approach shares with those of Srinivas, Singer and others. Dube's suggestion is in fact 'theoretically' homologous to the approaches of Srinivas and Singer.

Another attempt to rationalise the classification of the substantive areas for the analysis of change in India seeks to formulate three

ramifications of social realities: the elite culture and structure, the folk cultural forms and social structure and the tribal culture and society. At these three levels it is suggested that a comprehensive analysis of social change should be undertaken (see, Unnithan, Deva and Singh, 1965). This approach is intended to be a modification over Singer's categories which particularly overlook the tribal, social and cultural organisations in India. But from a theoretical point of view this trichotomous classification too does not offer a theoretically viable alternative. The fact that elite structure may also separately exist in the tribal segment of culture has been overlooked in this classification.

Theoretically, however, most conceptual formulations discussed so far remain insufficient as far as the explanation of social change is concerned. If we define social change not merely as new cultural adaptations or positional changes in the status of groups and categories but as structural changes or changes in the principles of social stratification as such, we would find that all the above conceptual formulations on social change tend to be partial. The dependent (where change takes place) and independent (why change takes place) variables used through these concepts do not reach the point of critical minima to be considered adequate for theoretical generalisation. The dependent variables are in most cases culturological, they deal with changes in ideologies, outlooks, traditions and their social organisation rather than in the social system or structure as such. Even when the conceptual framework is more sensitizing, as for example, the Sanskritization-Westernization scheme of Srinivas, it focuses upon a limited segment of the social reality. The treatment of the structural processes of social change is by and large neglected.

Structural Approaches

Although the dominant concern in most analyses of social change in India has been culturological, the structural aspects have not been altogether neglected. A structural focus in the study of change does not only imply a variation in the dependent variables through which changes are being identified but also establishing relationship with independent causal variables. This enhances the power of the social change theory. Firstly, the units of observation in a structural study are not ideas, sentiments, and values but the order of roles and statuses which form the basis of social relationships and are schematised into groups or categories. A major principle which governs the form of ordering of social structure is asymmetry of power in relation to command over resources or values. Structural changes may primarily be located by identifying the emerging principles that

lay down new rules about this asymmetry and consequent differentiation and transformation in the institutionalised forms of social relationships and their ordering in society. For instance, the abolition of zamindari and intermediary rights in land were intended to alter the pre-existing modes of power asymmetry in the Indian society; now the extent to which this asymmetry has been removed may be an instance of structural change in the social system, a transition from the feudal-patrimonial to egalitarian liberal social order. The *principles* through which this transformation is measured are abstractions over the raw social data or the actual social ethnographic portraits of social life. These abstractions forming a set of hypotheses that are logically interrelated constitute the explanatory systems of the process of social change. (Structural approach thus seeks to explain and not merely describe social change.)

As Bailey writes, in structural analysis "we ought not to confine ourselves to the raw material provided by the 'principles that peoples themselves give', our only task is not to make sense of the 'flagrant contradictions in popular thought' by abstracting out consistent elements which a culturological study attempts. A valid sociological understanding can be achieved, given certain problems, by making abstractions immediately from behaviour or from other non-verbal information, and by using our own concepts and evading the ideas of the people" (F. G. Bailey, 1959: 88-101). These words written in response to Louis Dumont's treatment of Indian sociology and social change (which we shall refer below) throw light, not only on the distinction between the structural and the culturological approaches, but also bear out the relevance of role analysis in the structural study of social change.

Consequently, the second major characteristic of the structural study of social change is the observation of the magnitude and incidence of role differentiation in the social structure resulting from social pressures such as increase in population, diversification and growth of industries, rise of new cities or urban centres and rise in the economic and technological bases of society, which necessitate creation of more complex organisation and new role and status types. In this process the fused structures performing multiple roles, such as the traditional family (which was not only a unit for biological reproduction but also earning of livelihood, recreation as well as education of children, etc.), become differentiated as other specialised groups come into being to take care of many of the functions of its traditional structures. The theoretical formulations about how these processes come to fruition are many. Some studies in this field suggest that the breakthrough is achieved when the traditional fusion of the family system with the economic system breaks down through

new technological impacts that revolutionise the mode of production (see, N. J. Smelser, 1959 and 1968; Everett E. Hagen, 1962; Marion J. Levy Jr., 1949 etc).

In most Indian studies of social change a systematic structural differentiation model has not been used, but it is implicit in their analytical framework. We shall briefly analyse some of them below.

Structural Differentiation and Social Mobility: Social change studies focusing upon the processes of structural differentiation have covered many areas. Family organisation, caste and community structure, factory system, leadership and elite categories have been analysed in respect of their changing role and status principles, functions, variations in forms and its implications to the social system as a whole. These studies are conducted sometimes independently and sometimes as a part of the study of social mobility of occupations, groups or categories. We have treated both of these analytical approaches together in our reporting of the conceptual trends of such social change studies. Mobility studies have mainly drawn their data from the studies on caste, class and occupation; leadership and elite structure are also covered. The structural differentiation framework is found, however, in studies on family, community (specially through study of factional groupings and regroupings), political parties and industrial and factory social structures. There is also a third group of studies which uses the framework of tradition-modernity in analysing attitudes and values pertaining to social structures, roles and status constellations.

As we said earlier, the studies focusing upon structural differentiation have not used a systematic theoretical model. There is no direct concern to formulate general statements or a logical sequence of this process (as for instance, we find in Smelser's study of the industrial revolution; see Smelser, 1968: 79-80) in most such studies. But a continuum or ideal type classification of states of social phenomena in the process of change is generally implicit in the treatment of data. We may find a good example of this in the study of five factories in Poona by Lambert. Formulating his conceptual scheme he writes:

Throughout this literature, however, a relatively simple polarity occurs ...... a set of ideal types whose component parts-appear again and again in discussions about changes from peasant to industrialised societies. For our purpose, we will select five changes which are presumed to accompany that process of social change called modernization: status is superseded by contract as the predominant basis of interpersonal economic relations; primary group organised production processes are supplanted by a more

complex division of labour, finer job specifications, and the interdependence of separate economic roles; ascribed status gives way to achieved status as the legitimizer of social gradation; status immobility surrenders to rapid vertical and horizontal mobility; and belief in the durability, inevitability and propriety of one's status is replaced by aspirations for improving one's lot ...... It is assumed that the introduction of the factory system has certain institutional imperatives that follow from this form of work organisation, imperatives which are instrumental in moving a society from one end of the polarity to another, from a static, acquired-status-ridden, tradition-bound, primary group oriented, particularistic, fatalistic society into one that is rapidly changing, achieved-status-dominated, progressive secondary-group-oriented, universalistic and aspiring (Richard D. Lambert, 1963: 16-17).

Substantively, however, Lambert's findings do not confirm many assumptions with which he started. A more important one was that in the process of modernization traditional structures must give way to new forms. The traditional structures like caste and family, he finds, have undergone only adaptive changes under the impact of the factory system. The differentiating structures such as labour force, unions, and other industrial work groups maintain many particularistic and ascriptive ties and yet participate as effectively in the industrial role structure. Many other studies in industrial sociology of India also confirm this finding (see, Berna, 1960; Hazlehurst, 1966).

