

Analysis of Social Structure : A Case Study of Haryana

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ABSTRACT

In recent times some attention is being paid to the study of social structure and modes of life prevailing in Haryana. This study is also an attempt to study social structure among caste in Haryana society. This paper on Haryana society is studied on the basis of Caste, Class and Power. Caste system is radically different from Caste system in Indian society. The rigid aspect is missing and very few people are ready to attach any importance to ascribed status. In Haryana Class is the base of social structure and most of the times its bases are economic. However, the process of Modernization, secularization, education and new found economic prosperity has made the lines of demarcation very blur and flexibility is quite visible while analyzing social structure in Hindu society.

Keywords : Social Structure, Education, Social change, Lower castes, Hindu Society.

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of social structure can be traced back to the times “when human switched their interest from” fishing or hunting to sedentary agricultural societies with a surplus economy, a variety of occupations developed that were essential to the proper functioning of that society (Frank, 1995). Inevitably, these functions began to be ranked hierarchically, usually based on the amount of preparation & training needed or the importance of that occupation to a particular society. Most people would agree that few societies are really equal. In the real world that is not always the case because some individuals have greater access to the scarce resources of society. Society is this built upon the relationships between the various unequal parts (Ramon and Robert, 2000). So, we

know that societies have the internal inequality which may be termed as social structure. These include inequalities between rich and poor, between social classes, between men and women, and between black and white. Inequalities in wide range in almost every area of social life, such as in job security, leisure opportunities, health, housing, income and the power to influence events in society (Browne, 2005). From the very beginning, sociologists have tried to seek the roots, origin and rationales of the phenomenon. In fact, controversies are the natural outcome of the search for the higher orders of explanations and inclusive system of classification of this phenomenon. The differencing value systems, perception of social orders, equality and justice have led them, to provide different explanation. Social structure and social inequalities exist in all types of human societies. Even

the simplest cultures, where variations in wealth or property are virtually non-existent, there are inequalities between individuals, men and women, the young and old. To describe inequalities, sociologists speak of social structure. Structure can be defined as structured inequalities between different groupings of people (Giddens, 1997). The systems of social structure exhibit wide variance in different societies of the world. This variation may be in the criteria, utilized for placing individuals and groups in various social strata of the system, or in the number of strata in the system, and with some having two broad strata such as, feudal lords and serfs, or nobility and commoners and others having more. There may be flexibility and the sharpness with which each stratum is demarcated. In some systems different strata are easily identifiable, while in others the boundaries are hard to locate. Considering the various societies that have existed and do exist in the world, certain recurrent forms of social structure generally can be identified. Sociologists have identified four major types or structure systems, which have different differences between them, the Slavery, the Feudal Estates, the Caste and the Class system.

II. Methodology

Studying human life and human society is and has been a particular subject of some of the prolific philosophers and intellectuals. The proposed study is on a simple but an important topic i.e., social structure. The topic has been dealt with many a time before but the researchers have either concluded on undertaking limited groups of people or have not highlighted all the facts related to it. Thus, there is always a scope for more and more research on this particular topic.

III. Hypothesis

Like in all human societies of the world, the Hindu society has developed certain patterns of social

structure. The existing pattern of social structure in the Haryana has undergone certain degrees of qualitative as well as quantitative change mainly due to the impact of the process of modernization, secularization, spread of education and new found economic prosperity.

IV. The Collection of Data

Collection of data for the study under reference began with secondary sources. The information gathered from secondary sources provided an in-depth understanding of the historical account of the patterns of social structure and forms of inequality prevalent in Hindu society. These sources proved fruitful in building some theoretical assumptions and parameters for the method of inquiry. Before going to the field and actually interviewing people the study began with a pilot study which starts before the field work. For the pilot study, the researcher took 50 families from different areas and caste groups to know the real patterns of social structure present in Haryana and also understands the changes that have taken place in the social structure of district wise. The analysis of the pilot study helped the researcher to form the basis of an outline including the desirable items to be included in the in-depth study of social structure in the study area. On the basis of this pilot study, a sample of 100 households was selected accordingly. Thereafter, field work was carried out by the researcher. An interview Guide was used as a tool for data collection.

V. Results and Discussions

The study area as a representative type of the Hindu society resembles with the traditional social structure prevailing in the Haryana. The universe of the study is stratified on the basis of caste and class. But at present, the individuals here are differentiated on the basis of income, landholding, occupation, education and power. The analysis of the information gathered

from secondary sources as well as primary sources i.e., responses of the people revealed that social structure in study area may be explained in terms of caste and class. Theoretically speaking, Hindu as a form of religion has never uphold or allowed caste, creed, and colour as the basis of social hierarchy and inequality. But from the empirical point of view, Hindu all over the world and in the study area too are stratified, In some societies, on the basis of caste (Indian sub continent), in other societies on the basis of social and economic standing (Developed societies). So, the Haryana being part of the north western part Indian sub-continent is also stratified on the basis of caste and class.

Caste Structure

Caste first came to be identified as a principle of social structure among Hindus. Moreover, while analyzing systems of social structure in other religions and societies, they tend quite unconsciously to follow a culture-specific definition of the institution and base their discussion on the Hindu phenomenon. The Hindu society, being a part of the broader Indian society, has also been influenced by this caste system. In pre-Vedic period, the Haryana was wholly peopled with Hindus, in which the Brahmans were at the top of the social hierarchy because they were considered the most knowledgeable person. They enjoyed the superiority and exploited the lower castes (Shudra) for their vested interests.

