11 INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION IN INDIA

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WHAT IS INDUSTRIALIZATION?

Industrialization refers to the emergence of machine production, based on the use of inanimate power resources like steam or electricity. In most standard western textbook of sociology we learn that in even the most advanced of traditional civilizations, most people were engaged in working on the land. The relatively low level of technological development did not permit more than a small minority to be freed from the chores of agricultural production. By contrast, a prime feature of industrial societies today is that a large majority of the employed population work in factories, offices or shops rather than agriculture. Over 90 per cent of people in the industrialized societies live in towns and cities, where most jobs are to be found and new job opportunities are created. Not surprisingly, therefore, we usually associate urbanization with industrialization. They often do occur together but not always so. For instance in Britain, the first society to undergo industrialization, was also the earliest to move from being rural to a predominantly urban country.

Many of the great works of sociology were written at a time when industrialization was new and machinery was assuming great importance. Thinkers like **Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim** associated a number of social features with industry, such as urbanization, the loss of face-to-face relationships that were found in rural areas where people worked on their own farms or for a landlord they knew and their substitution by anonymous professional relationships in modern factories and workplaces. Industrialization involves a detailed division of labour. People often do not see the end result of their work because they are producing only one small part of a product. The work is often repetitive and exhausting. Yet, even this is better than having no work at all, i.e., being unemployed. Marx called this situation alienation, when people do not enjoy work, and see it as something they have to do only in order to survive, and even that survival depends on whether the technology has room for any human labour.

Industrialization leads to greater equality, at least in some spheres. For example, caste distinctions do not matter any more on trains, buses or in cyber cafes. On the other hand, older forms of discrimination may persist even in new factory or workplace settings. And even as social inequalities are reducing, economic or income inequality is growing in the world. Often social inequality and income inequality overlap, for example, in the domination of upper caste men in well-paying professions like medicine, law or journalism. Women often get paid less than men for similar work.

While the early sociologists saw industrialization as both positive and negative, by the mid 20th century, under the influence of modernization theory, industrialization came to be seen as inevitable and positive. Modernization theory argues that societies are at different stages on the road to modernization, but they are all heading in the same direction. Modern society, for these theorists, is represented by the West.

EVOLUTION OF MODERN INDUSTY IN INDIA

In India the impact of the very same British industrialization led to deindustrialization in some sectors. And decline of old urban centres. Just as manufacturing bummed in Britain, traditional exports of cotton and silk manufactures from India declined in the face of Manchester competition. This period also saw the further decline of cities such as Surat and Masulipattnam while Bombay and Madras grew. When the British took over Indian states, towns like Thanjavur, Dhaka and Murshidabad lost their courts and, therefore, some of their artisans and court gentry. From the end of the 19th century, with the installation of mechanized factory industries, some towns became much more heavily populated.

The experience of industrialization in India is in many ways similar to the western model and in many ways different. Comparative analysis of different countries suggests that there is no standard model of industrial capitalism. Let us start with one point of difference, relating to what kind of work people are doing. In developed countries, the majority of people are in the services sector, followed by industry and less than 10% are in agriculture (ILO figures). In India, in 1999-2000, nearly 60% were employed in the primary sector (agriculture and mining), 17% in the secondary sector (manufacturing, construction and utilities), and 23% in the tertiary sector (trade, transport, financial services etc.) However, if we look at the contribution of these sectors to economic growth, the share of agriculture has declined sharply, and services contribute approximately half. This is a very serious situation because it means that the sector where the maximum people are employed is not able to generate much income for them.

Industrialization in the Early Years of Indian Independence

The first modern industries in India were cotton, jute, coal mines and railways. At independence, the government took over the 'commanding heights of the economy.' This involved defiance, transport and communication, power, mining and other projects which only government had the power to do, and which was necessary for private industry also to flourish. In India's mixed economy policy, some sectors were reserved for government, while others were open to the private sector. But within that, the government tried to ensure, though it's licensing policy, that industries were spread over different regions. Before independence, industries were located mainly in the port cities like Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. But since then, we see that places like Baroda, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Pune, Faridabad and Rajkot have become important industrial centres. The government also tried to encourage the small-scale sector through special incentives and assistance. Many items like paper and wood products, stationery, glass and ceramics were reserved for the small-scale sector in 1991; large-scale industry employed only 28 per cent of the total workforce engaged in manufacture, while the small-scale and traditional industry employed 72 per cent (Roy)

Globalization, Liberalization and Change in Indian Industry

Since the 1990s, however, the government has followed a policy of liberalization. Private companies, especially foreign firms, are encouraged to invest in sectors earlier reserved for the government, including telecom, civil aviation, power etc. Licenses are no longer required to open industries. Foreign products are now easily available in Indian shops. As a result of liberalization, many Indian companies have been bought over by multinationals. At the same time

some Indian companies are becoming multinational companies. An instance of the first is when. Parle drinks were bought by Coca Cola. Parle's annual turnover was Rs. 250 crores, while Coca Cola's advertising budget was Rs. 400 crores. This level of advertising has naturally increased the consumption of coke across India replacing many traditional drinks. The next major area of liberalization may be in retail. Do you think that Indians will prefer to shop in departmental stores, or will they go out of business?

The government is trying to sell its share in several public sector companies, a process which is known as disinvestment. Many government workers are scared that after disinvestment, they will lose their jobs. In Modern Foods, which was set up by the government to make healthy bread available at cheap prices, and which was the first company to be privatized 60% of the workers were forced to retire in the first five years. More and more companies are reducing the number of permanent employees and outsourcing their work to smaller companies or even to homes. For multinational companies, this outsourcing is done across the globe, with developing countries like India providing cheap labour. Because small companies have to compete for orders from the big companies, they keep wages low and working conditions are often poor. It is more difficult for trade unions to organize in smaller firms. Almost all companies, even government ones, now practice some form of outsourcing and contracting. But the trend is especially visible in the private sector.

To summarize, India is still largely an agricultural country. The service sector-shops, banks, the IT industry, hotels and other services are employing more people and the urban middle class is growing, along with urban middle class values like those we see in television serials and films. But we also see that very few people in India have access to secure jobs, with even the small number in regular salaried employment becoming more insecure due to the rise in contract labour. So far, employment by the government was a major avenue for increasing the well-being of the population but now even that is coming down. Some economists debate this, but liberalization and privatization worldwide appear to be associated with rising income inequality.

At the same time as secure employment in large industry is declining the government is embarking on a policy of land acquisition for industry. These industries do not necessarily provide employment to the people of the surrounding areas, but they cause major pollution. Many farmers, especially Adivasis, who constitute approximately 40% of those displaced, are protesting at the low rates of compensation and the fact that they will be forced to become casual labour living and working on the footpaths of India's big cities.

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION IN INDIA :

Industrialization got under way in India in the last quarter of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Cities grew around the new industries. Before industrialization, we had :

- agrarian non-monetized economy,
- a level of technology where the domestic unit was also the unit of economic exchange,
- a non-differentiation of occupations between father and son and between brothers and brothers, and
- a value system where authority of the elders and the sanctity of tradition were both supported as against the criterion of 'rationality'.

But Industrialization has brought about economic and socio-cultural changes in our society:

- the economic field, it has resulted in specialization in work, occupational mobility, monetization of economy, and a breakdown of link between kinship and occupational structures;

- in the social field, it has resulted in the migration of people from rural to urban areas, spread of education, and a strong centralized political structure; and

- in the cultural field, it has brought secularization of beliefs.

There have been three important effects of industrialization on family organization

Firstly, family which was a principle unit of production has been transformed into a consumption unit. Instead of all family members working together in an integrated economic enterprise, a few male members go out of the home to earn the family's living. This has affected not only the traditional structure of the joint family but also the relations among its members.

Secondly, factory employment has freed young adults from direct dependence upon their families. As their wages have made them financially independent, the authority of the head of the household has weakened further. In the city, in many cases, along with men, their wives also have started working and earning. This has affected intra-family relations to some extent.