This is further confirmed by most studies conducted in India on the changing family structure. The tendency towards conceptual dichotomization, however, has also persisted in this field. Earlier, a stereotyped view prevailed that under the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation the structure of joint family would undergo changes and would be transformed into the nuclear or 'natural family' (Radha Kamal Mukherjee and Baljit Singh, 1961: 37). This was because the Western societies where industrialisation was far advanced had a very high incidence of nuclear families. Simplistically, the same model was extended to explain the Indian phenomenon. The European evidence of structural changes in family due to industrialisation was then mistakenly built into a thesis of general social disorganisation of joint families in less industrialised countries following industrialisation.

Many other studies of social change in family structure have, however, corrected this error of perspective. The focus in change studies has shifted now towards analysing the adaptive capacity in joint or semi-joint family structures in India in relation to the forces of

industrialisation and modernisation. Long term genealogical studies of family structure have brought out the evidence that joint families pass through circular stages from jointness to nuclear family structure and again to family jointness; also the very concept of jointness has been found to consist of a series of levels or degrees rather than forming a clear-cut dichotomy (see, I. P. Desai, 1964; Kapadia, 1958; Bernard Cohn, 1961; Ralph Nicholas, 1961; Orenstein, 1961; T. N. Madan, 1962; Shah, 1964; Kolenda, 1968; Epstein, 1962; Gould, 1968; etc.). It is said: "that we cannot speak meaningfully of structural change in the Indian family until we first establish some basis for differentiating such processes from the merely normal arrangements through time which the Indian family, like the human family everywhere, undergoes as a result of the vicissitudes of demography, economy, mobility, etc. One consequence of these *normal arrangements* will be the inevitable emergence of a certain quantum of nuclear families whose existence will in no sense demonstrate that the presence of nuclear families is automatic evidence of disintegrating extended families" (Harold A. Gould, 1968: 414).

Milton Singer gives three reasons why sociologists made a departure from the dichotomous view on changes in the family structure (that joint family would necessarily be transformed into nuclear ones in the process of increased industrialisation): (a) "the documentation by social anthropologists of the variety of family systems in different parts of the world; (b) the discovery by social historians that the nuclear family may have been prevalent as a cultural norm in Europe and the United States even before industrialisation; and (c) the finding by sociologists and social anthropologists that many families in American and European cities maintain widespread kin ties" (Milton Singer, 1968: 423). The nuclear or conjugal family that comes into being following modernisation of economy and technology is that of a multilineal type (M. J. Levy, 1966: 74), and many studies of kinship structure and family in the Western countries have demonstrated the persistence of widespread kinship ties despite industrialisation (Levy and Fallers, 1959; Firth, 1964, etc.).

The pattern of change which is observed in the Indian family structure among the business classes in Madras tends to show, according to Singer, elements of compartmentalisation, that is, separation in spheres of conduct norms (home becomes sphere of religion and traditional values, office that of business), vicarious ritualization, a symbolic if not real observance of the traditional familial ritual and other sacred obligations, separation of ownership and control, household management of industry and finally also a cycle of authority whereby the older generation on the one hand reconciles itself with the entrepreneurial authority of the younger generation if the same is

more creative and specialised and on the other also maintains its leadership quality by having loyal support from the younger generation (Singer, 1968: 438-445). According to Singer, all these are adaptive processes which among the business class families not only reinforce industrial entrepreneurship but also tend to perpetuate many aspects of the traditional family structure. The question, however, is that of the extent to which such changes in the Indian family do really offer evidence of structural change, and how far these contribute to a theory of social change.

Very few studies of family in India have analysed structural changes from a theoretical perspective, especially if one compares them with Radcliffe Brown's distinction between social physiology and structural change or Murdock's formulation of a set of sequences from which structural changes in the family take place (Murdock, 1949). Singer says that "we may characterise the recent discussion among social anthropologists and sociologists of the Indian family as moving from morphology to social physiology but not quite yet arrived at structural changes" (Singer, 1968: 426-7). The evidence of empirical studies bearing upon social structure of the Indian family does suggest that changes are more of an adaptive rather than structural nature. But the question of adaptive change is a complex one. It does not preclude such extensions, additions and eliminations of traditional family roles and its system of authority that may have structural consequences. The seeds of structural changes are embedded in the adaptive pattern of family transformation. Hence the contention that there are no structural changes in the family seems to be overstated. The argument does, however, belie the validity of formulating neat dichotomies in conceptual formulations for the study of change.

Factional segmentation in the structure of caste, community and political parties is yet another phenomenon of change related to the process of differentiation. This process relates to the distribution of relative power, a phenomenon germane to the theory of social structure. Nadel wrote that "social structure coincides with power and authority structure" (Nadel, 1957: 154). The emergence of factions in the village communities is also treated as a structural pre-requisite (Murdock, 1949). As a social change process, however, factional sub-division articulates the tensions arising out of the vertical and horizontal cleavages in the social stratification especially under the impact of the measures of social and economic reforms. How this process really begins, functions and affects the structural form of community life has been studied by many sociologists and social anthropologists (see, Bailey, 1963; Barth, 1960; McCormack, 1959; Mayer, 1965; Nicholas, 1963; 1965 and 1968; Orenstein, 1965; Singh,

1971). Srinivas has analysed this process in a Mysore village. He used the term dominant caste to interpret the new mode of power relationship that emerges when new forces of social change begin to operate in the social system of the village (Srinivas, 1955 and 1959). In a comparative analysis of factional segmentation and its relationship with structural forces of change as revealed by studies in nineteen villages of South Asia, Ralph Nicholas is able to formulate some structural propositions about the causes and consequences of formation of factions in the rural social system. He also integrates his theory of factional segmentation with the concept of dominant caste. He concludes:

(1) There are two factors found repeatedly in Indian villages, which are conducive to the development of vertical political cleavages: (a) considerable dispersal of agricultural lands among cultivating families as is found, ideally, under ryotwari land tenure, and (b) a dominant caste group that is a majority of a village population. A combination of these two factors is ordinarily associated with political conflict between factions. (2) A second set of factors often closely associated with one another, also frequently leads to vertical political cleavages; these are joint, or *mahalvari*, land tenure, by a dominant caste group organised on segmentary lineage principles. Each of the vertically divided political groups in this case is generally composed of a patrilineal segment of the dominant caste group, often localized in a "quarter" of a village, and its servants and dependents among the subordinate castes. (3) Political conflict between stratified groups, horizontally divided from one another, is the least frequent form in contemporary South Asian villages. Such conflict is more often associated with concentration of agricultural lands in the hands of one or a few individuals as is found, ideally, under zamindari land tenure, and/or dominance of a village by a minority caste.

In most villages there is combination of horizontal and vertical forms of political cleavages at work at the same time. This combination of cleavages is an expression of two facts: (a) In addition to the frequently recurring structural features which permit vertical cleavages, even a small local caste group can have a significant political influence, promoting horizontal cleavage. (b) There are economic class differences, not directly dependent upon caste, which also favour the development of horizontal cleavages. Furthermore, the variables considered under the three propositions listed above are not always interdependent, so that, for example, dispersed landholdings and a relatively small "dominant" caste may be associated in one village, while concentrated landholding and a large dominant caste may be found in another (Nicholas, 1968: 279-80).

