



# **SYM 101**

# **Sociological**

# **Concepts**

**UNIT : 03**

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**TOPIC : RURAL**

**COMMUNITY PART II**



# Content

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- ❖ **Social Structure of Rural Community: Caste, Class & Gender**
- ❖ **Economic Structure of Rural Community**
- ❖ **Political Functioning in Rural Community**

# Social Structure of Rural Community: Caste, Class and Gender



**Caste System:** Traditional occupation by people. Major categories were Varnas. Some believed caste to be fixed while others mobile.

**Dube identified 6 factors: Status differentiation in Rural Community of Shamirpet**

- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Caste
- ❖ Landownership
- ❖ Wealth
- ❖ Position in Government Service and Village Organization
- ❖ Age and Distinctive Personality Traits

# Social Structure of Rural Community: Caste, Class and Gender

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- Village consists of vertical interdependance of castes. It was earlier reflected in the Jajmani System. These vertical ties are cut across by the horizontal ties of kinship and caste, that is, relationship within castes which extend beyond the village to other villages and towns.
- **Ethnographic Examples: Oscar Lewis' study on Rani Khera.** Village is seen as part of larger inter-village network based upon kinship ties. Other villagers, often relatives and entire villages-- are classified by kinship terminology- mother's brother's village, grandmother's village or grandfather's village.



# Social Structure of Rural Community: Caste, Class and Gender

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- **Mckim Marriott** points out that certain elements of ritual and belief are contributions from village life which spread upward to the formation of India's great Sanskritic tradition. He has given concept of **universalization and parochialisation to refer to the process of interaction between little and great traditions**(concept given by **Robert Redfield**).
- In case of **Kishangarhi**, **Mckim Marriott** observed than there were 46 local lineage groups, each wholly separate from every other in descent. **No marriage inside village.**

# Caste Structure

Caste is the fundamental principle of social organizations in the Indian village. The structural basis of Hinduism is the caste system. Caste is also seen as a 'monopolistic guild'. The occupation on which a caste has monopoly may be very simple. Village is conceptualized as an aggregate of castes; each traditionally associated with an occupation. The members of the caste are spread over a region in more than one village. The members of a caste have matrimonial relations with the neighbouring villages.

Sometimes, the castes are also named after the corresponding occupations, e.g. caste, dholi caste, chakali- washerwomen, Kammaris- potters etc. Members of the caste marry within their own caste-but usually outside their village. In other words, the **village is exogamous, while the caste is endogamous**.

# Caste & Class Linkages

- There are some systems of marriage in which the men of upper castes marry women of lower castes allowing lower caste women to move up the hierarchy. This is known as hypergamy, (anuloma). For political purposes, social control and matrimony, the members of the caste in a village are dependent upon their caste group located in other villages. Society, caste and Panchayat have control over the individual.
- It is also true that all caste occupations are not found in the village. A village has some castes – but for services it may depend on members belonging to various other castes from neighbouring villages.
- **Caste and class are linked to each other with high castes usually being associated with higher class. Class has an economic dimension. Upper castes are the landed, and lower castes are the landless, generally.**

# Peasants as a Class

- The term ‘**peasant**’ also shot into prominence with the works of Robert Redfield. For the first time, however, the term was defined in the writings of the American anthropologist, **A.L. Kroeber**. His oft-quoted definition of peasants is as follows:
- “**Peasants are definitely rural – yet live in relation to market towns; they form a class segment of a larger population which usually contains also urban centers, sometimes metropolitan capitals.** They constitute part-societies with part-cultures. They lack the isolation, the political autonomy, and the self-sufficiency of tribal populations; but their local units retain much of their old identity, integration, and attachment to soil and cults.”

# Caste, Class & Power

- Ideally, **class and power**, as said previously, are subordinated to caste. A Brahmin, even if poor, occupies the highest position in the caste hierarchy and commands unlimited respect from other castes. At one time, the Kshatriya kings wielded power, but the Brahmin priest officiated in the ritual that accorded them legitimacy to rule. In some parts of India, there was a clear overlapping of the three ranked orders of caste, class, and power.

# Caste, Class & Power

- For instance, both André Béteille and Kathleen Gough, in their respective studies of villages Sripuram and Kumbapettai, found that the Brahmins, who numbered around four per cent of the total population of South India, owned around ninety-eight per cent of the land, which they abstained from tilling because of religious injunctions that did not allow Brahmins to touch ploughs.

# Caste, Class & Power

- The Brahmins, who lived in their separate quarters called **agraharam**, were also in control of **political power**. Therefore, being a Brahmin also meant occupying the highest position in class and power hierarchies. This was an example of what after **Robert Dahl** one would call '**cumulative inequality**'. In this case, social status together with economic and political power are all concentrated in one group, the Brahmins.
- The typical 'Brahmin villages' of South India have also been locally called **agraharavadai**.



## Caste, Class & Power

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- Surely, **not all the villages in India followed the pattern characteristic of villages in South India.** In many other parts, the caste that controlled economic resources was certainly not of Brahmins, nor even of Kshatriyas. In **Rampura, the Mysore village that M.N. Srinivas studied**, the landowners were the peasants, the members of the caste called Vokkaligas. In North India, the principal landowners were and are the Jats. In such cases, economic stratification is independent of the other principles of ranking, and can in fact influence them.