Finally, children have ceased to be economic assets and have become liabilities. Although in a few cases, the use and abuse of child labour has also increased, law does not permit children to work. At the same time, educational requirements have increased, lengthening dependence upon parental support. Accommodation in the cities is expensive and child-care is demanding. Thus, work and home have become separated due to industrialization.

Some sociologists have, however, recently challenged the theory of emergence of nuclear families due to industrialization. This challenge is based on the results of empirical studies and the documentation of the variety of family systems in different parts of the world. Studies by scholars like **M.S.A Rao, M.S. Gore and Milton singer** have shown that jointness is more preferred and prevalent in business communities, and many nuclear families maintain widespread kin ties. Several recent researchers in the industrialized West have also emphasized the supportive role, of kin and their function of acting as a buffer between the family and the impersonal wider world. Social historians too have shown that the nuclear family was prevalent as a cultural norm in Europe and the United States even before industrialization. However, it has to be noted that the supportive role of the kin does not have the compulsory character which is found in the family obligations of the Indian nuclear family. The youngsters in nuclear family still willingly follow the normal responsibility towards the primary kin (such as parents and siblings), solidarity of the close kin, and some sense of unity of the family, even though living in separate households. (Dube)

All these changes have modified our family system. While the population movement from the rural to the urban areas has led to decline in authoritarian power, growth of secularism has developed a value system which emphasizes individual initiative and responsibility. Individual now functions without any restrictive familial controls. Formerly, when man worked in the family and all family members helped him in his work, there was more intimacy among the family members but now since he works in the industry away from the family, the intimacy in relations has been adversely affected. The effect of industrialization on the pattern of family relationship is also evident from the decline in self-sufficiency of the family, and attitudinal changes toward family. Industrialization has, thus contributed markedly to the creation of a new social and psychological setting in which the survival of the early joint family with its authoritarian organization has become very difficult.

The social profile of communities under the impact of industrialization is indicative of many dimensions of linkages and interactions among segments of region, culture, social categories and communities. It is reflected in migration of people from one region to another which has contributed to increase of bilingualism. The Census of India,

1991 placed bilingualism to about 15 per cent, which in reality has been estimated to be as high as 60 per cent in survey of communities. Interaction and commonality among cultural regions too, is reflected in shared cultural traits, which is also true for large number of communities across reigns and territories. Such cultural traits belong not only to rituals and institutional practices but also to technologies of occupation, skills and division of labour. Most communities have also moved away from their traditional occupations and show keen awareness of developmental programmes sponsored by the government. This awareness, together with high aspirations, introduces in the social system a measure of tension and conflict now manifest in various dimensions of our social life.

GROWTH OF URBAN SETTLEMENT IN INDIA

Understanding the Meaning of Growth of Urban Settlements or Urbanization in India
Sociologists define Growth of urban settlement or urbanization as the movement of people from village to town/city where economic activities are centered around non-agricultural occupations, such as trade, manufacturing, industry and management. Broadly speaking, in order to explain to process of urbanization we can discuss the following three aspects:

* **The demographic-spatial aspects** of urbanization deal with shift of people from rural to urban areas, population density in urban areas and change in the pattern of land use from agriculture to non-agricultural activities.

* **Economic aspects of urbanization** relate to the change form agricultural to non-agricultural occupations. As cities have been the centres of diverse economic opportunities, they attract people from rural areas. This attraction pulls a significant section of the rural population to the urban areas. Rural poverty, backwardness of agricultural economic and the destruction of cottage and small industries also push villagers to urban areas. These pull and push factors of migration play an important role in the process of urbanization.

* **The socio-cultural aspects urbanization** highlights the emerging heterogeneity in urban areas. The city has generally been the meeting point of races and cultures.

* **Some features of Urbanization in Ancient and Medieval India :** The process of urbanization various periods of Indian history had distinctive spatial, economic, religious, socio-cultural, political features. There features are described here under three broad headings.

1. **Political, Demographic and Spatial Factors**

The early processes of urbanization had their close relationship with the rise and fall of sponsoring political regimes and cultural history of India, Indeed, cities emerged in those periods mainly based on political considerations. "The composition of these towns was built around the ruler and his kinsmen and followers, whose principal interests were centered on agricultural activities in their vicinity and the surplus they could extract from these" (Sabarwal).

Fortification in the form of a girdle of walls and defensive ditches was an important physical feature of the tradition at towns. Town planning of ancient cities not only took note of the needs of defence but also of the settlement of various castes in separate wards, and the location of different activities connected with manufacturing, commerce, trade, religion, recreation, administration and justice.

2. **Economic**

In spite of the rise and fall of the political powers and shifting religious biases, the social and economic institution of the traditional cities has shown certain stability. Guild formation was an important feature of traditional towns. Merchants and craftsmen were organized into guilds called shreni. In those towns there were the guilds based on the occupation of one caste shreni and also the guilds based on different cases and different occupations called puga. **Rao** points

out that the guilds performed important function in the traditional towns in terms of banking, trading, manufacturing and to a limited extent judicial.

3. Religious and socio-cultural

Authorities of the traditional urban centres patronized particular religion or sects. This had been delineated in the social organization and culture of the towns. For example, Pataliputra reflected the Brahminical Hindu civilization under the rule of Chandra Gupta Maurya, while under Ashokan rule Buddhism flourished. Similarly the Islamic civilization was concertized by the Muslim rule in the imperial capitals of Delhi, Lucknow, and Hyderabad and in other places. The traditional towns were erogenous in terms of the multiplicity of the religious, sectarian and caste groups. Strain specialist castes like florist, tailor were to be found only in big towns. Each ethnic or religious group was governed by its own customary laws. The caste and the occupational guilds also had their own laws sanctioned by the political authority (Ray).

NEW FEATURES OF URBANIZATION IN EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD

With the coming of European colonial traders in India, the process of urbanization entered into a new phase. Cities grew up in the coastal areas as ports-cum-trading centres. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European trading posts were established initially for trading purposes. As the British power grew in the 19th century, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras became the political centres too, Indeed, in this period with the introduction and development of advanced technological knowledge, we find the emergence of new economic and political institutions, new modes of communication such as telegraph, railways, advanced system of roads and waterways. The process of urbanization became smooth and widened the structure of economic opportunity and widened the social horizons of people.

In the nineteenth century, though the process of urbanization grew in a modest way, the countryside suffered from the gradual process of the destruction of the cottage and small industries in the rural areas. In this situation, the new economic opportunity structure pulled a significant section of population to the urban areas. Many of the artisans became unemployed. Hence, the displaced rural artisans and labourers were also pushed to urban areas for employment. The late nineteenth century, however, witnessed a large scale migration of the rural labour force especially from Bihar and eastern United Provinces towards the jute mills of Calcutta and other industrial destinations. To avail the new economic opportunities many people migrated either temporarily or permanently to the urban areas.

With the spread of education, the institutional arrangements of the urban centres also changed. The educated people joined the bureaucracy, and also took up jobs as teachers, journalists, lawyers and so on. They brought about a new worldview. The urban centres gradually grow up to be the centres of new social and political ideas, diverse economic activities and of heterogeneous populations. The new process of urbanization presented various economic opportunities and scope for occupational and social mobility; it was only the upper caste and class people who were able to make use of these opportunities.

GROWTH OF URBAN SETTLEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

The new process of urbansation which began with the advent of the British received a momentum at the beginning of twentieth century. The process of this urbanization has some distinctive features.

India is passing through a phase of rapid urbanization in the contemporary phase of the transition of society. The modern urban centres perform diversified functions in terms of economic, administrative and political and so on. Here, it is very difficult to classify the towns and cities in terms of a single activity. Generally, people classify urban areas on the basis of some prominent socio-economic and political features. For example, people mention that there are historical cities like

Delhi, Calcutta, Banaras, Lucknow etc., industrial cities like Ghaziabad, Modinagar, Kanpur, Jamshedpur, Bhilai etc., religious cities like Mathura, Hardwar, Madurai, Allahabad etc., Cities reputed for film making, like Bombay and Madras, have a special appeal for a villager or a small-town dweller. In sociology, we discuss the pattern of urbanization in terms of its demographic, spatial, and economic and socio cultural aspects. But before we take up these aspects, let us also briefly explain how we define a town in the Indian context.