The above analysis reveals that an essential element in factional division is not merely a competition for access to resources and power but also a set of structural conditions under which competition or even conflict for power becomes or appears to be a credible instrument for the realization of the goal. These structural conditions might differ from one arena of factional politics to another but its general properties remain the same. At the political party level the study of factional segmentation has also revealed results that broadly conform with the above analysis (see, Brass, 1965; Rajni Kothari, 1970; Myron Weiner and Kothari, 1965). Most of these studies report mobilisation of a caste group or community for realisation of economic or other social objectives through political participation. These studies also reveal that often a caste group or community is internally divided into factions or sub-interest groups for similar reasons. The process is indeed complex. In mobilisation of such interests the leadership has to play a new role more so when the scope of competing interests gets enlarged. This throws up new types of leadership in the society. Definite signs of differentiation (as different from systematic changes) in the leadership structure in India have, therefore, been found in many studies (see, Park and Tinker, 1959; A. R. Desai, 1969). Differentiation operates through the emergence of new (formal) leadership and adaptive changes in the traditional leadership institutions. Studies of leadership trends suggest that whereas new cadres have come into existence from traditionally weaker sections of the society, the dominant social groups continue to provide the bulk of leadership at various levels.

A similar trend operates at the elite level. During the past few decades and specially after Independence a significant diversification has taken place in the recruitment of the elite cadres; especially in politics the predominance of the urban elites has weakened (see, Rosen, 1966) as more and more rural elites are coming forward to replace them. Another significant structural trend is that of segmentation within the elite structure. Before Independence, Indian elites whether in the field of administration, business, army or politics were recruited from the same class or status groups. So, the relative difference in their cultural background and social origin was minimal. This has widened much since Independence, specially between the political elites and the rest of the elite subgroups. This difference has been noted in the study of this phenomenon by social scientists (see, Beteille, 1969; Broomfield, 1968; Bottomore, 1969; Rosenthal, 1970; Singh, 1971) although there is a divergence of opinion about whether this cultural lag in the internal composition of elites at various levels would be dysfunctional to modernization. Bottomore holds that despite cultural and social differences between the political and non-political

elites in India their integrated role in the modernization of the Indian society should not be adversely affected (Bottomore. 1969). Others accept this conclusion with qualifications.

The important point for analysis of social change in the studies of elite-structure is the extent to which we get evidence of the process of structural differentiation at this level, and the extent to which changes here suggest emergence of adaptive processes rather than transformation of the social structure. Rosenthal after studying political elites in Agra and Poona concludes that:

the diminution of some aspects of traditional group authority over the individual does not imply the total disintegration of such groups as meaningful units for social or political action. In India as in the United States, ascriptive ties are likely to maintain their salience for some members of the society so long as democratic structures persist. Thus collectivities such as jatis ("castes" or "sub-castes" depending on the particular context), continue to function in a transmuted form to the extent that they are able to adapt their traditional function in a society to the "System rules" of the new order—an order which they have participated in moulding to their own political needs. At the same time, the hold of tradition-al primordial groups and of the status system with which they were associated have appeared to loosen under the pressure of general social and economic change; the political and social rele-vance of the group depends increasingly upon voluntary identifica-tions rather than on legally or ritually enforced distinctions (Rosen-thal, 1970: 233).

This suggests that adaptive changes far surpass the extent of struc-tural changes in the elite substructure. This process of change too conforms with the overall pattern of social change in India.

Social Mobility and Social Change: The problem of social mobility is directly linked with the system of social stratification. It is like change in family, community structure and leadership a process that directly reflects the direction which the structural changes in society may be taking. The goals of Indian nationhood being establishment of a democratic and socialist society changes in the system of social stratification assume added significance. There are a few studies in India which throw light on this aspect of social change besides offer-ing us important contextual insights for the study of social change. Although we shall concern ourselves mainly with the conceptual formulations of social change a discussion of some substantive issues may be unavoidable.

The tradition-modernity dichotomy in the studies of social mobility has often led to a confusion of perspective. It led to the contention that mobility was absent in the social system of traditional India, which was said to have a closed system of social stratification. There are many reasons for this misconception. First, this view is based upon classical literature and its ideology which overemphasises the element of continuity. Secondly, for the Western scholars, the most striking feature in the Indian system has been the contrast it offered to their own society. Moreover, the historical literature on social mobility in the past not being well-developed sociologists have been handicapped in making objective generalizations. On top of all this has probably been the ideological bias, a moral sense of superiority felt by most Western scholars over the Indian society and culture which was considered to have fallen under their colonial rule be-cause of its own (see, Barber, 1968: 27) limitations.

Srinivas corrects this perspective saying that "while traditional, that is pre-British, Indian society, was stationary in character, it did not preclude the mobility, upward as well as downward, of individual castes in the local hierarchy" (Srinivas, 1968: 169). Much evidence has been adduced in this direction recently in the studies by both historians and sociologists (see, Barber, 1968: 18-35; Stein, 1968: 78-94; Cohn, 1962; Hab'b, 1963; Panikkar, 1955; Shah, 1964; Damle, 1968, etc.). Burton Stein distinguishes between the familial mobility which he says was most common in medieval India, and the corporate mobility (of entire castes or jatis) which followed later in history. Older aristocratic families used to decay and new aristo-cracies emerged by conquest or by amassing of wealth. Panikkar states that most kshatriya royal houses after the time of Mahapadma Nand were established by non-kshatriya castes. Many tribals also ascended to the position of royalty in India by establishing claim to kshatriyahood by conquest and accumulation of power (see, M. Orans, 1959; Surajit Sinha, 1957). Both Stein and Irfan Habib have stated that during the medieval period vast tracts of land were available for settlement, and enterprising families could move from one region to another and settle down as rajas or feudal lords and establish peasant settlements. The 'mobility of this kind was caused by "outside" forces like military invasion or war which led to the establishment of new rulerships. These rulers encouraged promotion of their supporters to higher positions of office or patronage (this was done both by the Mughals and the British in India). Mobility was also possible through accidental factors, such as a good harvest or famine, which respectively contributed to upward or downward mobility of families. Among the internal structural factors were fluctua-tions in population, accumulation of property and technological

changes leading to emergence of new occupational groups (see, Barber, 1968).

Traditionally, however, there was another form of social mobility available to the members of the Indian society — mobility through renunciation or by becoming *sanyasins*. In the traditional scheme of the *ashramas* the stage of renunciation was institutionalised. It was meant mainly for the twice-born castes. In practice, however, members from the lower castes also used to become sadhus or *sanyasins* from time to time, often to escape the deprivations of their own place in the social hierarchy. Some sociologists who consider that the Indian tradition did not allow for the concept of individual find in the idea of renunciation its sociological equivalent (see, Dumont, 1970). Silverberg writes: "For individuals in India there have always been means of escaping the stratification system, e.g., as sanyasis or family ascetics." But he rightly criticises the inference that this process accounted for significant degree of social mobility. According to him "if such individual escape-routes have functioned as a pressure valve, as some suggest, their significance might be principally that of facilitating the perpetuation of an otherwise rigid system of stratification in which there was little mobility" (Silverberg, 1968: 128).