This verse makes it quite clear that though Hindu accepts differentiation based on gender and tribe. It does not recognize social structure. It clearly opposes to draw the line of demarcation on the basis of race, colour, creed and caste. But, at the same time, it is true only up to the theoretical understanding of Hindu and Islam. But in reality, the Hindu community remains diversified, fragmented and as caste-ridden as any other community of India. Practically, the situation in the Hindu society is somewhat different. Hindu too is stratified on the

basis of caste. There had been always an element of superiority present with those castes which are considered to be at top, and a kind of inferiority present with those castes which are considered to be at the bottom. The finding of the present study undertakes an analysis of the social structure among the Hindu of the Haryana.

Class Structure

The Hindu society is presently class-based rather than caste based. People at present are stratified on the basis of class. Some are placed at the top of the hierarchy; some at the bottom and rest in between. This system is explained in terms of class, particularly an economic class. People in the past were differentiating on the basis of large land holding and religious knowledge. But, at present it is not the land holding, but the monthly income of the person which differentiates families from one another. Now it is one's income which determines his/her social position or status in the society. Economic class is purely seen in relation to the property, nature of service, trade, business and the standard of living, but belonging to a higher caste gives additional status to the person. The class structure of Haryana is aptly reflected by the agrarian class structure. The economy of all divisions was based primarily upon agriculture and hence the relation of production depends upon the process of agriculture, such categories include, landlords, cultivators, tenants & agricultural labourers. So, this indicates that in Haryana class structure was based upon the landholding. In Haryana, those who own the land were called, *Zamindars* (Land lords) & those who don't were called as *Nangars* (Landless).

Social Structure Change in Haryana

After independence and contact with developed countries, tremendous changes have been experienced in the overall structure of the Hindu society. Such changes had left no area unaffected. In rural areas as compared to urban areas the change has been a bit slow. It is because of illiteracy, ignorance

and the lack of opportunities to the rural people. Another factor is that the rural people are superstitious & religious dogmatic which is not the case in urban areas. In the past, patterns of living in this area were determined by land holdings, religious knowledge and traditional practices. But the facts collected from the field suggest that past patterns of differentiation has started changing gradually due to the changes in the relational and institutional aspects of community life. The distinctions between the upper and lower castes are narrowing and greater frequency of interaction is found between them. Presently the sense of superiority or domination on the basis of religious knowledge and foreign ancestry is still persisting but not with the same zeal and consciousness. Modernization, secularization, education & new found economic prosperity has changed the attitude and actual practices regarding the ascribed and achieved status and prestige and facilitated social mobility. Social hierarchy is still persisting but the traditional form of rigid structure is not in practice. This change in the patterns of social structure and hierarchy is an index of change in the social structure of the area under study. Again, Hindu sanctions do not divide the community in to different endogamous groups. But under the impact of traditional culture, the Hindu also developed a caste-like hierarchy and the concept of superior or inferior prevailed on the basis of birth, descent and religions knowledge. This was given due importance and Hindu also performed marriages within the same castes. But after independence, different caste people work shoulder to shoulder in day to day activities but in spite of that people still follow the very tradition in the matters of mate selection. At present within caste marriages occur. This is the only institution where caste system still plays a vital role.

After modernization things got better and better every day in our state as well as in the area under study. The area of Haryana has always prone to the adoption of social changes. It is primarily because

majority of the people are earn their livelihood from the broader economic activities present here & in other parts of the study area. In the past, the vast majority of the population was dependent on agriculture. So, the social structure was primarily based on how much land one owns. But, this kind of social structure has gone through basic change. People have switched over to trade, business and government services. The whole exploitative and dehumanizing system diminished. Spread of education, land reform acts, reservation for lower castes, democratic ideas, and new found economic prosperity changed the traditional pattern of social structure. Due to change in peoples standard of living, had made them conscious about the exploitation they faced by the hands of upper castes. The rise and development of political awareness and political consciousness among the villagers are found these days. This rise of political awareness is an index of changing political relations and thus the change in the structure of this society. New sources of power like political affiliation and education are emerging fast. Finally family, caste and religions knowledge do play important role in the forms of social structure. But the dominating factors which stratify the Hindu society are monthly income, education, and political connections. Because of this, Haryana society is becoming class-based rather caste-based, and importance of land holding in determining the power of the family has been replaced by wealth.

VI.CONCLUSION

This study is an attempt to study the broad patterns of social structure prevailing in Haryana. As a complex social phenomenon, social structure which refers to the division of the society into various hierarchical strata is as old as human civilization, while many have talked about a „classless“ societies of either the past or the future, but these ideas found very little support in historical experience. Though the phenomenon is common to all societies but its nature

and forms vary from society to society, and from culture to culture. After independence and contact with developed countries, tremendous changes have been experienced in the overall structure of the Haryana society. Such changes had left no area unaffected. In rural areas as compared to urban areas the change has been a bit slow. It is because of illiteracy, ignorance and the lack of opportunities to the rural people. Another factor is that the rural people are superstitious and religious dogmatic which is not the case in urban areas. In the past, patterns of living in this area were determined by land holdings religious knowledge and traditional practices. But the facts collected from the field suggests that past patterns of differentiation has started changing gradually due to the changes in the relational and institutional aspects of community life. At present the situation is changing. Modernization, secularization, education and new found economic prosperity has changed the attitude and actual practices regarding the ascribed and achieved status and prestige and facilitated social mobility. Social hierarchy is still persisting but the traditional form of rigid structure is not in practice. This change in the patterns of social structure and hierarchy is an index of change in the social structure of the area under study.

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