Any place which satisfied the following criteria of

· a minimum of 5,000 persons,

· at least 75% of the working occupations are non-agricultural,

· a density of not less than 1,000 persons per square mile, and

· a place should have certain industrial areas, large housing settlements, places of tourist importance and civic amenities.

Spatial Pattern

Spatial disparities have marked the Indian urban scenario. These disparities emerged mainly due to regional disparities, imbalanced population concentration and some times because of the change in the census definition of "urban areas'. In this context we need to mention about two concepts, namely over-urbanization and sub-urbanization. Towns or urban areas have certain limitations in accommodating population, providing civic amenities or catering to such needs as schooling, hospitals etc. Beyond certain optimum capacities, it becomes difficult for the town administration to provide facilities for the increasing population. Bombay and Calcutta are two such examples of cities (among others) which have urban population growth beyond their capacities to manage. This feature refers to **over-urbanization**.

Closely related to over-urbanization of a town is a feature called sub-urbanization. When towns get over-crowded by population, it may result in sub-urbanization. Delhi is a typical example (among others) where sub-urbanization trend is taking place around it. Sub-urbanization means urbanization of rural areas around the towns characterized by the following features:

· Increase in the 'urban (non-agricultural) uses' of land,

· Inclusion of surrounding areas of town within its municipal limits, and

· Intensive communication of all types between town and its surrounding areas.

Economic Aspect

According to **Mill and Becker**, urbanization is a natural and inevitable consequence of economic development. Urbanization accompanies economic development because economic development entails a massive shift of labour and other inputs from predominantly rural sectors to those predominantly urban. **The National Commission Urbanization of India** recognizes the economic importance of the Indian cities and towns. It considers "urbanization as a catalyst for economic development and that the towns and cities despite their problems are for the millions and millions of our people the road to a better future".

When we examine the various cities in India, we find that some cities have come up during the last eighty years in places where there was nothing but forests earlier. One of the first steel cities in India, like Jamshedpur in Bihar, has provided employment to a large number of people including the Santhals. These tribals who were relatively isolated earlier have come into contact with a wide section of Indian population, coming from different regions, speaking different languages, and so on. Besides Jamshedpur, three more steel towns have emerged after Independence. These are Bhilai in Madhya Pradesh, Rourkela in Orissa and Durgapur in West Bengal. Emergence of these steel factories has brought about not only property but has led to the modification of the whole social scenario of this area. **According to Srinivas**, areas which were

socio-economically backward have now become prosperous and cosmopolitan.

While talking about the economic features of urbanization in contemporary India, occupational diversification and migration appear to be the key aspects.

The degree of urban-industrialization and planned development through the Five Year Plans could not bring about a significant shift in occupational structure in Indian. The percentage of Indian labour force in agriculture remained static between 1901 and 1971. In the said period 69.4% of the total labour force was in agriculture respectively. Though the percentage of urban population increased substantially during this period there has not been corresponding increase in the percentage of the labour force in the urban manufacturing, construction and service sector.

The proportion of urban population engaged in the primary sector (comprising cultivation, household industry, mining quarrying, and fishing) showed an increase and that in the secondary sector (Comprising manufacturing and processing) showed decrease contrary to expectations. The tertiary sector (comprising commerce and service) showed a slight recovery. Even within the urban sector, there is a distinct traditional/rural component of occupation which is significant.

This brings out the still persisting, and unabsorbed rural element in the urban sector, mostly in the periphery of large urban settlements and in the medium and small towns with a strong agricultural base. It appears that the urban commercial sector responded more to urbanization than did the industrial sector in terms of working population.

There is widespread unemployment among the unskilled and other marginal workers in most of the cities. Again, unemployment among educated classes in urban areas is a peculiar feature in Indian society. It is estimated that 46% of the total educated unemployed are reported to be concentrated in the four major metropolitan cities in Indian (Sabarwal).

Urbanization and Migration

In the process of urbanization in India, migration of the rural people to the urban areas has been continuous and is an important feature. The Urban Commission of India viewed rural urban migration to be "of vital importance for the development of rural areas". The commission again points out that besides releasing the surplus labour from the rural areas, for the landless labourers, harijans and adivasis these cities provide the opportunities which are enshrined in our Constitution. For these millions, our urban centres will continue to be havens of hope, where they can forge a new future (Mehta).

In India, this increase in urban-ward migration is of fairly recent origin which began in the late 1930s. Of the total migrants in urban areas 20% persons are displaced from Pakistan, 51% from rural areas of the same state and 25% from the rural areas of other states. An important feature of the immigrant stream in urban areas is its predominantly male character (Sabarwal).

Due to the increase of unemployment in the rural areas, surplus rural labour force gets pushed to urban centres with the hope of getting employment. The other factors which have pulled sections of the rural population including the affluent sections) toward the city has been the expectation of a variety of glamorous jobs, good housing medical, educational and communication facilities.

Here it is significant to note that industrialization should not be taken as prerequisite for urbanization, as the process of migration from village starts when a relative saturation point is reached in the field of agriculture. This is a result of an imbalanced land/man ratio in the countryside.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECT OF GROWTH OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS

Urbanization has been viewed as an important force of social change in India, this process has on the one hand, meant economic growth, political change new values and new attitudes. It reflects

also the elements of continuity between rural and urban social structures. In the process of urbanization the towns and cities of India have achieved heterogeneous character in terms of ethnicity, caste, race, class and culture.

In the urban areas there has always been coexistence of different cultures. Studies show that though various ethnic and/or caste groups have adjusted themselves with each other in the city they have also tried to maintain their traditional identity. The migrants have maintained distinctive cultural traditions in the towns. Various migrant groups have maintained their own cultural identity.

- **N.K. Bose** points out that the migrants tend to cluster around people with whom they have linguistic; local regional, caste and ethnic ties.

- **Jagannath and Haldar** in there study on the pavement-dwellers in Calcutta shows that they retain close ties with kingship and caste groups for socializing and transmitting or receiving information from the village. Thus cultural-pluralism has been an important socio-cultural dimension of the urbanites.

- **According to Srinivas** many of the Indian towns have a "mixed" character, i.e., they are the capital cities, centres of trade and commerce, important railway junctions etc. In these types of cities we find a "core" area which consists of the old inhabitants. This area is the oldest in the city and on its fringe we find the new immigrants. The pattern of residence of this "core" population shows a close relation to language, caste and religion. Bombay is cited as an example of this type of city.

- **Lynch** also points out that in many Indian cities, especially in the traditional cities like Agra, neighbourhoods have remained homogeneous in terms of caste and religious groups. There the untouchable Jatav caste is concentrated in particular areas called mohallas (ward). But changes have taken place mostly because of politicization, spread of education, and occupational diversification. But **D'Souza** noted that in the planned city like Chandigarh neighborhood has not been developed on the basis of ethnicity, common interest and other similarities. In this city the religious activities, friendship and educational ties are often outside one's own neighbourhood.

- **Family, Marriage and Kinship in Urban India**

Marriage and family are two important aspects of social life. In the urban areas caste norms have been flexible with regard to the selection of mates. There have been increasing opportunities for the free mixing of young men and women. Again the voluntary associations have encouraged inter-caste marriages. As a result there have been more inter-caste and inter-religious marriages in the urban areas than earlier. Though it has been pointed out that joint families are breaking down in the urban areas, studies conducted in several parts of the country also suggest that joint families do exist in the cities among certain castes like Khatris of Delhi and Chettiars of Madras.