Social mobility as a process has become more active in recent times. It has resulted from sets of endogenous and exogenous factors that have loosened the summation of status principles which the traditional caste stratification represented. The congruence of ritual status, economic status and power status as in the traditional caste stratification is withering away under the impact of social legislation, education, democratisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. These processes have created many alternative resources for supplementing one's social status and have broken the exclusiveness of the traditional principles of social status determination as a consequence of increased social mobility. Many studies in India which have analysed this process have shown the divergent functioning of caste, power and economic factors in the determination of social status. Mobility thus causes status incongruence or inconsistency (see, Bailey, 1957; 1960; 1963; Leach, 1960; Beteille, 1965; Barber, 1968, etc.). This growth of autonomy or divergence among the determinants of traditional system of caste hierarchy has also led to much speculation about the transformation of the caste system into class system of social stratification (see, Davis, 1951; Bose, 1968; Desai, 1966; Berreman, 1967, etc.). The terms 'caste' and 'class' are used as conceptual dichotomies for the analysis of change.

The caste is getting more rationally organised into caste associations and federations and assuming to itself the functions of rational corporate groups. In this process both fusion and fission are taking place

in the structure of caste organisation in different parts of the country (see, Hardgrave, 1968; Kothari, 1970; Rudolph and Rudolph, 1969; Gould, 1968). Srinivas confirms the new role of castes in India by concluding that the contemporary process in the structure of castes is that of fusion in contrast to the past trends which were in the direction of continued fission (Srinivas, 1968).

An essential analytical element in studying these processes of change relates to the formulation of referents or units at the level of which mobility in the system of stratification may be analysed. One might also distinguish between one unit and another for their sociological relevance. For instance, Stein holds that in traditional India social mobility used to operate more often at the level of family whereas in contemporary India it has assumed a corporate unit character (Stein, 1968). Here a distinction has been made on the basis of group context in mobility. Many other distinctions, however, may be necessary to make for an objective study of the social mobility pattern.

Marriott reviewing a number of studies on social mobility finds relevant distinctions at three levels in the ranking system related to the Indian mobility pattern. These are based on distinctions between: (1) rural from metropolitan types of ranking systems, (2) individual or groups from corporate units in ranking, and (3) a series of successively wider zones of reference for the units in any local system, the several zones being characterized by distinctive values (Marriott, 1968). The zones according to him are the village, the linguistic region and the whole civilization.

A question may now be posed: how far do the studies of mobility and social differentiation contribute to the growth of relevant conceptual schemes or systems for the analyses of social change in India? And in what form do these conceptual frames offer possibility of theoretical integration for adequacy of social change explanation?

One broad conclusion that emerges from most analyses of structural differentiation and social mobility in India is that the processes of change defy being comprehended through neatly formulated continua or conceptual dichotomies. Whether it is family, polity, caste, or occupational mobility, there is one constant factor observed in their process towards change, that of structural adaptation. The failure of conceptual continua and dichotomies in comprehending social change reflects the need for formulating a *dialectical* rather than *dichotomous* approach for the study of change. It also warrants that change may be analysed through native conceptual categories rather than borrowed conceptual models.

We find some realisation of this theoretical need in the contemporary sociological analyses. Rajni Kothari refers to it saying: "The prevailing dichotomy between tradition and modernity has created a curious

cognitive hiatus — in ideological thinking as well as in much of
social science theorising — between society on the one hand and polity
on the other. The former is conceived, as if by definition, as 'tradi-
tional', the latter as 'modern' and 'developmental'. In reality,
however, this is a false approach to the phenomenon of moderniza-
tion" (Kothari, 1970: 3). In the same vein Rudolph and Rudolph
write:

> the difficulties that can arise from the use of ideal-typical concepts
> in empirical investigation have often been recited. They can
> screen out perceptions of the particular and the exceptional that
> contradict dominant trends and motifs. Such theoretical screening
> is especially inimical to the analysis of social change because it
> eliminates form consideration latent, deviant, and minority alter-
> natives. With some alterations in historical circumstances, such
> alternatives may become the source of new or transformed identities,
> structures, and norms. Social change and new realities it creates
> arise not only from the impact of objective, exogenous, or revolu-
> tionary forces on established systems but also from alternative
> potentialities within such systems. Marxist theory brilliantly
> stresses this insight when it emphasizes the creative possibilities of
> historical contradictions. Ideal-typical or heuristic analyses of
> modernity and tradition in particular historical and national settings
> are likely to miss these creative possibilities in so far as they assume
> that the characterological, structural, and ideological components
> of each are absent in the other and thereby place modernity and
> tradition in a dichotomous rather than a dialectical relationship
> (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1969: 7-8).

In the analysis of social change, the concept of dialectical 'levels'
should introduce a dynamic-historical element. This approach is
adapted to the explanation of social change in its historical individua-
lity as well as cumulative propensity. Continuum models, on the
other hand, are less viable as explanatory systems and in reality their
significance as diachronic models is also doubtful. Most continuum
models take a consensual view of society and place undue emphasis
on the process of acculturative diffusion. Elements of conflict and
intergroup contradictions of material and existential interests — in
other words, structural dilemmas of change — are not taken into
consideration. (Singh, 1970: 269-70). Evidently a sound historical
perspective is essential in these conceptual formulations.

We have noted above how studies in structural differentiation of
family, caste and community have been theoretically misdirected
because the Western-derived continuum type concepts were used to

analyse social change. What matters most in formulating conceptual
categories for the study of change is that native "initial conditions"
or historicity of social processes must not be overlooked, and the
researcher should try to observe the dialectical relationship between
the system interactions and social change. How uniquely the histori-
city of the Indian social reality has impinged upon the nature of social
change has been objectively analysed by a number of sociologists (see,
Eisenstadt, 1970 and 1965; Beteille, 1969; Singh, 1970; Bendix, 1964;
Ishwaran, 1970) recently in India and abroad.

Most of these studies bring out that social change processes even
though structurally similar, being generated by universal forces, such
as population growth, diversification of occupational structures,
industrialisation and growth of technology and science, assume
historically different shapes and propositions in each society due to
its pre-existing systems of social institutions and ideologies. An
important historical element in the traditional Indian social structure
was that of inter-substructural autonomy, such as, the autonomy be-
tween polity and stratification, stratification and culture, and culture
and polity etc. (see, Eisenstadt, 1970 and Y. Singh, 1970). This
structural autonomy between social sub-systems helped in acceptance
of many social and cultural innovations at one level of the system
without affecting the other systems. The nature of this process was
segmental. The changes of great significance could thus take place
without generating resistance from other social segments (see, Irawati
Karve, 1961). The contemporary process of social change, however, is
basically different from the traditional form (upto the early phase of
the British rule in India). Most changes have now ceased to be
segmental; they have become organic. This is so as the structural
autonomy of the social sub-systems is now slowly breaking down with
the erosion of the traditional structural insularity. This takes place
following various institutional changes in society which affect all
other systems and activate most of its segments for participation in a
wider national scene. The mechanisms for such mobilisation are
economic or existential, the urge for equality, mobility and economic
security. As we noticed above, these urges in social segments do
continue to operate through the traditional social media of caste,
kinship-groups and factions, perhaps because these are the natural
structural entities through which the social systems could be mobilised.
No wonder that mobilisations for equality, mobility and security also
inadvertently reinforce the caste, class and communal identities. But
the quality of the consciousness in these identities is not the same as
existed in the traditional society with its autonomy of sub-systems.
Now all social segments tend to be activated because of the constraint
towards organic social growth. This growth is symbolised by the

emergence of the Indian nationhood. The caste associations, factions, fissions and fusions in structural entities manifest the diverse ramifications of this process.