## Caste, Class & Power

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- Thus, those who control political power may also be the landowners. In this case, different ranked orders do not overlap; they rather exist independently. For such a system, one can use the term '**dispersed inequality**', for the group that occupies the highest position in one ranking system is placed lowly in the other. Keeping this in mind, many sociologists make a distinction between '**ritual status**' and '**secular status**' – the former emerges from the caste, which is essentially a '**ritual hierarchy**'.



## Caste, Class & Power

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- While the **latter emerges from the ownership of economic and political power**. When these two statuses exist independently, it is a case of **dispersed inequality**; and when they overlap, it is **cumulative inequality**.

# Gender Relations

- The power relations are also closely related to the gendered location one has. Thus, in rural society women have less power in decision-making and their needs and concern do not seem to be well articulated at the household level and in the larger community. Their institutional presence is also considerably less as compared to men. These are compounded when class and caste are joined together.



# Economic Structure of Rural Community

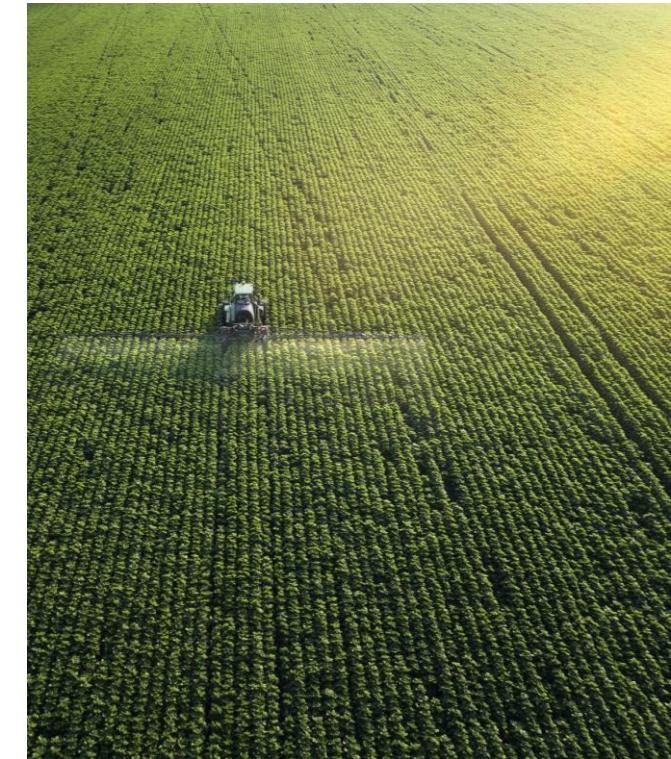
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- The agricultural sub sector consists of agriculture and allied economic activities such as crop husbandry, animal husbandry, and dairying, fisheries, poultry, and forestry. The non-agricultural sector consists of economic activities related to industry, business or services. This refers to the cottage and village industries, khadi, handloom, handicrafts etc.
- Dry land agriculture is usually unaccounted for in mainstream agriculture. In India, it is estimated that 410 million people depend on the dry lands for a living. Dry land agriculture is another economy in rural areas that closely enmeshes with the 'poverty geography' of the country.

# Economic Structure of Rural Community

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- **Allied Agricultural Activities:** Animal husbandry and horticulture, pisciculture, apiculture and sericulture are examples of allied activities which are closely related to agriculture and provide marginal or substantial source of income for rural communities.
- **Non-agricultural Activities:** This sector in rural areas constitutes an important component of the rural work force constituting 20 to 25% of the rural work force. This includes manufacturing of implements and work of artisans and crafts persons that support the agricultural work. Rural industries that fall into the Khadi and village industries serve as an important support for employment.



# Features of Rural Economy

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Excessive dependance on nature

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Low capital labour ratio

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Small economic holdings and livestock holdings

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Low factor productivity

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Long gestation and low rate of turnover

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High incidence of poverty and unemployment

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Preponderance of non-literate and unskilled workforce

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Lack of basic infrastructure like credit institutions

# Political Structure

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Political power centered in cities controls villages. The conflicts between different people pertain mainly to the matters of land disputes, traditional power arrangements, sharing of common resources such as the community pastures, water and forest resources and transgressing caste boundaries.



Panchayats are usually the forums for dispute resolution. There are two types, one the Village Panchayat and the other Jati Panchayat. The former deals with the welfare of the families living in that village undertaking collective tasks of the village such as performing rituals for the welfare of the entire village or organizing programs for the collective welfare such as building tanks, roads, granary. A traditional caste council called Panch or five, comprises of a small but always an odd number, deals with issues related to caste matters and inter-caste relations.

# Political Structure

- A particular caste is dominant implying either a numerical predominance, or control over economic resources, political power or having a high ritual status, or first ones to take advantage of the Western Education system. Lower castes are often reduced to a marginal status. The dominant castes have often resorted to violence to keep other castes submissive. The power of the Panchayat is being reduced by the presence of the secular formal institutions, of the dominant castes. **There is also conflict between the traditional caste Panchayats and the secular institutions such as the Gram Panchayat.** Class has an economic dimension. **Upper castes are the landed, and lower castes are the landless, generally.**

# Changes in Indian Rural Community

Changes in family Structure

Changes in Jajmani and Caste Structure

Changes in marriage and other customs

Changes in food, clothes and habits

Changes in Housing

Changes in rural health

Changes in Education

Changes in economic field

Changes in political areas



# Thankyou

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