It is usually assumed that the process of urbanization leads to decline in family size, weakening or family ties and break up of joint family system into nuclear families. This assumption presupposes that joint family, as it is found in India, is an institution of rural India associated with agrarian economy.

But as a matter of fact joint families are found in urban areas as well. The correlation of "joint" family with rural areas and "nuclear" family with urban is not tenable. Sociologists have gathered ample proof that joint families are as common in urban areas as in rural and that in both rural and urban areas a family may undergo a process of cyclical change from nuclear to joint and back to nuclear within a period of time.

When we observe the household dimension of family in urban India, the studies by **K. M. Kapadia, I. P. Desai, A. M. Shah, R. Mukherjee,** indicate that there is no correlation between urbanization and 'separate' unclear households.

Assumption that Indian urbanites live in nuclear households and that urbanization leads to breaking up to joint families cannot be sustained. Some studies show that not only kinship is an important principle of social organization in cities but also that there is structural congruity between joint family on one hand, and requirements of industrial and urban life, on the other.

- **Milton Singer,** from a detailed case study of nineteen families of outstanding business leaders in Madras city, argues that a modified version of traditional Indian joint family is consistent with urban and industrial setting.

- **I.P. Desai** studied the role of wider family relationships. He points out that when there is some serious illness and people need to utilize the hospital facilities not available locally, members of the family and close kin residing in the bigger cities are called in for help. Likewise when a person in rural areas needs educational or economic advancement, be calls upon his urban counterparts for help.

- **Recent studies** show the important role of family and kinship 'networks' for the rural based boys seeking new avenues in the urban setting. They also show how the elders negotiating with urban institutions like banks, the administration, or the polity, ask for the help of their young relatives in cities.

This does not however suggest that there have been no changes in the family structure. Some of the changes, which call attention to the gradual modification of the family structure in urban India, are:

- Diminishing size of the family, owing to the increasing awareness of family planning measures,

- Reduction in functions of family as a result of relegation of certain educational, recreational and other functions previously performed by families to other institutions, and

- Relative equality in regard to status and rights of women as a consequence of more and more women seeking employment resulting in economic independence of women.

The phenomenon of inter-caste, inter-communal and inter-regional marriage no matter how infrequent, in cities point to the changing attitudes of the urban individual. Similarly one can see the change in the selection pattern too. In selection for their bride, a higher proportion of men from urban middle class background tend to favour urban educated, preferably working girls. Thus, the non-traditionalists as regards bride selection are found largely in urban areas. The evidence also suggests that the new concept of wifehood, i.e., emphasis on conjugal relationship, in India is associated with urban living. There has also been some evidence of increase in age at marriage in urban areas. Simplification of rituals at marriages and incidence of court marriages in the cities reveal a gradual separation of the institution of marriage from its sacred religious complex. Attitude of Indian urban youth towards marriage reflects willingness to depart from the traditional practices but often they are not able to put it in practice due to traditional sanctions and moral pressure which have retained their rigours to an appreciable degree in cities.

Still there is a general preference for arranged marriage, marriages within one's caste group and dowry. The increasing incidence of bride burning or dowry deaths as they are called clearly shows the increasing emphasis on dowry both in terms of cash and goods like colored television sets, cars etc. In this regard, value of the college educated urban youth of India has increase in the matrimonial 'market'.

Caste in Urban India

Generally caste is thought to be a phenomenon of rural India mainly associated with agrarian economy. Caste system has been viewed as a system which has restricted the development of non-agrarian economy. It is assumed that urbanization along with industrialization would induce certain essential changes in the caste-based system of stratification.

Sociologists, like **Srinivas, Ghurye, Gore, D'Souza, Rao,** have conducted studies in urban areas. Their studies have shown that caste system continues to play an important role in urban areas. Opinions are, however, divided regarding the degree of persistence or degree of flexibility in the caste system found in urban setting. In this section we will discuss how the caste system has continued to persist and exert its influence in some sectors of urban social life while it has changed its form in some other sectors. When it comes to every day reality caste plays a significant role.

- **Harold Gould's study of the rikshawalas of Lucknow** shows that, as far as their occupation is concerned, they (i.e., the rikshawalas) follow secular rules but when it comes to personal, family matters, such as marriage, the caste identities are all important. Thus, a dichotomy exists between workplace and domestic situation.

- M.S.A Rao, in another example, has shown that caste system exists in cities. But he points out some significant organizational changes in the way it exists in cities. He says that due to the introduction of modern industry, growth of professions and the emergence of new occupational categories there has emerged a new class structure along with new status groups. Due to the impact of democracy and the electoral system adopted by India, the power axis, i.e., distribution of power and the formation of different kinds of elites, has changed from the traditional system.

- In respect of the *change in the distribution of power* we find that in pre-British India, upper caste was also the upper class. It would seem that now with education and new types of occupations this correlation of caste and class is no longer the case. **A. Beteille** has pointed out that higher caste does not always imply higher class. This disharmony is most often found in the Indian cities where new job opportunities have developed.

- In spite of these changes caste has not disappeared and in the process of establishing social identities it is still widely used in all parts of India. In fact, some sociologists say that it is not necessary at all that with the process of urbanization it will give way to class system of stratification in urban areas.

- *The establishment of caste association* in order to help their caste fellows in terms of educational and occupational opportunities, political power, etc. again reveals the vitality of caste system. The most powerful role that caste identity is playing in contemporary period is in politics which governs the power dimension. The need to gain power through the modern political system has forced leaders to mobilize people of not only one's immediate subcaste but the wider caste group itself. Caste provides a ready made identity along which people align themselves. In India we have at all levels a parliamentary democracy where the numbers of votes become very important. Therefore, in today's India, horizontal unity of caste over a wide area, in both rural and urban sectors, provides a vote 'bank' that can ensure the election of a candidate from one's own caste.

- Caste seems to have also become a basis for organizing trade union like associations. These associations are nothing but interest groups which protect the rights and interest of its caste members, such as the Gujarat Bania Sabha; the Kshatriyas Mahasabha (Gujarat), Jatav Mahasabha of Agra; etc. These are caste associations which perform the functions of a trade union for its members. On the one hand, this can be viewed as the strength of a caste; on the other, as pointed out by **Leach,** once a caste becomes a trade union-like organization, it becomes competitive and therefore, it becomes a class group.

Certain aspects of behaviour associated with caste ideology have now almost disappeared in

the urban context. The rules of commensality have very little meaning in the urban context where one may not know or may ignore the caste identity of one's neighbours, friends, servants, etc. Though in family and marriage matters, caste is still quite important but other factors such as, education, occupation etc., of the partners are also just as important as caste. The frequency of inter-caste, inter-region marriages have increased with the young people coming more in contact with each other in urban areas. It is clear that caste is still significant in urban areas, although its functions have changed and become modified. We may say that it has lost some of its earlier rigidities and has become more flexible.

Sylvia Vatuk has shown that there has not been any marked change in the traditional family and kinship system in the urban areas. Neither does the Indian urbanite suddenly become an anonymous, city-bred person who is totally isolated from primary contacts outside the nuclear family. She found that the kinship organization in the old wards (mohalla) of Meerut city in the past and amongst the poorer section of the population in the city even today, follows the same pattern as in the rural districts of this region. The persistence of the similar pattern of kinship organization, as found in the villages, in the older and poorer sections of the city goes to show that there is no sharp cultural discontinuity between the masses of the pre-industrial towns and the peasants of the countryside.

Social stratification in Urban India

Social stratification has taken a new form in the urban society. It is assumed that with urbanization caste transforms itself into class in the urban areas. But caste systems do exist in the cities though with significant organizational differences. **Ramakrishna Mukherjee** demonstrates that people in Calcutta rank themselves in terms of caste-hierarchy. Stratification has also taken place on the basis of occupational categories. For example, **Harold Gould** points out that the rikshawalas of Lucknow belonging to several religious and caste group's

exhibit uniformity in the pattern of interaction and attitudes in respect to their common occupation. Again it has been found that caste has not played a significant role in determining the choice of occupation in the urban areas. But it is important to note that both the caste and the class have their respective based on time and space and situational focus (Rao).