Dialectical-Historical Approach*

The use of the dialectical-historical model for the study of social change has not been as common in India as other approaches discussed above. Probably the explanation lies in the colonial linkages of the Indian social sciences and social scientists, and this was historically conditioned. Nevertheless, some important studies of social change have been made using a dialectical-historical framework.

Paradoxically, Marx's own writings on India though underlying the need for revolutionary changes focus more prominently upon the static and the primeval character of the Indian society. Of course, he constantly changed his opinion as new facts came to his knowledge. Daniel Thorner notes this paradox in Marx's views about social change in India. He writes: "There is an element of paradox in Marx's emphasis (in his writings up through *Capital*) on the primacy of India as the point of departure for European development. On the one hand Marx insists that the ancient Indian form of common property as embodied in joint ownership and joint cultivation of land by the entire village is the original form from which all others evolved. On the other hand he holds that these characteristic features of the ancient Indian village plus the tight union of agriculture and handicrafts provide the basis for the static, unchanging nature of Asiatic society. The self-same ancient Indian community to which all the subsequent European societies owe their origin provides, by its very nature, the explanation of why these later forms had failed to emerge in Asia" (Thorner, 1966: 66).

Marx tried to resolve this paradox in his later writings. In his early writings around 1853 Marx was deeply impressed by static, a

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*We have not used the simple term "Marxist approach" mainly because of two reasons: (1) Marxist contribution consists of not one but a series of models of which social change theory is one part, and (2) some authors whose studies we may review may not be the followers of the orthodox Marxist view. For instance, D. P. Mukerji, one of India's most eloquent sociologists, who applied many elements of the Marxist theory in his interpretations and analyses of social change preferred to call himself a 'Marxologist' as distinguished from orthodox Marxist. Moreover, in a number of new analyses of social processes where dialectical-historical approach has been applied significant departures have been made from the tenets of classical Marxism. Finally, most theoreticians of Marxism now treat it as a growing or self-correcting system of scientific theory than a specific or everlasting dogma.

historical and primeval nature of the Indian society. Partly, his views were also influenced by British despatches of that period which painted Indian villages in a highly exaggerated static colour (see, Dumont, 1966: 67-89). Also the view of Hegel probably influenced him when the former wrote: "India, like China is a phenomenon antique as well as modern: one which has remained stationary and fixed......" (quoted in, Thorner, 1966). Marx also thought that Indian society consisted of a series of autonomous communal bodies, and there was no concept of individuality in this society. Although he characterized the British rule in India as "swinish", he did feel that it would bring new enlightenment and technological revolution in the society.

In 1857-58, we find Marx further elaborating upon this thesis. He distinguishes between the primary and secondary forms of societies. Among the primary forms he included community settlements where both working and property owning members lived. Community authority here merged into a hierarchical series with the despot at the top. The secondary form emerges due to war, serfdom and slavery. In the primary form there is generalised slavery whereas in slavery. In the secondary form it takes an institutionalised form. The first type he compared with the Asiatic and Slavonic societal forms and the second with the German and Roman ones. Differentiating the primeval social form into these two types Marx propounded his evolutionary and dialectical thesis of social change the mechanisms of which were the four types of modes of production. These he said: "in broad outline we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeoisie modes of production as so many epochs in the process of economic formation of society" (Marx, 1904).

Important for us to note in this sequential arrangement of modes of production is that for Marx India still presents an archaic social form. This view, however, changed when Marx came into contact with the Russian scholars during 1870-80 (see, Thorner, 1966). The work of Kovalevsky, *Communal Landholding: The Causes, Character and Outcome of its Disintegration* of 1879 impressed him deeply and as a consequence of it Marx prepared a note on the sequences of structural differentiation and change in the Indian social system which completely alters his earlier views on this theme. He noted five stages in social differentiation: (1) tribal community with undivided property in land and agriculture in common; (2) disintegration of tribal community and its transformation into family communities with loosening of common property; (3) land shares being fixed by inheritance rights or the degree of kinship, thus creating inequality. Tribal wars further increase this inequality; (4) passing of inequality

based kinship to that on possession as expressed by actual cultivation; (5) system of periodical redistribution of communal land; and its gradual shrinking, first this redistribution included house land, arable land and pasture but gradually the sphere of communal property shrank and was limited only to the community woodland and waste. Such progressive differentiation of property in ancient and medieval India also logically inheres for Marx the unfolding of the rest of the historical forces of change and its march to subsequent stages of social transformation.

At this stage Marx also radically revised his evaluation of the role of British colonialism for Indian society. "In 1850 Marx had welcomed the British introduction of 'private property' in India, as a necessary precondition for Indian development. In 1881 he condemns the suppression of communal ownership of land as an act of English vandalism. It had brought not an advance, but a setback to the native peoples" (see, Thrower, 1966).

The Marxist sociology of change that grew in India was not based on the earlier pessimistic picture of the static-ness of the Indian society which Marx was tempted to draw because of the partiality of social and historical accounts that were available to him. Studies conducted with the help of the Marxist model have covered many areas of Indian social life, e.g., caste and social polity, stages of social evolution corresponding to modes of production (Dange, 1949), nationalism (A. R. Desai, 1966), historical developments (Kosambi, 1956), social stratification and social institutions (Pavlov, 1964; Mukerji, 1957, 1958). We shall refer to some of these studies, particularly those which have a theoretical orientation.

In the writings of D. P. Mukerji we witness an illuminating example of historical-dialectical perspective for the analysis of social change. The main focus of Mukerji is on the emergence of a new class structure, especially that of the middle class under the impact of the British colonial rule; the structural forces behind this class differentiation which led to the growth of the nationalist awakening in India were according to Mukerji governed by the Indian tradition. Tradition in India, according to him, offers the resilient yet adaptive social and cultural force which must be kept in the framework of sociological analysis, even if the change generating capacity of economic forces (modes of production and its relationships) and institutions are accepted. He writes:

The value of Indian tradition lies in the ability of their conserving forces to put a brake on hasty passage. Adjustment is the end-product of the dialectical connection between the two. Meanwhile is tension. And tension is not merely interesting as a subject

of research. If it leads upto a higher stage, it is desirable. That higher stage is where personality is integrated through a planned and a socially directed, collective endeavour for historically understood end, which means, as the author understands it, a socialist order. Tension will not cease there. It is not the peace of the grave. Only alienation from nature, man and work will stop in the arduous course of such high and strenuous endeavour (D. P. Mukherji, 1958: 76).