Cities of India have to be studied in the context of cultural heritage. In the cities many little traditions have been brought in by the migrants and the great traditions have also achieved dimensional change. It has been pointed out that many forms of the great traditions are modified in the modern cities. **Milton Singer** shows that "the intellectual and ritualistic approaches to God are being discarded in favour of the devotional approach which is more catholic and suited to urban conditions in Madras city. Technological innovations like microphone, cinema automobile etc., are used in promoting religious activities. Religious activities are not on decline in the metropolitan city of Madras but are being modernized".

Status of Women in Urban India

Status of women in urban areas is higher than that of women in rural areas. Urban women are comparatively more *educated and liberal*. Against 25.1 per cent literate women in rural areas, there are 54 per cent literate women in urban areas according to the census of 1991. Some of them are working too. Now they are not only aware of their economic social and political rights but they also use these rights to save themselves from being humiliated and exploited. The average age of girls at marriage in cities is also higher than the corresponding age in villages.

However, in the *labour market*, women are still in a disadvantaged situation. The labour market discriminates against women and is opposed to equality of opportunity-understood in a comprehensive sense to include equality of employment, training and promotional opportunities. In this sense, change is not

possible in the sex segregated labour market whose structures ensure that the career patterns of women will normally be marked by discontinuity, unlike the normal male career patterns which assume continuity. Because of the constraints of the sex segregated labour market, women tend to cluster in a limited range of occupations, which have low status and are poorly paid. Women normally prefer teaching, nursing, social work, secretarial and clerical jobs – all of which have low status and low remuneration. Even those women have surmounted the hurdles to professional education are disadvantaged as they find it difficult to harmonize competing demands of a professional career and home.

Generally speaking, it is difficult for a woman to remain single or to combine marriage with career. Apart from the general expectation that all wives must be housewives, it has been noted that women are called upon to sacrifice their carrier when the need arises, thereby subordinating their own career to that of their husbands. This often creates frustration among women, leading even to psychotic illness in a few cases. Rural women, however, do not have to face such problems.

It has been further found that in the cities of India, high level education among girls is significantly associated with smaller family size. Though education of women has raised the age of marriage and lowered birth rate, it has not brought about any radical change in the traditional pattern of arranged marriages with dowry. **Margaret Cormack** found in her study of 500 university students that girls were ready to go to college and mix with boys but they wanted their parents to arrange their marriage. Women want new opportunities but demand old securities as well. They enjoy their newly-found freedom but at the same time wish to carry on with old values.

Divorce and remarriage are new phenomena we find among urban women. Today, women take initiative to break their marriages legally if they find adjustment after marriage impossible. In Delhi alone 20 couples file cases every week seeking divorce from their spouses. About 2,000 divorce cases were filed in Delhi courts in five months between January and May, 1999 (The Hindustan Times, June 12, 1999). Surprisingly, large number of divorces is sought by women on the grounds of incompatibility and mental torture.

Politically also, urban women are more active today. The number of women contesting elections has increased at every level. They hold important political positions and also possess independent political ideologies. It may, thus, be concluded that while rural women continue to be dependent on men both economically and socially, urban women are comparatively independent and enjoy greater freedom.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it may be said that though we may accept the views of scholars like **Ashis Nandy,** who have talked about new aspects of urban social organization which have replaced traditional ties, yet we cannot reject the prevalence of traditional aspects in the functioning of family, caste, kinship and religion in urban settings.

WORKING CLASS: STRUCTURE, GROWTH, CLASS MOBILIZATION

The modern working class came into being with the rise of capitalist mode of production. This mode of production brought with it the factory type of industry. In other words, rise of factory system of production and working class happened simultaneously. Conversely, without a factory industry there can be no working class but only working people.

In Marxian scheme, the capitalist society will be characterized with two principle classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat. Bourgeoisie will own the means of production and proletariat will sell their labour for wages in order to live. The Marxist meanings of these terms have been specified clearly by Engle in a footnote to the Communist Manifesto. By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, and by proletariat the class of modern wage-labourers. Hence, bourgeoisie is synonymous with the capitalist and proletariat with the working class.

In recent years, Marxist view on working class has been countered essentially from two views giving contradiction of analysis. The first view is that working class is literally disappearing. With the automation of industry and apparent displacement of blue-collar jobs, the working class is fast shrinking in size. However, the fact is that it is not the disappearance of working class as a whole, but blue-collar workers are disappearing. Second view states the opposite. In this view all society is becoming working class. That is, students, teachers, blue-collar workers, white-collar workers and salaried employee of various kinds are all workers. The working class is not disappearing by elimination, but is in fact expanding with everybody joining it except a few capitalists at the top. This view emphasizes the so-called blurring of class boundaries but overlooks the important social distinctions between classes. Moreover those distinctions are still very much prevalent in the society.

However, the question still remains, who are the working class? As M. Holmstorm defines it 'people commonly refer to industrial workers, and sometimes other kind of wage-earners and self-employed workers, as the 'working class'. Usually this means a group who share similar economic situation, which distinguishes them from others, like property owners, employees and managers. It suggests a common interest and shared consciousness of these interests'. This implies that like other classes the defining feature of working class is their understanding of 'a common interest' and 'shared consciousness'. However, in recent times these two concepts have become difficult to actualize for the working class due to their own internal divisions and diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

GROWTH

With the growth of modern factory industries the factory workers gradually shaped themselves into a distinct category. The concentration of the working class in the cities near the industrial enterprise was an extremely important factor in the formation of the workers as a class. Similar conditions in factories and common living conditions made the workers feel alike and react in similar fashion. In other words, the principle factors underlying the growth and formation of working mass as a class in India in the latter half of 19th century and at the beginning of 20th century although bears similarities with the advanced countries of Europe. Hence, the consciousness of being exploited by the capitalists/owners of factories was evident as early as 1888, when workers of Shyamnagar Jute Mill assaulted the manager Mr. Kiddie. That is, the reactions against the exploitation in early phases were marked by riots, affrays, assaults and physical violence.

Side by side with these forms of protest there were also other forms of struggle characteristic of working class. Typical working class actins such as strike against long hours of work, against wage cuts, against supervisors' extortion were increasing in number and the tendency to act collectively was also growing. As early as 1879-80 there was a threat of a strike in Champdany Jute Mill against an attempt by the authorities to introduce a new system of single shift which was unpopular with workers. Presumably because of this strike threat the proposed system was ultimately abandoned.

The end of 19th century and beginning of 20th was marked by the organized national movements and consolidation of working class. The national movement especially in Bengal and Maharashtra had already assumed a developed form which exerted a great impact on the later national awakening of the entire country. Partition of Bengal in the year 1905 aroused bitter public indignation and gave rise to mass national upsurge. This political development worked as a favourable condition for the Indian working class too for moving ahead with its economic struggles and raising them to higher pitch. The period from the beginning of the century till the out break of the pitch First World War was marked with widespread and dogged struggles of the workers. And not only economic struggles, the Indian

working class achieved the feat in the political struggles also. That is, these struggles led to the laying of foundation of first trade unions of the country. Moreover, the turn of the century was also marked with the advance in industrializations with concomitant swelling of the working class in numerical strength.

On the eve of First World War the capitalist development in India got accelerated. The government widely used the country's industrial potential for the needs of war. But for the working class it was tough time. This was because the soaring up of prices reduced the living standards of working class. While rural areas were affected by the rise of prices of manufactured goods, the towns faced the higher food prices. The expansion of industrialization saw swelling of numbers of factory workers. October socialist revolution and subsequent sweeping mass and working class struggle formed the background under which the first organization of the Indian working class called **All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)** was born. In other words, the end of World War I, Success of the October revolution and the first general crisis of capitalism added new strength to the anti-imperialist struggle of India.

The working class did not fail to occupy its own place in anti-imperialist struggle. In this regard it is important to note that the background of political struggle during 1905-8 is the unprecedented dimension of class struggle waged by Indian working class in the national and international set-up of the post-war period against capitalist exploitation bore more significance from the point of view of workers' class-consciousness. Then the birth of the central class organization of Indian working class at the right moment when national political awakening was at its peak and they were conscious as class.

Recession in Indian industry and economy began already in the year 1922 and continued intensifying. In 1929 the impact of the world economic recession and general crisis of world capitalism veritably shocked Indian economy. The mill owners attempted to reduce wages of the workers. It is particular misfortune of the Indian working class that they ultimately have to fall victim to the intense rivalry between imperialists and native capitalists. But the workers did not lie low before that onslaught, they resisted. So in order to safeguard its position the working class of India had to proceed through a path of bitter struggle.

World War II broke out on 1939. This had devastating effect on the Indian economy and working class in particular. The colonial government reoriented the economy, where by the industrial units introduced double to triple shift of work and leave facilities were curtailed. This done to cater to the war needs of England. As far as workers were concerned their economic conditions were miserable in pre-war period, and the new war made the situation more worse. This was because of the steady fall in the wage rates across the industry. In such a situation the working class of India had to wage struggle for protecting the existing standard of living. The working class embarked on a series of strikes in Bombay, Kanpur, Calcutta, Bangalore, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Jharia, Nagpur, Madras, and Digboy of Assam. This event along with other struggles indicates that during this period the outlook of the Indian working class did not confined solely to the economic demands. The working class rather fully kept pace with the national and international political developments and played key role in the political struggles. In such event the imperialist government directed severe attack to forestall the struggle of working class.

The defeat of fascism and end of World War II saw the emergence of the Indian working class as a highly organized, class-conscious and uncompromising force against the colonialist. An unprecedented and irresistible struggle for national liberation and democratic advance engulfed the country. Side-by-side the working class had to engage in sharp economic struggles. The phenomenal rise in the number of strike actions in the year 1946 was an indication of the stiff resistance. All India Trade Union Congress raised the demand of stopping retrenchment, minimum

wage, eight hours work, health insurance scheme, old age pension, unemployment allowance and several other social security measures.

As soon as India became independent, the political climate of the country changed. This was particularly so for the working class. That is, till independence political and economic struggle of the working class was directed against the colonial masters. But with independence began a new political dynamics, where power was in the hands of capitalist and landlords. Their economic interests were directly counter to those of the working class.

The Independence though roused immense hopes and aspirations among all sections of the society, but was accompanied with huge rise in prices and continuous fall in the real wages of the workers. Moreover, the ruling classes had embarked upon a path of building capitalism in the newly independent country. This brought in immense hardships and suffering to the toiling masses which generated powerful resistance of the working class all over the country.

STRUCTURE

India has a multi-structural economy where a number of pre-capitalist relations of production co-exist with capitalist relations of production. Correspondingly, here exists a differentiated working class structure i.e., the numerous types of relations of production, consumption and accumulation of surplus combine to produce a variety of forms of the existence of the working class. This is further compounded by the structural features of Pan-Indian society along with local conditions. So the composition of the working class is affected by the caste, tribe, ethnic origin and the gender based division of labour between male and female and associated patriarchy. This implies that despite internal structural differences and the relations of production through which working people have been and continues to be, there exists a group of people denoted as 'working class'. Then, it becomes pertinent to analyze the growth of working class in India. This particularly so, when one considers two facts. First, in India

prior to 19th century there were vast working people not working class. Second, the growth of capitalist mode of production along with industrialization was imposed by colonial masters.

Given such an eventful history and growth of the working class in India, it is worthwhile to examine structure nature of the working class in the present day circumstances. As mentioned above, due to the existence of multi-structural economy and effects of primordial affiliations, variety of forms of the working class exists in India. On top of all the differences the differences in wage is also the basis of divisions among the working class. On the basis of wage there are four types of workers.

- **First,** those workers who are permanent employees of the large factory sector and get family wage; (by 'family wage' it is meant that wage of the worker should be sufficient to maintain and reproduce to only the individual but also the workers family. They are mostly employed in the public sector enterprises and modern sectors of petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and engineering.

- **Second,** a large and preponderant section of the working class that does not get a family wage. This includes workers in the older industries like cotton and jute textiles, sugar and paper. Even the permanent workers in the tea plantation come in the same category because the owners refused to accept the norm of family wage for an individual worker.

- **Third,** this section of the working class is at the bottom of the wage scale. They are the mass of contract and sometimes casual labourers in industry, including construction, brick making and other casual workers.

- **Fourth,** below all these lie a reserve army of labour, who work in petty commodities production in petty trading, ranging from hawking to rag-picking. They are generally engaged in informal sector and carry on for the want of sufficient survival wage.

The existence of majority of workers, who are not paid family wage means that either the worker gets some form of supplement from other non-capitalist sector or the worker and his/her family cut down their consumption below the minimum standard. This also means that there is more than one wage earner per household. And as **Das Gupta** mentions that both men and women work in the plantation or bidi manufacturing. At the same time they also supplement these earnings with various kinds of agricultural activities including not only cultivation as such but also poultry and milk production. Even in plantation workers were given plots of land with which to carry on agricultural production. It is the supplementary agricultural activities that enable wages in these sectors to be kept low. In this sense, supplementary activities by the workers under pre-capitalist relations of production are a tribute to capitalist sector.

Not only there is wage differential among working class, but **variations are also there in the terms of working conditions**. Hence, better paid labour has also much greater job security. However the workers on the lower end of wage scale have not only job security but also have considerable extra-economic coercion and personal bondage which leads to lack of civil rights. Similarly, working conditions for the low paid workers are uniformly worse than for high paid workers. So, in the same plant or site there is a clear difference in the safety measures for the two groups of workers. The situation worsens further with regard to women workers. For example, women are not allowed to work in the steel plants for safety reasons, but are not prohibited to be employed on the same site as contract labour. With such major divisions amongst the working class of India on the basis of wage, one would expect that there would be large scale mobility among the workers. So a worker would start as casual or contract labour in a firm and then would move to permanent employment either in the same or other firm. **A study by Deshpande** of Bombay labour found

the reverse to be true. That is, around 87 per cent of the regular employees, who had changed their job, had started as regular employee and only 13 per cent had started as casual labour. In this regard, **Harris, who conducted study in Coimbatore,** reported that 'individuals do not move easily between sectors of the labour market. Among the 826 households surveyed there were only less than 20 cases of movement from unorganized into organized sector. Many in the unorganized sector had the requisite skills, experience and education for factory job. But they lack the right connections or to put it in another way, they do not belong to the right social network'. This means that mobility to a large extent is dependent upon the way recruitments are done. The above-mentioned study of Bombay labour, though dealing with private sector, found that recruitments are done mainly through friends and relatives. **A study of Ahmadabad by Subramanian and Papola** found that 91 per cent of the jobs were secured through introduction by other workers. This in a way then denies the disadvantaged groups access to the high wage employment. In public sector though substantial portion of the vacancies are filled through employment exchange, but it does not in any way means that the causal, contract or other disadvantaged groups have equal access.

CLASS MOBILIZATION

Indian working class, as mentioned earlier, came from diverse social backgrounds in which primordial identities such as caste, ethnicity, religion and language played very important roles. In recent years the significance of these elements has been to new not reduced but they do persist nonetheless.

- In this regard the **Ahmadabad, study of Subramanian and Papola** points out that where jobs are secured through introduction by other workers, the latter was a blood relation in 35 per cent of the cases belonged to the same caste in another 44 per cent and belonged to the same native place in another

12 per cent. Friends helped in 7 per cent of the cases. Several other studies have pointed not only play a significant role in securing the employment, but also in the placement in wage scale.

- **K. L. Sharma** in his five studies of Pune, Kota, Bombay, Ahmadabad and Bangalore covering large number of industries found that 61 per cent of workers were upper caste Hindus.