We find Mukherji's views conforming closest to the dialectical-historical approach to social change. According to him social change is a process of movements through conflicts and contradictions; the contradiction in the Indian case is between its tradition, culture and value systems which are holistic or devoid of the atomistic principle and the ramifications of class interests that have successively emerged through the changing material conditions and modes of production. For understanding this the social scientists will have to devise their own conceptual categories and tools. The process of change would contribute to the growth of a socialist society, but not the one that would be a historical repetition of others. Mukerji believed in Dilthey as much as in Marx. For him history matters, but it also does not repeat itself.

We have another exposition of the dialectical-historical approach in the writings of A. R. Desai. He analyses the processes of changes in India in the context of the history of nationalism. This according to him emerged due to the special historical conditions created in India by British colonialism. Nationalism according to Desai did not exist in pre-British India. The British rule led to India's economic breakdown and simultaneously also to the rise of nationalistic consciousness. The urge for political freedom grew as the urge for economic freedom became acute. This urge among the Indian business classes is manifested by their demand for protection of native industries. The educated classes wanted Indianization of the services and the agriculturists reduction in land taxes. The nation as a whole wanted freedom for association, expression and political articulation. Thus, the catalytic factors in the entire process of nationalistic movement were the new economic interests and their institutionalisation through various class interests. In his analysis of changes in the rural and urban societies A. R. Desai has extended his dialectical methodological frame. The changes generated by the C.D.P., the educational, political and other developmental measures have according to Desai, succeeded or failed to the extent that the pre-existing material conditions, especially the class contradictions were mature or not (see, Desai, 1959).

The dialectical-historical concepts for the study of change have also been used by Ramkrishna Mukherjee. In his study of *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* one may find the uses of Marxist categories to interpret the forces that led to British colonial expansion in India. Mukherjee refutes the popular theory of some historians that the British rule was beneficial for the Indian society rather than the colonial regimes. He undertakes a thorough examination of the material forces which led to the emergence of the merchant bourgeoisie in Britain, their expansion in India which was itself undergoing a process of internal class disintegration (the disintegration of feudalism and aristocratic despotism), and subsequently the fall of the East India Company due to the rise of the new class of exploitators in Britain, the industrial bourgeoisie. The emergence of the latter class was conditioned by the industrial revolution and the material forces that it had released in society; ultimately these forces also rendered the merchant bourgeoisie obsolete as a class. Mukherjee writes:

> ....after 1813, the final limit was placed on the scope of British merchant capital in India and the path was cleared and new avenues were opened for the successful penetration of British industrial capital in the colony. Merchant capital could no more keep pace with the march of time; so it was laid aside. Its monopoly was abolished, and thus it was devoid of its real vigour (1955).

In a later work Mukherji extends the dialectical model of social change analyses to the rural society. He attempts to analyse the village social structure in a historical setting, in terms of its dynamic class structure and the processes of inherent contradictions (Mukherjee, 1957). He lays emphasis on the systematic and the organic character of Indian society for understanding its processes of change. He refutes the thesis that the factors generating social change could be delimited to any single set of variables. For instance, he offers proof to falsify the prevailing view in some quarters that urbanisation necessarily contributes to social change. After a painstaking analysis of facts he concludes that: "(1) there is not yet any evidence of significant rural-urban difference with reference to the basic problems of social development, (2) a causal or concomitant relation between cultural changes due to urban living or urbanization and 'social' development cannot be legitimately deduced, and so (3) the concept of rural-urban dichotomy or rural-urban continuum need not be meaningful in the context of urbanisation and social transformation of India at the moment" (Mukherjee, 1965: 48).

While the debate on the value of the rural-urban continuum is not yet over (see, M. S. A. Rao, 1970), the point that comes out seriously

from Mukherjee's analysis of social change is that most studies of change are poor at the level of causal analysis. There is absence of change commensurate with the structural multifactoral analysis of change commensurate with the structural properties of the Indian social system. A paradigmatic statement of this position has been attempted by Mukherjee (see, Mukherjee, 1969, 1970) in some of his essays. Here one may witness a subtle change in his position as he moves towards a near formal theoretical construction of change corresponding to a *probabilistic nomological approach*. This approach in essence is a meeting point between the Marxist and the positivistic nomological theories in contemporary sociology (see, Gouldner, 1970). Mukherjee writes:

> If we look into the social history of India we find that it is characterised by an assortment of different behaviour patterns, by their accumulation, adjustment and compromise, and not always by their successive replacement. Changes are, no doubt, taking place in the society, but they do not necessarily destroy the existing social system at any rate the governing ones...... A simple *sequential model of social change*, therefore, is inadequate for these societies when the phenomenon is studied in contemporary perspective.
>
> The model may be found ineffective in the contemporary analysis of social change in the "developed" societies also; while, for all kinds of society, it may be appropriate for the study of social change in a historical perspective. In that case, change is a *matter of deduction* after it has taken place and new social formations have replaced the corresponding previous formations.
>
> If, however, social change is invariably regarded as a matter of deduction and any alteration in any behaviour pattern (as the consequence of any alteration in any societal arrangement) is considered as an evidence of "social change", then the concept loses its analytical relevance for diagnostic investigation in the contemporary perspective. It will merely substantiate the obvious fact that any society, at any given point of time, is in a state of *dynamic equilibrium* and alterations are inevitably effected in a social organism. It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between studies of social change from the *historical or the contemporary perspective* and as an *explanatory or diagnostic proposition* (Mukherjee, 1970: 1160-61).

Mukherjee is of the view that a proper theory of social change can be formulated by testing a set of hypotheses that may be based on any type of theoretical system (he mentions Marxian and Weberian types), and then generalisations can be obtained after these hypotheses have been tested through a research design "which is based on the

concept of statistical probability and which is conducive to multi-variate analysis of the quantitative and/or qualitative data, as found appropriate and available" (1970: 1165). The hypotheses may, however, be formulated in terms of a hierarchy of unit-concepts that are mutually subsuming. He suggests concepts of social action, behaviour pattern, social relationships, institutions and social groups as determinant of the mechanics of the social system in a taxonomic order. These social system units may be used for generation of hypotheses in consonance with any ideological preferences of the researchers (1970: 1165), but the 'tier' of these conceptual units should offer a uniform and relevant social framework for the analysis of change. To render these hypotheses derived from conceptual units diachronic, these may be tested with reference to place, time and object.

The element of ideological neutrality that Mukherjee introduces in his suggested method for the analysis of social change along with his continuing emphasis on discovering the broad historical principles of social change generalisation brings his theory closer to the nomological rather than 'dialectical' approach. But as we said earlier, nomology of a certain variety is built into the dialectical-historical model of the social change theory.

A neo-Marxist model for the analysis of social change in India and other developing societies is offered by Andre Gunder Frank. He formulates a new hypothesis on the nature of social change and the poverty of new nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He prefers a systematic and dialectical approach to other approaches, especially Myrdal's institutional theory and Rostow's theory of universal stages of economic growth. He also rejects the cultural and institutional hypotheses for the lack of development in the Asian and other under-developed countries, which assumed that if these countries are not developing it is due to their socio-cultural systems. He also rejects the theory of Westernization for economic and social development of the less developed nations. All this he postulates on the basis of his own causal interpretation of the nature and function of Western colonialism in the new nations.