- The dominant position of the workers from upper caste was also brought out in **a study of Kerala.** This study point out that in higher income jobs upper castes dominate whereas Dalits/Adivasis have preponderance in low wage jobs. The middle castes are concentrated in middle to bottom ranges. Even in public sector, the representation of backward caste, schedule caste and tribe is not up to their proportion in population.

- Moreover, it seems that caste-based division of labour is followed in the class III and IV jobs in government and public sector enterprises. So the jobs of sweepers are reserved for Dalits and Adivasis. In coal mines, hard physical labour of loading and pushing the coal tubs is done by dalits and adivasis. In steel plant the production work in the intense heat of coke oven and blast furnace is mainly done by adivasis and dalits. This is because, as **Deshpande** points out of 'pre labour market characteristic' such as education and land holding. So those who possessed more land and education ended up in higher wage sector. But then if upper and lower caste people own comparable levels of landholding and education, the upper caste worker will get into higher segment of the wage than lower caste worker. This is because of the continuing importance of caste ties in recruitment.

- According to Nathan, Caste also serves the function in ensuring the labour supply for different jobs with the fact of not paying more than what is necessary. In other words, the depressed conditions of adivasis and dalits helps in ensuring a supply of labour, who can be made to work at the mere subsistence level.

Hence, caste on one hand plays the role in keeping the lower sections of the society into the lower strata of the working class, on the other hand, the upper caste get a privilege in the labour market. Further, caste is not only a matter of marriage and to an extent; residence; but more so a continuing pool of social relation for the supply of various kinds of labour for the capitalist mode of production.

CONCLUSION

The working class, which is the product of capitalist relations of production, came into being with industrial revolution and subsequent industrialization in England, in particular and Europe, in general. In this relation of production, unlike other epochs, they did not own anything except the labour, which they sold for survival. At the other spectrum, there were capitalists who not only owned all the means of production but also appropriated the entire surplus generated out of this relation of production.

The working class at the conceptual level seems to be fairly simple, but if one ties to define it, the problem magnifies. The reason is that this is not a homogeneous entity. Rather it is a complex, contradictory and constantly changing entity. Other reason is that the concept of 'class-consciousness' is very slippery with regard to the working class. The consequence of this is that it is often proclaimed that either working class is shrinking in size or everybody except a few at the top is working class. However the fact is that working class is a distinct entity, with characteristics of its own. In India, the situation is much more complex because of several reasons like, (a) the forced intrusion of British capital in India; (b) simultaneous existence of multiple relations of production; and (c) never ending identification of working mass with

primordial features such as caste, religion and other ethnic divisions of the society.

Their coming into being and consolidation of working class in the world as well as in India has been affected by local and international events of both economic and political nature. So for carrying out further studies on the working class, these peculiarities have to be taken into account.

INFORMAL SECTOR IN INDIA

Scholars often make a distinction between the organized or formal and unorganized or informal sector. There is a debate over how to define these sectors. According to one definition, the organized sector consists of all units employing ten or more people throughout the year. These have to be registered with the government to ensure that their employees get proper salaries or wages, pension and other benefits. Informal sector could best be understood through its composition.

Composition of the Informal Sector in India

In most Indian cities the urban poor survive by working in the informal sector. Poverty and lack of gainful employment in the rural areas and in the smaller towns drive large numbers of people to the cities for work and livelihood. These people generally possess low skills and lack the level of education required for the better paid jobs in the formal sector. Besides, permanent protected jobs in the formal sector are shrinking hence even those having the requisite skills are unable to find proper employment. For these people work in the informal sector are the only means for their survival. For the urban poor, street vending is one of the means of earning a livelihood, as it requires minor financial input and the skills involved are low though the income too is low.

- **A large section of street vendors in urban areas are those with low skills and who have migrated to the larger cities from rural areas or small towns in search of employment.** Other employment opportunities for the illiterate or semi-literate migrants are working in small factories or workshops having low level of technology, and hence having a greater reliance on physical labour, and causal day labourers in construction sites or other places.

- **There is another section of the urban population that has joined the informal sector; namely, those once engaged in the formal sector.** These people or their spouses were once engaged in better paid jobs in the exile miles in Mumbai and Ahmadabad and engineering firms in the formal sector (Bhowmik). A study conducted by SEWA in Ahmadabad shows that around half the retrenched textile worker are now street vendors. We can hence see that the urban informal sector has a variety of occupations, though incomes are low and social security is non-existent.

- **The third category of workers in the informal sector is those who are employed in the formal sector.** These people are engaged as temporary or casual labour in industries or establishments in the formal sector. In large factories or undertakings one can find permanent workers and also workers who are employed as temporary or casual labour. In many such organizations, there are sections where casual labour is employed. This could be in the canteen or in cleaning. In many companies the security staffs are not employees of the company. They are hired from a separate company. These people are on contract with that security company. They are hence contract workers. Therefore, we have casual and contract workers working in the formal sector organizations. In many organizations we will find that contract labour and casual or temporary labour is used extensively.

- The employment of such labour is because many companies do not want to increase the number of permanent workers. The reason is that if a worker becomes permanent then the employer has to make provision for provident fund, give gratuity payment at the time of retirement, provide for medical leave and

facilities if the person falls ill, allow the pension after retirement.

- The most important reason is that the employer cannot remove a permanent worker from his work. In other words, the employer can hire a worker but he/she cannot fire the worker as easily. There is a long legal process involved. On the other hand, temporary and casual workers do not get any of the facilities cited above and they can be removed from their jobs at anytime. In 1993, a book containing case studies in eight industries (Davala, 1993) shows that in some industries casual and contract labour form more than half the total number of workers employed in that industry.

Above description brings about certain aspect of the informal sector. The overwhelming majority of the work force in India lies in the informal sector. Over 90% of the work, whether it is in agriculture, industry or services is in the unorganized or informal sector. Workers in the formal sector do not get most of the security given to workers of formal sector. There jobs are insecure, as most of the laws do not protect them. Though in principle labour laws in India are expected to apply to all sections of industrial labour, there are inbuilt provisions which exclude large sections of our labour force. For example, the most important law regulating work in industries is Factories Act. All other Acts such as Employee State Insurance Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Provident and Pension Act etc., apply only to establishments covered by the Factories Act. This Act is applicable only to manufacturing units which employ a minimum of 10 workers and which use power and a minimum of 20 workers if the unit does not use power. Hence a large section of industrial workers employed in small industries do not have legal protection in there work.

Broadly speaking, Informal sector is characterized by

- Low levels of skill: Workers in this sector have low levels of education and thus they have low levels of skills. This is the reason why they are engaged in jobs involving low technology. Worker in the formal sector have skill and there position in the labour is better.

- Easy entry: Getting work in informal sector is comparatively easier than in the formal sector. Any able bodied person, irrespective of the skills possessed can become a day labourer. With minimum investment the same person can become a street vendor and sell her/his wares in the market. The people need no money to invest in a shop. In this way the informal sector is able to absorb more workers who would not get any work because they are either not qualified or they do not have capital for investing in business.

- Low paid employment: Because of the requirement of low skill and the easy entry, work in the informal sector has low returns. Workers who offer their labour are not paid high wages. In fact, the biggest grievance against this sector is that the wages are many times below sustenance level. In many cases, low wages drive other members of the family in informal workforce because the main wage earned is not sufficient for sustaining a household. In this sense, children too, may be encouraged to join the labour force.

- Immigrant labour: Informal sector is largely composed of immigrant. Most of the workers come to the city from rural areas in search of a livelihood. Hence migrant status is a characteristic of informal sector.

- Informal sector in India is broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods and services with the primary objectives of generating employment and incomes to the persons concern.

- These units typically operate at low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale.

- Labour relations, where they exist, are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal or social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees. Thus, production units in informal sector are not constituted as separate legal entities independently of the household or household members that own them. There is no complete sets of accounts are available which would permit a clear distinction of the production activities of the enterprises from the other activities of their owners.

- The owners of their production units have to raise the finance at their own risk and are personally liable, without limit, for any debts or obligations incurred in the production process.

- Expenditure for production is often indistinguishable from household expenditure. For statistical purpose, the informal sector is regarded as group of production units, which form part of the household sector as household enterprises or equivalently, unincorporated enterprises owned by households.

- One major difference between developing and developed countries is the number of people in regular salaried employment. In developed countries, the majority are formally employed. In India, over 50% of the population is self-employed, only about 14% are in regular salaried employment, while approximately 30% are in casual labour.

What are the social implications of this small size of the organized sector?

- First, it means that very few people have the experience of employment in large firms where they get to meet people from other regions and backgrounds. Urban settings do provide some corrective to this – your neighbours in a city may be from a different place – but by and large, work for most Indians is still in small scale workplaces. Here personal relationships determine many aspects of work.

If the employer likes you, you may get a salary raise, and if you have a fight with him or her, you may lose your job. This is different from a large organization with well defined rules recruitment is more transparent and there are mechanisms for complaints and redressal if you disagree with your immediate superior.

- Second, very few Indians have access to secure jobs with benefits. Of those who do, two-thirds work for the government. This is why government jobs are so popular. The rest are forced to depend on their children in their old age. Government employment in India has played a major role in overcoming boundaries of caste, religion and region. One sociologist has argued that the reason why there have never been communal riots in a place like Bhilai is because the public sector Bhilai Steel Plant employs people from all over India who work together. Others may question this.

- Third, since very few people are members of unions, a feature of the organized sector, they do not have the experience of collectively fighting for proper wages and safe working conditions. The government has laws to monitor conditions in the unorganized sector, but in practice they are left to the whims and fancies of the employer or contractor.

Relevance of the Informal Sector in Indian Context

- Broadly, the informal sector provides income-earning opportunities for a larger number of workers. In India, there is large magnitude of workforce getting their livelihood from the informal sector.

- Thus informal sector has a crucial role in our economy in terms of employment and its contribution to the National Domestic Product, savings and capital formation.

- Since majority of Indian Workforce is illiterate and poorly trained, role of informal sector becomes crucial for providing employment to such workforce

CONCLUSION

At present Indian Economy is passing through a process of economic reforms and liberalization. During the process, merger, integration of various firms within the industry and upgradation of technology and other innovative measures take place to enhance competitiveness of the output both in terms of cost and qualitative to compete in the international market. The low inefficient units either wither away or merge with other ones performing better. In this situation, there is a special need to take care of the interests of the workers by providing them training, upgrading their skills, and other measures to enable them to find new avenue of employment, improve their productivity in the existing employment, necessary to enhance the competitiveness of their product both in terms of quality and cost which would also help in improving their income and thereby raising their socio-economic status. It has been experienced that formal sector could not provide adequate opportunities to accommodate workforce in the country and informal sector has been providing employment for their subsistence and survival. Keeping in view the existing economic scenario, the unorganized sector will expand further in the years to come. Thus, it needs to be strengthened and activated so that it could act as a vehicle of employment provider and social development.

SLUMS AND DEPRIVATION IN URBAN AREAS

Slums have been defined as those areas where buildings are unfit for human habitation, or are by dilapidation, overcrowding, design of buildings, narrowness of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitary facilities or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or moral (Slum Area Improvement and Clearance Act 1956).

The growth of slums is considered to be a major bane to human society next only to population explosion in this century. It is a substandard housing within a city. It is an inhabited uninhabitable habitation.

Magnitude

*   There has been no systematic scientific survey or updating of the slum population carried out on an all India basis, though some city specific ad hoc surveys have been done.

*   The percentage of slum population in the four mega cities are – Bombay 34.30%

Calcutta	32.90%
Madras	32.10%
Delhi	31.40%

*   An all India average where the cities with 10 lakh and above population have 29.10% population living in slums.

*   The slums are also deficient of various basic services, water supply and sanitation facilities being most acute.

*   Empirical evidences shows that higher the intensity of urbanization, higher is the percentage of slum population.

*   Juvenile delinquency and mal-socialization of more or less prevalent in the slum society.

*   Slums act as cover for hide-outs for all sorts of crimes and vices like gambling which prevail and thrive upon the city population.

Genesis and growth of slums

*   Higher intensity of economic activities in cities mainly attracts poor people particularly from the adjacent rural areas. Most of this population have practically no resources for living and are instrumental in establishing slums and squatters settlements.

*   A large population of such urban poor provides services to the other segment of population i.e., vending, plumbing, waste disposal service, domestic and transport services.

*   No amount of legal and regulatory mechanism could stop this process because of the

economic reality of bargaining for the cheapest labour, goods and services by the city consumers and readiness of this migrant poor population to provide the same.

- To earn max income with least possible cost for living and community while providing goods and services the urban poor frequently invades open lands if these are optimally located.

- The cost of housing schemes made for economically weaker sections at times tend to be beyond the affordability of slum dwellers pricing then out from housing supply.

Types of Slums

1. **Original slum :** An area which from very beginning consisted of unsuitable buildings. These are usually areas around an old factory or mining site which is now given up or is the zone in transition. These sections are beyond recovery as they consist of age old structures and they need to be razed in order to be eradicated e.g. Mexican Slum; slums in Kolkata.

2. **Transitional zone slum**: It is created by the departure of middle and upper class families to other sections or it may be due to the starting of a new industry or due to congestion and subsequent deterioration of the living area. These are to be found in the transition zone of developing cities.

3. The third and most unpleasant type of slum is mainly a phenomenon of transition once the area around a main business district has become blighted. Physical and social deterioration spreads rapidly. This type of slum looms with flophouses, one night accommodations for the destitute, houses of prostitution. It is populated by chronic alcoholics, beggars, homeless men and habitual criminals.

Possible solution and steps taken

- Earlier the stress was on clearance of slums, which is now replaced by an approach for the Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS) by the provisions of basic services such as water supply, community toilets, drainage, paved pathways and street lights.

- Soft loans for slum upgradation and environmental improvement schemes have been provided by HUDCO.

- Since 1989, the Government of India has also launched the shelter upgradation scheme under the Nehru Rozgar Yojana.

- While preparing the master or structure plan for a city, adequate provision should be made in the land use for the habitats/workplaces of the required urban poor/low income service population which constitutes an overwhelming majority in Indian cities.

- Rather than snatching land from slum dwellers they should be provided adequate habitable land at affordable cost at any other site or the same location where they are staying.

- This system of land banking will be more beneficial with long term sustainability.

- The given land should be duly linked preferably by cycle tracks with the industrial/ organized economic activity centres in the city.

- Such optional locations will reduce the cost of transportation and save time thereby reducing the cost of goods and services to consumers besides reducing the stress in the city transportation system.

- The allotted lands should accrue the right to the individual household and no right to sell, to prevent transfer and resquatting.

- Such habitats should have adequate provisions for social facilities like education and health facilities for a wholesome life.

- HUDCO has suggested that all housing agencies earmark 5 to 15% of the housing development area to be utilized for the shelter less service population. As a result a land

bank of 341 hectares a have been created in different states.

- HUDCO has also requested all the state Governments to consider issuing suitable order for reserving land for the shelterless category as done by the Government of M.P.
- There is no single solution to the problem of slums, nor a simple one.
- Slum Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act that seeks to clear slums and properly rehabilitate the discoursed population.
- A programme for providing housing in urban areas called Valmiki Ambedkar Aawas Yojana (VAMBAY) has been started for lower caste slum dwellers.
- The Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNURM) which envisages a total investment of ever 520 billion has a component for the urban poor called Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP).

The problem of slums is widespread in overweight cities of developing countries. The prime concern is not that slums are breeding ground of crime and disease, rather than slums residents do not get a good quality of life. Only a multi-pronged approach backed by motivated administration can tackle these problems.

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