He develops a systematic theory of colonial relationship between what he calls the 'metropolis' or the developed capitalist countries of the world and the 'colonial or neo-colonial' nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Tracing the history of this type of relationship he writes:

Throughout this history we can see three major elements. One is a colonial or new neo-colonial relationship between the metropolis and its colonies or neo-colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Second this colonial relationship forms and transforms the whole domestic economic, political, social, cultural, even psychological structure of Asia, Africa and Latin America. And third, this new economic and class structure creates the economic and class interests of a bourgeoisie which is tied to the metropolis as a colonialised junior partner of the metropolis. The colonial relationship or structure as well as the economic and class structure at home give this dependent bourgeoisie a natural interest in pursuing policies in the colonial countries that do not generate economic development but rather generate evermore economic, social and cultural underdevelopment. From these three conclusions it becomes apparent that it is not possible to achieve economic development in Asia, Africa and Latin America without destroying both the (neo) colonial dependence on the metropolis and the resulting internal economic and class structure (Frank, 1970: 1179).

Frank's thesis is that wherever Western colonization took place the motivation was to exploit the natural, human or mineral resources of those nations for the colonizer's own markets. The colonial nations, according to him did not deplete the economy of the colonies as much through capital drain as by completely subjugating the production structure of these nations to their own metropolitan ends. This is exactly what the British did in India. This was done not because of any personality or cultural characteristic of the metropolitan bourgeoisie but because of the structural compulsiveness of their system in which they could not do any thing else. He adds: "so it is not that the bourgeoisie in Britain was smarter or more entrepreneurial than was its counterpart in the colonies, but simply that the structure and functioning of this world-wide system, that Adam Smith had already talked about, necessarily induced interests and possibilities among the metropolitan bourgeoisie that generated very different results from the quite different economic interests that the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries had." (Frank, 1970: 1185). Even after independence most of these nations including India are bound by new ties of foreign investment and there is dependence of their industries on the multi-national corporate system led by the United States of America. The national industrial bourgeoisie of India, Latin America and Africa to this extent, according to Frank, are transferred into a "dependent-colonial or neo-colonial bourgeoisie."

Frank concludes his arguments with a definite suggestion for developing a new social science theory. This "theory must be historical, structural and dialectic. Most important of all, it must embrace the really determinant social system — world capitalism — whose historical development, complex structure and dialectical

conflict relations have created both the wealth of the new and the poverty of the vast majority of the world's people" (Frank, 1970: 1184). What is of importance in the propositions of Frank relates to his emphasis on two aspects of social science theorisation, first, that social change processes in India (he mainly focuses upon economic development) should be seen as a part of larger systematic net-work of relationships. The minimal unit for this would be the arena of world capitalism. Secondly, the approach should be structural and dialectical, in other words, processes of development should be seen as a resultant of the contradictions of economic interests between rich and poor nations or colonial and colonised nations and between different classes in an international setting.

Cognitive Historical Approach

Another systematic approach to the study of social change is that of Louis Dumont. The theory of social change is not his primary concern as he is interested in analysing the cognitive or ideational structural nature of the Indian social system. But in this context he also makes comparisons of the Indian social system with that of the West. It is here that some relevant social change propositions emerge. Dumont conceives of the Indian social system not as a system of social relationships but as systems of ideational and value configurations or patterns. Social change study according to Dumont should be focused on analysing the "reaction of Indian minds to the revelation of Western culture" (Dumont, 1964-66). According to Dumont this reaction would lie in the cognitive transformation from the principle of hierarchy to equality. Essentially, change consists in the adaptive or transformative processes within the traditional Indian cognitive system. Thus cultural change is the precursor for individuality and of the social change (see, Dumont, 1964, 1965).

Dumont's model seeks mainly to compare the diversities of the ideo-structures in different traditions or civilizations. Distinguishing between synchronic and diachronic studies, Dumont is critical of studies of social morphology at two points of time which are taken for proper studies of change. At best such studies can be called double synchronic. For a diachronic study 'time' would have to be built into the paradigm of the study, and the comparison in historical contexts may be essential.

Despite the emphasis on history and ideology, Dumont's main interest, as we mentioned above, does not lie in the analysis of social change. He contends that "study of social change answers a strong public demand, and for a part corresponds more to the subjective needs of the student as a member of modern society, than to properly

sociological issues" (Dumont, 1964: 12). For the structural studies of the type he is interested, time may be devoid of meaning. Hence the basic locus for the analysis of change, according to Dumont, is comparison and abstraction in which emphasis on change is implicit rather than explicitly formulated as a theoretical system.

Institutional Approach

The study of social change in a systematic framework based on the institutional model has been conducted by Myrdal. In three volumes of his *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations* which incorporates the labour of a team of workers, a comparative evaluation of the nature and possibility of economic growth and development is undertaken. Myrdal says: "our approach is broadly 'institutional', and we plead for greatly intensified research efforts along these lines. We should remember that to be really fruitful this new approach cannot be restricted to the insertion of qualifications and reservations meant to take into account the things left out by the conventional economic analysis along Western lines. As the very theories and concepts utilised in that analysis guide it away from those 'non-economic' factors, what is needed is a different framework of theories and concepts that is more realistic for those societies" (Myrdal, 1968: 27). As a part of this institutional approach Myrdal redevelops his theory of circular or cumulative causation which he had earlier used in his study of the race problems in the U.S.A. (Myrdal, 1944). For the interpretation of this process he formulates a set of *conditions* which operate in the South Asian nations, particularly India. These conditions in sets of combination form *social systems*. The term social system is used in a heuristic sense. The conditions are: output and incomes, conditions of production, levels of living, attitude towards life and work, institution and policies. The first three are primarily economic conditions, fourth and fifth are non-economic, and the sixth is a mixed condition.

Myrdal postulates an upward growth in the system if any one of these conditions moves in a *desirable* direction and sets similar momentum in other conditions; a downward movement is there if one or a set of these conditions begins to operate in an undesirable direction. Value premises are thus built into the processes of development in the social systems. These value premises also relate to each of the conditions which may either be having an independent or instrumental value significance. Independent values are those which constitute an end by themselves and instrumental are those which are desirable as a means. Conditions may vary on account of their being valued for independent or instrumental reasons. Each

nation, however, formulates its own value priorities for development on the basis of which values are associated with conditions.

For India, Myrdal is of the view that the chosen value premises were incorporated in a 'modernization ideal' whose ingredients were "rationality, development, and planning for development, rise of productivity, rise of levels of living, social and economic equalization, improved institutions and attitudes and national consolidation" (see, Myrdal, 1968: 39-69). The same modernization ideal has also been accepted by other South Asian nations but in each of them the process operates differently due to differences in the 'initial conditions' or its past history and culture.

In the case of India, however, Myrdal's final judgement about the possibility of successful development commensurate with the modernization ideal are qualified, mainly because of the lack of emphasis on institutional changes. The odds against it are population growth, international tangles (against China and Pakistan), fragmented domestic politics, problem of 'emotional integration' of the nation and finally India's more wilful emphasis on a sort of moral conversion rather than on institutional changes. He writes: "In India an intellectual and moral conversion tends to be advanced as a panacea for all kinds of ills. But to change attitudes without changing social institutions is a rather hopeless quest. This remains the basic dilemma and challenge of Indian politics" (Myrdal, 1968: 505).

Myrdal's theory on social and economic development is devoid of originality. Its roots go deeper in the history of social change analysis to the time of Max Weber and Max Scheler. The view point has, however, been repeatedly refuted by many researches done on the process of Indian development. Myrdal's entire approach suffers from a curious ambivalence. He, on the one hand articulates the need in South Asian countries to evaluate their processes of social change and its various facets with the help of their own conceptual categories and in the light of their own initial conditions, but on the other, he also blames the very given 'initial conditions' for the lack of their development. There is much merit in his emphasis on institutional and systematic reasoning, but the greatest weakness of his evaluation is that he is unable to look at the South Asian social reality except from the Western socio-cultural perspective.

Yet another formulation of social change concept is that by Narbadeshwar Prasad. He postulates a model of social change based on a social psychological and cultural framework. He categorises the factors of social change into external or objective and internal or subjective levels. Objective levels are: material and behavioural. The subjective level consists of values, motives, needs, perception and belief. Each can influence the process of change in terms of its

quality, quantity, and function. Changes may begin at either of the two levels but their success depends upon the mode of fit between the two levels of categories and their interaction (see, N. Prasad, 1970).

One major limitation in Prasad's formulation is that he does not seem to have applied the model that he formulates to actual assessment of the processes of social change. Consequently, his approach tends to become eclectic and is devoid of analytical coherence, especially when he discusses the substantive issues of social change.

Social change study from an institutional and systematic conceptual frame has also been made by M. C. Shekhar. He formulates a "theoretical model with fourfold constituent structures. These structures are related to the value-orientation, social structure, polity and economy. With the help of the theoretical model the interaction of these structures has been analysed. The process of social change is referred to here as institutional change which is directed by the Government" (M. C. Shekhar, 1968: 339). Shekhar adopts the Parsonian framework for his formulation of the concepts of structure and system. He also uses Parsons' concept of pattern variables. But he feels that Parsonian formulations of systems may not be adequate for analysing the Indian situation of social change, and suggests introduction of the concept, 'super-system' "which includes the entire nation" (p. 342) as an analytical category. He reviews the role of charismatic movements in the emergence of new structures in addition to other processes of social change. He concludes: "Due to certain looseness of the structure and multiplicity of action-orientation, the Hindu social structure is amenable to change on certain lines. It has the capacity to absorb the changes on a telltale level without undergoing structural differentiation" (p. 347).

An Overview

The formulation of a theory of social change is one of the most involved issues in contemporary sociology. Even those sociologists who profess nomological and systematic theoretical concerns are skeptical about an easy solution to the theoretical tangles related to social change. No doubt, therefore, that conceptual formulations about social change in India present heterogeneous and heteronomous theoretical standards. This is not unique, however, as in most other countries too (with the probable exception of the socialist countries) the theoretical issues about social change remain unresolved. The problems of social change theory are, therefore, not specific to Indian sociology but to sociology in general. It becomes an Indian problem to the extent that our sociologists develop a keen awareness about

the historicity of our socio-cultural conditions in formulating conceptual schemes or theories of social change. There is evidence to suggest that such awareness has existed among sociologists and social scientists in our country, the need, however, is to push it further into action.

There are many 'conceptual schemes' about social change but no 'theories'. Among the conceptual schemes that exist we may notice an emerging polarization between two types: those that postulate continuum models and others that are oriented to the dialectical model for the study of social change. Whether it is a study of caste, social stratification, social mobility, family and kinship or modernization one comes across similar divergence in the conceptual formulation of change. There are social scientists who think that the two approaches are reconcilable (see, Steward, 1955; Berghe, 1958). But considering the theoretical issues involved it is difficult to assume that the basic pre-suppositions in the two approaches could be easily reconciled. The continuum approach takes an ideological position where the process of change is assumed to be accretive, integrative and is seen moving from one position of equilibrium to another until the other end of the continuum has been reached. Conflict is characterised as mere deviation. It postulates two distinctive ideal-typical forms of social phenomena which set the limit to the transition from one form to another. Such ideal-typical formulations are often devoid of systematic concerns. Social change is analysed in narrow contextual framework without studying how other components of the social sub-systems impinge upon the system as a whole. The tradition-modernity dichotomy is a result of such reasoning.

The dialectical model of social change focuses upon the latent and manifest areas of social conflict, their aggregate articulation and relationship with specific structures in the social system as a whole. It postulates change as a process of transformation through reconciliation (resolutions) of a series of conflicts. Ideologically, conflict is treated as the basic process of social change. The nominalism of the continuum models is avoided and social phenomena are seen to be endowed with an imminent quality of self-transformation. The systemic concern is logically related in this model to the element of historicity. It treats social history as an essential component for the analysis of social change. The source of change in this model are assumed to be both endogenous and exogenous, but these operate only through the immanent internal social forces. Thus, it avoids the pit-fall of misplaced polarity in the formulation of the stages of social change as implied in the continuum models.

The theoretical and conceptual scheme of social change in India have so far remained limited to formulation of ideal types and

continua. Consequently, most analyses of change are deficient in theoretical power and explanatory sophistication. There is urgent need, therefore, to study social change from a systemic and dialectical historical frame of reference so that a truly diachronic study may be possible. Continuum models have essentially a synchronic character and their maximum theoretical relevance for the study of change is limited to comparison or at best the taxonomy of social phenomena. A truly viable theory of change needs to go beyond comparison to the level of formulating general propositions based on time-bound logical set of variations in social phenomena. This is possible only when concept of time both 'reversible' (mechanical) and 'irreversible' (evolutionary) to use the phrase of Levi-Strauss is built into the theory of social change. Dialectical-historical approach partially answers this need, since depending upon the extent of methodological sophistication it offers scope for incorporating time into the theoretical analysis of change.

Research Gaps and Priority Areas

The gaps in social change studies in India are both methodological and theoretical. The difficulty, in making suggestions to cover up the gap arises from the fact that the value-frames or preferences of individual social scientists may differ and avoid being forged into some predictable schedule. The preferences for theoretical approaches and their relevance to substantive areas of interest might also differ from one social scientist to another.

This does not, however, rule out the need for formulating priorities for social research. Each profession, on the basis of the nature of the urgent problems that it encounters formulates research priorities. The process operates through a consensus among the scientists and the rest of the national elites. Within a discipline, however, consensus on priorities also emerges on collective realisation of theoretical and methodological lags. These factors together provide the *raison de' etre* for formulating social change research priorities.

Let us first take the salient theoretical and methodological gaps that seem to emerge from the above review of literature on social change. We find that so far, the most popular model for the study of social change has been the continuum model; the dialectical and historical methods have been neglected by and large; with the exception of some studies mentioned in this report, the use of rich historical data for sociological analysis of change is lacking. Another gap that one notices in most studies of social change is the absence of the systemic frame. Specific social isolates like caste, family, occupation, etc. have been studied in a local or at most in a regional setting, but